

**GERMAN LIBERALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY:
THE FDP'S OSTPOLITIK UNDER HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER,
1974-1990**

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Abstract

For most of West Germany's history, the FDP has been the smallest party in the German system. However, in relation to their numerical weakness, the Liberals have exerted a disproportionally large influence on German foreign policy, especially in the field of Ostpolitik/German policy. With a special emphasis on the years 1974-1990 and on Hans-Dietrich Genscher's role as Foreign Minister, this dissertation examines the question how the FDP, at times barely making it into the Bundestag, could come to have such a strong impact on German Ostpolitik. Equally, this study is concerned with the constraints on the Free Democrats' freedom of manoeuvre in foreign policy.

The following parameters are investigated to explain and define the FDP's capacities for action in foreign policy: (1) the impact of international relations, (2) the domestic context, and (3) the historical-ideological aspects of liberal foreign policy. Since the Free Democrats were in government with two different partners during the time period in question, the impact of these three parameters is examined during the Social-Liberal coalition (1974-82) and the Christian-Liberal coalition (1982-1990) respectively.

Three main and related conclusions emerge from this study. First, that the international climate, while setting a tight framework for the Free Democrats' foreign policy, simultaneously allowed a number of specific FDP (Genscher) initiatives to have some impact on East-West relations, much more so during the 1980s than during the 1970s. Second, that the domestic context had nearly opposite effects on the FDP's foreign policy before and after 1982: during their coalition with the SPD, the domestic factors constrained the Free Democrats' capacities for action, while during the Christian-Liberal coalition, the FDP was able to exploit the domestic-political constellations to its advantage. And third, that contrary to what the literature on the Free Democrats posits, liberal ideology and personalities not only substantially influenced the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990, but provided a crucial element of continuity, consistency and indeed identity for the party.

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To my parents

ABBREVIATIONS

CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CFE	Conventional Forces of Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CMEA	Council on Mutual Economic Assistance (Soviet bloc)
CoCom	Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSU	Christian Social Union
DDP	German Democratic Party (Weimar Republic)
DVP	German People's Party (Weimar Republic)
EC	European Community
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Cooperation
FDP	Free Democratic Party
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
LDPD	Liberal Democratic Party of Germany
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
SED	Socialist Unity Party (East German Communist party)
SPD	Social Democratic Party
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
UN	United Nations
WEU	Western European Union

Chapter I. Introduction

Introduction to the research problem

Germany's geopolitical position in the middle of Europe has compelled every German statesman since Bismarck to pursue some kind of Eastern policy. The question of Eastern policy has naturally been tied up with Germany's whole foreign policy concept and thus played a very important role: if Germany decided to pursue favourable relations with the East, it was bound to alienate its Western neighbours, and if it concluded agreements with the West, it surely troubled the East. In addition, there was the constant danger that East and West would ally themselves against Germany which made alliances towards one side or the other absolutely compulsory.

The importance of Eastern policy for German foreign policy and for Germany as a whole increased even more after World War II. East-West polarisation now occupied the whole world in form of the Cold War, and Germany as divided country - with one half forming part of the Eastern bloc and the other half siding with the West - became *the* symbol of East-West conflict pure and simple. One would thus expect that interest and influence on a matter of such importance would mostly be reserved for two very influential factors in Germany's political system: the two big parties, CDU/CSU and SPD. And it is true that both of them have been responsible for important initiatives in Ostpolitik, the Social Democrats with their innovative approach much more so than the Union.

Considering the fact, however, that for most of the Federal Republic's history, the FDP has been the smallest party in the German system, in relation to their numerical weakness, Liberals have played a disproportionally large role in German foreign policy, especially in the field of Ostpolitik/German policy. With a special emphasis on the years 1974-1990 and on Hans-Dietrich Genscher's role as Foreign Minister, this dissertation examines the question of how the FDP, at times barely making it into the Bundestag, could come to have such a strong effect on German Ostpolitik. Equally, this study is concerned with the constraints on the Free Democrats' freedom of manoeuvre in foreign policy.

'Ostpolitik,' a term at the core of this dissertation, will be used as follows: Ostpolitik, translated literally, means 'Eastern policies,' a policy of conducting relations with the Eastern European states, including the Soviet Union. However, from the late 1960s onwards, Ostpolitik has come to mean a policy of *detente* with the Eastern European countries,

based on acceptance of Europe's post-war division. Since this study is predominantly concerned with German Ostpolitik in the 1970s and 1980s, Ostpolitik will refer to a policy of rapprochement with Eastern Europe. Frequently, Ostpolitik has been inseparably linked with other foreign policy matters, such as German policy, defence and economic cooperation. Whenever this has been the case, the definition of Ostpolitik will be extended to cover the overlap. However, sometimes 'Deutschlandpolitik' will also be used as an independent term, referring to policies exclusively concerning the two Germanies.

While the thesis focuses on the Free Democratic Party as a whole, special consideration will be given to Hans-Dietrich Genscher who, for most of the time period in question, held the triple function of Vice Chancellor (1974-92), Foreign Minister (1974-92) and Party Chairman (1974-85). Although in practice, the position of Vice Chancellor has been a honorific one, it nevertheless highlighted Genscher's personal importance in German politics and the FDP's strong position as coalition partner. Furthermore, Genscher's occupation of the post of Foreign Minister for eighteen years not only rendered him the longest-serving Foreign Minister in the Western world, but also had obvious implications for his impact on German foreign policy, i.e. in terms of knowing the diplomatic scene both at home and abroad. Genscher's say in Liberal politics was further enhanced by his function as FDP Chairman from 1974 until 1985, which meant that - in addition to foreign policy - he also influenced the FDP's policy in all other areas, continuously aiming at ensuring the party's survival in power.

In trying to find some explanation for this apparent inconsistency, that is the contrast between the FDP's size and its impact, the following parameters are investigated to define the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in foreign policy: (1) the impact of international relations, (2) the domestic context, and (3) the historical-ideological aspects of liberal foreign policy. Let us take each point in turn and first take a closer look at the impact of international relations on the FDP's foreign policy.

International relations and German foreign policy

In an age of increasing interdependence, it is impossible to examine any country's foreign policy without taking its international environment into account. Due to the special circumstances of the Federal Republic's creation and its geopolitical position as divided country and Cold War mirror in the middle of Europe, West Germany has depended on international circumstances even more than other countries. In attempting to find an answer to the seeming paradox between the FDP's smallness and its strong presence in foreign policy, this study will consequently look at (1) how Germany's external constraints have affected the Free Democrats' foreign policy-making and (2) whether the Liberals themselves have somewhat contributed to international relations between 1974 and 1990.

Before turning to the external impact on German foreign policy, it should be stressed that international relations of course usually affected West Germany as a whole and not only individual parties. Hence, there will only be special reference to the Free Democratic Party when international developments specifically influenced it, or when the FDP's Ostpolitik in return affected international relations. Even though there may not always be an immediate link between Germany's external environment and the Free Democrats, an examination of Bonn's international framework nevertheless forms an integral part of this study. Given Germany's intense dependence on the wider context of East-West relations, the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in foreign policy cannot be comprehensively defined without taking the external environment into account.

External constraints on German foreign policy-making

Due to Germany's enormous dependence upon external factors from the very beginning of its existence, the concept of "compatibility" has played a significant role in the Federal Republic. "Compatibility," as defined by Wolfram Hanrieder, is "intended to assess the degrees of feasibility of foreign policy goals, given the structures and opportunities of the international system."¹ This dissertation will analyse the

¹Hanrieder, West German Foreign Policy, p.7

compatibility of Liberal Ostpolitik with the following structures and opportunities of Germany's external environment: the superpower climate, inner-German relations and alliance politics.

Superpower climate

A central question will be how far the Federal Republic's efforts for constructive relations with the Communist bloc have been compatible with the climate between the superpowers and with the domestic and foreign-political aspirations of the respective US and Soviet leadership. Have bad relations between the superpowers automatically limited West Germany's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik, and likewise, has a relaxation of Cold War tension or superpower leadership in return increased the FDP's chances for an active conduct of Ostpolitik? In this context, the link between Ostpolitik and arms control/demilitarisation will also be examined. The question is to what degree the Federal Republic's room for manoeuvre towards Eastern Europe has been determined by the success or failure of superpower summitry dealing with defence and arms control.

Inner-German relations

In addition, this study will investigate how Bonn's Ostpolitik has been affected by the two German states' membership in antagonistic alliances. How did the Free Democrats cope with the need to consider East Germany's importance for Soviet politics and security calculations whenever striving for progress in inner-German relations? Furthermore, the question is whether the two Germanies succeeded in their attempt to shield inner-German cooperation from the ups and downs in US-Soviet relations.

Alliance politics - linkage and bargaining

This thesis will furthermore seek to analyse how Germany's dependence on NATO, and particularly the US security guarantee, has constrained West German foreign policy makers. In other words, the use of 'linkage' in the Atlantic Alliance will be examined, based on the following definition by William Wallace:

"Linkage between unrelated or only loosely-related issues in order to gain increased leverage in negotiation is an ancient and accepted aspect of diplomacy - a means of widening the threats or rewards at stake in international bargaining, with the hoped-for pay-off of increasing the incentive to accede to a government's demands."²

All German governments since the Second World War have been aware of the 'linkage' between Washington's commitment of troops to Germany's defence and the Federal Republic's firm and visible commitment to NATO and the West. Bonn's dependence on the Western Allies for a solution to the German national question and to the Berlin controversies must also be considered here. The question is how the federal government, and the FDP in particular, tried to make sure that the German division would not become subject to any bilateral or multilateral agreement concluded between 1974 and 1989, and how Bonn strove for the Western Allies' support for progress on the Berlin issue.

The FDP's contributions to international relations

While external constraints have led Germany to certain foreign policy actions, its foreign policy actions and reactions have in return influenced the international environment. According to Philip Windsor, Germany has been important for international relations because in some ways, it has "...held the key to the future of the Cold War, or to the detente which might follow it."³ Given this study's focus on Liberal Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990, the main question will be whether the Free Democrats have to an extent contributed to the development of East-West relations during the time period in question.

Economic leverage

To begin with, the thesis will investigate how the Federal Republic, once termed an "economic giant but a political dwarf" by Willy Brandt, tried to circumvent its political weakness by using its economic strength

²Wallace, Atlantic Relations, p.164

³Windsor, p.239

as a lever for exerting influence in other areas. More specifically, the question will be how West German politicians (with a special focus on the Free Democrats), have utilized 'positive economic leverage,' defined by Angela Stent as "...the use of positive economic means in the pursuit of political goals..." in the attempt to elicit certain humanitarian concessions from Eastern Europe.⁴ It will also be examined whether the Liberals employed 'negative economic leverage' during the 1970s and 1980s by withdrawing economic assistance to the Warsaw Pact in order to retaliate for Communist measures harming detente.

The FDP's agenda

In attempting to analyse West Germany's impact on its external environment, this dissertation will also look at the issues most actively promoted by the Free Democratic Party. It will investigate how the Free Democrats tried to increase their room for manoeuvre in foreign policy precisely by stressing Germany's firm commitment to democratic alliances like NATO and the European Communities. How successful were the Liberals in their attempt to utilize European Political Cooperation as a framework for gaining a greater say in international negotiations and organizations, and how did the Free Democrats try to translate their specific interest in more human rights and reunification into an international agenda? Lastly, the question will be considered whether through the judicious seizing of opportunities, a statesman like Genscher could occasionally influence external developments as much as he was influenced by them.

The domestic context

In addition to analysing the impact of international relations, any examination of the German Liberal Party's role in foreign policy inevitably also requires a consideration of the domestic context in which the Free Democrats have operated. Hence, this section will turn to the question of how far the FDP's domestic environment - the German constitution, public opinion and the structure of the party system - help to

⁴Stent, p.10

explain the Liberals' strong presence in Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990.

Constitutional framework of foreign-policy-making in Germany

Officially, the Federal Chancellor is the principal decision-maker in foreign policy, entitled by Article 65 of the Basic Law to "...determine, and be responsible for, the general policy guidelines."⁵ In practice, however, the conduct of foreign policy in Germany has not been the Chancellor's monopoly, (1) because foreign policy has been initiated by the Chancellor *and* the Foreign Minister and agreed upon by the Cabinet, and (2) because each Chancellor has to make sure that he enjoys both his party's and his coalition partner's support in the Bundestag. This dependency of foreign policy-making on a functioning party system has provided the Free Democrats with much leverage in the process.

Let us therefore next take a look at the role of political parties in Germany. The Basic Law is unique in assigning parties a key role in German political life - according to Article 21, their task is to "...participate in the formation of the political will of the people." Parties are the strongest non-governmental factors in the formulation of foreign policy and are supposed to act as responsible agents of the electorate in the conduct of government. Without doubt, the FDP, for example, has played the significant role of translating attitudinal changes in the German public into political changes at the government level and vice versa.⁶ In other words, the Free Democrats have been both 'followers' and 'leaders' of public opinion.

There are a number of other elements in the German constitution assigned some influence on foreign policy: the Federal President represents Germany according to the Law of Nations and concludes treaties with foreign states on behalf of the Federation. Furthermore, in a parliamentary democracy like Germany, Parliament naturally also exerts some influence over foreign policy-making. Treaties that regulate the political relations of the Federation can only become law with the consent

⁵This and the following translated excerpts of the Basic Law are taken from Ulrich Karpen, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, pp.223-308

⁶Schweigler, p.82

of the Bundestag. The stronger the Chancellor is supported, the less he needs to rely on convincing Parliament to pass foreign policy decrees. Overall, however, the Bundestag is powerless to initiate foreign policy and can only react to it. Officially, the Länder of the Federal Republic, represented in the Upper Chamber of Parliament, the Bundesrat, are constitutionally barred from concluding foreign policy agreements. Unofficially, however, they do exercise some influence, since their administrations provide channels through which regional interests make themselves felt. The government needs a two-thirds majority in the Bundesrat for constitutional amendments.

Since the Basic Law does not clearly define the limits of foreign affairs entrusted to the federal government, the Federal Constitutional Court is supposed to fill this gap. Both the Social Democrats and the Union have - respectively during their time in opposition - challenged the government's foreign policy actions on the grounds that they were not compatible with the German Constitution. Both Chambers of Parliament may challenge the government's actions in foreign policy before the Constitutional Court.

In Germany, domestic and foreign policy have been most clearly linked in the sense that imperatives for Germany's foreign policy have been anchored in the Basic Law: for reunification and international cooperation. Article 23 of the Basic Law made it a constitutional requirement for the Federal Republic to complete the unity and liberty of Germany in free self-determination. In other words, there has been a "constitutional taboo on the renunciation of reunification."⁷ The Basic Law did not state the means of reaching national unity, however, which resulted in relative freedom for West Germany's policy makers in designing policies geared towards reunification. Furthermore, the Federal Republic has been constitutionally obliged to seek international cooperation. Article 25 provides that the general rules of international law should form part of the Federal Law and that they should take precedence over local laws. West German foreign policy has thus from the beginning been built around legal or quasi-legal doctrine, and any foreign policy actor has had to take these constitutional imperatives into account.

⁷Tilford, p.16

Necessity of domestic consensus as indicator of feasibility in foreign policy actions

Apart from the impact of Germany's constitutional framework on the FDP's foreign policy, this dissertation will also examine the link between the Free Democrats' Ostpolitik and their need to maintain enough domestic consensus and popular support to stay in power. According to Wolfram Hanrieder, consensus "...assesses the measure of agreement of the ends and means of foreign policy on the domestic political scene."⁸ The need for domestic consensus is thus a standard of feasibility: only to a limited degree can the FDP pursue foreign policy that does not correspond to popular will or to its coalition partner's desires before it risks loss of popular support or fragmentation of the party system.

Domestic pressure and the need for coalition consensus can thus both positively and negatively influence the FDP's foreign policy-making. Positively, if the Liberals respond to domestic pressure by incorporating the public's will into their political programmes and actions, or if they use the success of their politics - such as after the first Ostpolitik Treaties - to gain electoral advantages. Domestic pressure can also negatively influence foreign policy-making, however, in the sense that public disagreement can result in election losses. Besides domestic pressure, the Free Democrats have to guard their coalition partner's plans and goals, at least enough to ensure survival of the coalition.⁹ Consequently, a question relevant to this dissertation is how far the need to maintain both enough popular and coalition partner support to stay in power has influenced the FDP's Ostpolitik.

Structure of the party system and the FDP's coalition behaviour

In attempting to define the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in foreign policy with the help of domestic politics, the FDP's function in

⁸Hanrieder, West German Foreign Policy, p.8

⁹Of course, there are exceptions to this rule, such as in 1974 and 1982 when respectively a Social-Liberal coalition broke down. It is nevertheless interesting to note that in both cases the FDP continued to stay in power.

the German system must also be considered. Due to the Liberals' situation as smallest party in the Federal Republic (until the arrival of the Green Party in 1983), their behaviour has been geared towards guaranteeing their survival, and it seems as though Ostpolitik has aided the FDP in this attempt in several ways: (1) the combination of Germany's electoral system and the FDP's strong profile in Ostpolitik has provided the Liberals with much leverage in their choice of coalition partner, (2) the Free Democrats have employed Ostpolitik to distinguish themselves in the German party system and (3) to stress their function as 'third force' between the SPD and the Union. (4), the FDP has used Ostpolitik to divert attention from inner-party friction through a 'personalization effect' in foreign policy. Let us take each point in turn and first consider

The favourable interaction between Germany's electoral system and the FDP's strong profile in Ostpolitik

Frequently, the German electoral system has worked to the Free Democrats' advantage because of the possibility of 'vote-splitting.' In the Federal Republic, each voter has two votes, one for electing a candidate in his constituency (Land) and a second one, the *Zweitstimme*, which forms the basis for determining proportional representation in the Bundestag and hence is the decisive vote.¹⁰ While a majority of the electorate give both their first and second vote to the same party, the Free Democrats have frequently survived at the federal level because of the possibility of vote-splitting. Often, voters will give the SPD or CDU/CSU candidate in their constituencies their first vote, and their second vote to the FDP, leaving the Free Democrats as main beneficiaries because of the decisive nature of the *Zweitstimme* for determining the governing coalition at the federal level.

Furthermore, the Free Democrats have profited from the Federal Republic's electoral system because the system of proportional representation in the Bundestag has rendered it very difficult for either of the two big parties to win an absolute majority (only exception: the Union's absolute majority of 50.2% in 1957). As a consequence, the FDP plays a pivotal role in its function as coalition partner, enabling the formation of a government. The Liberals have also benefited from the

¹⁰Smith, Democracy in Western Germany, pp.136-139

fact that both the Social- and the Christian Democrats prefer the FDP as coalition partner to each other: (1) ideologically, the Free Democrats are in the middle between the two big parties since, for most of the time, the CDU's and SPD's programmes have varied too much to be co-ordinated, and (2) the FDP is "only" a junior partner, meaning that it is a weaker coalition partner than either of the big parties and needs to be granted fewer concessions.¹¹

In the Free Democrats' strong position as majority enabler, their foreign policy profile has often played a role because the Liberals have used foreign policy criteria for the choice of their coalition partner. For example, in 1949, the CDU was seen as the only logical coalition option for the Free Democrats, largely on the basis of foreign policy considerations, and when the Christian Democrats started their campaign against Social-Liberal Ostpolitik from the late 1960s onwards, the Liberals could only see themselves in a coalition with the Social Democrats. Given the FDP's powerful position as final arbitrator of the government's composition, this dissertation will investigate how Ostpolitik has played a role in the Liberals' choice of coalition partner.

The FDP's use of Ostpolitik for distinguishing itself in the German party system

The Free Democrats have gone about this in two ways: firstly, since 1948, the Liberals have tried to distinguish themselves from the Social Democrats and the Union with the help of innovative Ostpolitik programmes and actions. For example, in 1952, with the Pfleiderer Plan, the FDP as first party introduced the idea of combining West-integration with detente towards the East (a thought which later became the basis of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik), and in 1969, the FDP was the first party to renounce the reunification idea which turned out to be another key element of Ostpolitik. Secondly, the FDP has attempted to shape its

¹¹In March 1983, the Greens entered the Bundestag as fourth party and thus put a theoretical end to the FDP's position as only possible junior coalition partner. In practice, however, the Greens have not concluded a coalition agreement on the federal level so far, and therefore the Free Democrats have continued to be needed as majority makers by their coalition partners. The Greens furthermore face the strategic disadvantage of occupying a position quite on the left of the German political spectrum, which leaves them with only one coalition option, the SPD, instead of enjoying flexibility towards both major parties like the Free Democrats.

profile in the respective coalitions through regularly advancing a claim to the post of Foreign Minister, most successfully from 1969 onwards, since when the Free Democrats have continuously occupied the Foreign Ministry. This study will examine whether the FDP's attempts to strengthen its position in the German party system with the help of innovative party programmes and functional claims could provide some further explanation for the Liberals' focus on foreign policy/Ostpolitik.

The FDP's position as 'third force' between the Union and the SPD

Part of the FDP's function in the German party system is also its role as 'third force' between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, although the Free Democrats only fully developed the concept in the early 1970s. By then, the Free Democrats' previous definition of their role as 'liberal corrective' to the CDU/CSU had caused major problems, since the FDP's emphasis on its corrective task made it difficult for the Liberals to develop an independent policy profile. One result of this was that the media primarily referred to the FDP in terms of its relations with other parties instead of on its own merit.¹²

While the Free Democrats continued to keep the SPD's foreign policy in check in the Social-Liberal coalition, under Hans-Dietrich Genscher's leadership, the FDP made a concerted effort to move away from its image as reactive force without a clear ideological identity of its own. Instead, the Free Democrats began to emphasize their role as 'third force' and distinct representative of liberal principles between the CDU/CSU and the SPD. As Heino Kaack has pointed out, the primary purpose of this 'strategy of self-sufficiency' was to persuade other people to stop thinking of the party on the basis of its coalition position and to start viewing the FDP as representative of liberal principles.¹³ The FDP's role as 'third force' in the German party system thus could provide some insight into the Liberals' special interest in foreign policy: how have the Free Democrats used their liberal foreign policy stance to legitimise their existence in the German party system?

¹² Kaack, The FDP in the German party system, p.78

¹³ Kaack, The FDP in the German party system, p.79

The 'personalization' effect

For a small party such as the FDP, too many individualistic members pulling in opposite directions can pose major risks to its coherence, efficiency and survival. To prevent especially the last danger, collapse due to internal friction, the Free Democrats have periodically tried to shape their image with the help of one or two leading personalities whose task it has not only been to restore some internal party coherence but also to gain votes and recognition. The 'personalization' effect could thus also shed some light onto the question how the Free Democrats have employed foreign policy to survive in the German party system despite their smallness. In this context, this study will mostly be concerned with Hans-Dietrich Genscher's role in the Free Democratic Party.

Overall, its favourable position between the two major parties has allowed the FDP to adapt towards both political ends and thus to exert a disproportionately large influence in German politics. On the other hand, as Emil Kirchner has pointed out, the Free Democrats have had problems in establishing a unique 'liberal' identity for themselves as a result of this functional position:

"...The FDP's problems in establishing an identity for itself based on 'liberal' ideas have been accentuated by the party's enforced role within the post Second World War German party system as a 'corrective' or 'pivot' between the two major parties..."¹⁴

Consequently, this study will now turn to the question whether the Free Democrats' strong functional position in the German party system has been compatible with their efforts for a distinct 'liberal' foreign policy identity.

¹⁴Kirchner, Liberal Parties in Western Europe, p.62 Despite the FDP's (and for that matter, many Western European liberal parties') tendency to pay more attention to coalition prospects than to ideological principle, Kirchner has also argued that "...it would be inappropriate to characterise liberal parties as opportunistic in policy aims." Kirchner, p.484

The historical-ideological aspects of liberal foreign policy

There are two reasons why it is necessary to look at the FDP's foreign policy ideology. First, it is necessary to examine whether a party which arguably has become a prisoner of its own electoral success has also to some degree been guided by liberal principles in foreign policy. More specifically, the question is whether a 'liberal' foreign policy ideology exists in the first place, and if so, whether the roots of liberal foreign policy in the past can help to account for the FDP's strong presence in foreign policy and for its concentration on the national question and Ostpolitik.

Second, it is necessary to look at the FDP's foreign policy ideology because in analysing foreign policy decisions, one has to consider the decision-makers' motives, values, and ideology. Psychology helps to explain why one decision is *preferred* to another. As Christopher Hill has said:

"With a knowledge of ideology...it should be possible to make broad but definite predictions about, for instance, which policies will be pursued with special resolve, and which will be sacrificed if it needs be....Ideally, a concern for attitudes, perceptions and values should be part of the texture of any analysis of policy, at whatever level of generality."¹⁵

An interesting - if hypothetical - question in this context will be whether the fact that the Federal Republic has had the same Foreign Minister for eighteen years has resulted in more steady foreign policy perceptions and consequently foreign policy actions than might have been the case if the Foreign Ministry had been occupied by different people.

Since the FDP sees itself as representative of today's Liberalism, most of its party programmes naturally claim adherence to past liberal ideology. This section will consequently next look at the various elements of a liberal foreign policy ideology.

¹⁵Hill, A theoretical introduction, pp.16-17

The link between freedom and law

German liberalism has its roots in the movement of the enlightenment which slowly caught on in Germany after the French Revolution. The main characteristic of this movement, reason, has been the leverage for all German liberal domestic and foreign policy. For example, while individual freedom (and consequently rejection of authoritarianism) has always been a main pillar of liberalism, reason has led Liberals to accept the need for some kind of authority to guarantee this individual freedom. Thus, liberalism has developed the concept of 'as little state power as possible and as much state power as necessary to reach liberal goals.' The best way to guarantee individual freedom in a state seemed to be with the help of law - hence the liberal belief in being able to tame human beings by law while simultaneously granting them maximum individual freedom. According to the neo-liberal Friedrich August von Hayek,

"The conception of freedom under the law rests on the contention that when we obey laws, in the sense of general abstract rules laid down irrespective of their application to us, we are not subject to another man's will and therefore free."¹⁶

The question then arises whether there is such a thing as freedom in foreign policy. Since history has proved that - even in terms of relations between democratic states - human beings are not naturally peaceable, liberals have relied and still rely today on Immanuel Kant's concept of foreign policy, as stated in his work 'Perpetual Peace': "A state of peace among men living together is not the same as the state of nature, which is rather a state of war."¹⁷ Consequently, individual freedom cannot be endless, neither in domestic policy nor in foreign policy, because human beings are not naturally peaceable.

In foreign policy, it also has become more and more necessary to tie up national freedom of action in laws. For example, the fact that the Basic Law (created with the help of some Liberals) has set the framework

¹⁶Hayek cited in Zundel, p.75

¹⁷Reiss, p.98

for German foreign policy-making shows the liberal belief that a proper foreign policy will result from a proper domestic constitution. Besides the belief that foreign policy can be anchored constitutionally, liberals hold that the nation ought to direct its efforts towards the establishment of a rational peace order to be secured by institutions and firm principles. Just like the individual in the state would give up some of his personal freedom in order to have it secured by the state, the nation in the international scene would out of voluntary self-interest give up some of its national independence in order to guarantee its survival with the help of a peace order, a thought much reflected in the FDP's party programmes demanding a pan-European peace order.

An early example of the liberal belief that law can be realised in foreign policy was the organisation of the League of Nations. Today, the modern Liberal would probably desire a little more security of regulations according to the Law of Nations, not because he believes it is possible to break the laws of power but hoping to domesticate power a little by laws. No matter how little efficient and far from perfect they may seem, the United Nations, International Courts of Justice, disarmament conferences and treaties are institutions which demonstrate liberal thinking. They reflect the ambitious but necessary attempt to tame human beings with reason.

Defence

The liberal principle of as much state power as necessary and as little as possible extends into the realm of defence. A reason-oriented foreign policy also means that military policy has to be subordinated to foreign policy and must be a reasonable defence policy. Too high a level of German defence equipment would be just as provocative as a level of minimalist one for neither would guarantee peace. Liberal ideology here positions itself between the conservatives who have traditionally promoted a strong army and the political left-wing which has traditionally been more sceptical about the need to maintain an army strong enough for defence than the liberals. Liberal rational pacifism considers the use of force for reasons other than defence a fatal contradiction of the concept of law and a factor through which power degenerates into an end in itself.

Progress and reform

Another liberal heritage from the enlightenment is the belief in progress and reform. While Liberals share this heritage with the Socialists, they nevertheless differ from them in the degree of radicalism with regard to reform. Liberals reject radical progress as well as radical reform on the grounds that change in itself does not equal progress. Liberals also contrast their desire for rationally justified reforms with the Conservatives' status quo thinking in foreign policy. Walter Scheel once portrayed this liberal position between the left and right wing as follows:

"Liberals are not dreamers...To face realities, understand politics as the art to change what can be changed and not to despair over what has to be accepted as given distinguishes the liberal politician from the illusionary visionary as well as from the one who wants to leave everything as it is."¹⁸

Negotiations and compromise

The need to face realities is another guiding principle in liberal foreign policy. Again, reason is the driving force behind this: the recognition that one can really best pursue one's interests by recognition of the facts. In terms of international relations, Liberals believe in negotiation, compromise and understanding. In order to progress in international relations, it is vital to consider one's partner's and opponents' interests as well as one's own. Liberalism claims a sense of realism, tolerance and readiness for compromise to be part of its foreign policy ideology, which has been reflected in many FDP party programmes.

Liberalism and nationalism/Ostpolitik

The combination of liberalism and nationalism in Germany emerged when the German liberals tried to implement the democratic values inherited from the enlightenment, and found that there existed no unified German state to realise them. How the desire for national unification could come completely to overtake other 'liberal' goals, such

¹⁸Scheel cited in Reif p.10

as the objective of a democratic constitution, will be examined in Chapter Two. For now, it should be stressed (1) that the Free Democrats have inherited the liberal tradition of fighting for national unity, if in a modified version, and (2) that due to Germany's post-World War II situation as a divided country and Cold War mirror in Europe, the desire for reunification and Ostpolitik have been inseparably intertwined. With East Germany being a satellite state of the Soviet Union, West Germany could make no move towards the other half of the German nation without somehow taking Moscow's presence into account, in other words, without conducting some form of Ostpolitik.

This thesis sets out to investigate whether the Free Democrats have been able to develop a 'liberal' foreign policy identity despite their strong functional position in the German party system. It also examines how far factors such as history, ideology and past experience help to explain why certain issues became more highlighted than others in Liberal Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik during the 1970s and 1980s. The question whether great Liberals of the past, i.e. Immanuel Kant or more recently Gustav Stresemann, still served as role models for the FDP in any way will also be considered. Lastly, we shall pay attention to the issue of 'Genscherism' and to the question whether and how far Genscherism is something distinctive from general liberal values and ideology.

Research Gap

In addition to the attempt at explaining the FDP's disproportionately large influence in foreign policy, especially Ostpolitik, this dissertation tries to fill a research gap. The existing literature on the FDP's foreign policy can be divided into two main categories: on the one hand, the literature which specifically deals with the FDP's Ostpolitik is dominated by historical accounts and does not cover Liberal Ostpolitik beyond 1974. On the other hand, the literature which does address the Free Democratic Party in the 1970s and 1980s is not specifically concerned with the FDP's foreign policy, let alone its Ostpolitik. Consequently, this thesis attempts to provide the first systematic study of the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990.

In terms of historical accounts of the FDP's Ostpolitik, Sebastian Glatzeder's book Die Deutschlandpolitik der FDP in der Ära Adenauer covers Liberal Ostpolitik between 1949 and 1963. While Glatzeder provides a thorough account of the FDP's programmes and actions under Adenauer, his analysis focuses on the domestic and international parameters, omitting any reference to liberal ideology. Liberal Ostpolitik in the 1960s and early 1970s has been examined both by Clemens Heitmann in his book FDP und neue Ostpolitik and by Arnulf Baring in Machtwechsel. Die Ära Brandt - Scheel. Heitmann's book demonstrates the FDP's pacesetter role as first German party to promote a more realistic assessment of the East during its time in opposition and lays out the importance of the Free Democrats' concepts for later German Ostpolitik. However, since Heitmann's book is a Master's thesis, it is almost exclusively based on secondary sources. Baring's Machtwechsel, in contrast, offers a much more comprehensive analysis of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik during the whole period of the Brandt and Scheel government (1969-74) and is largely based on primary sources. Ting-Fu Hung's book Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der Regierung Kohl/Genscher in den Jahren 1984-85 is the only account of Liberal Ostpolitik in the 1980s so far, if limited to the study of two years. Hung's analysis is based on comparing and contrasting the government's theoretical attitude with its concrete actions, while placing special emphasis on the importance of Germany's international environment.

Concerning the more recent literature on German politics, a number of studies dealing with international politics in the 1970s and

1980s also touch upon the FDP's foreign policy. While Avril Pittman's book From Ostpolitik to Reunification predominantly focuses on Chancellor Schmidt's (and the SPD's) politics and barely mentions the FDP at all, Michael Sodaro's Moscow, Germany and the West from Khrushchev to Gorbachev contains occasional references to the FDP's positions. There is much more literature on the process of German unification. Stephen Szabo's book The diplomacy of German unification, Elisabeth Pond's study Beyond the Wall, and Karl Kaiser's article on 'Germany's unification,' all give some consideration to the FDP's role in the process of German unification. Timothy Garton Ash's book In Europe's Name, is a most comprehensive and insightful analysis of German Ostpolitik from 1945 until unification. However, Garton Ash's main focus is on West German politics as a whole and not so much on the differences between the various parties and personalities.

While there is no shortage of literature about the FDP's domestic function in the German party system, little thereof specifically relates to the Free Democrats' foreign policy.¹⁹ The literature on the FDP's historical-ideological heritage is much less plentiful, but Rolf Zundel's Die Erben des Liberalismus and Hans Reif, Friedrich Henning and Werner Stephan's Geschichte des deutschen Liberalismus, provide valuable insights. Emil Kirchner's (ed.) book Liberal Parties in Western Europe discusses the FDP within an international context by analysing and comparing the domestic context/strategies and ideological heritage of fourteen Western European liberal parties.

While Garton Ash touches upon the issue of 'Genscherism,' the only academic work specifically attempting to define the term is Emil Kirchner's 1990 article 'Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism.' Kirchner's article examines Genscherism in light of Germany's opposition to the modernization of NATO's short-range nuclear missiles in 1989, and consequently bases its conclusions on this particular case

¹⁹For the FDP's domestic strategies, see for instance Jürgen Dittberner, FDP - Partei der zweiten Wahl; Heino Kaack, 'The FDP in the German party system,' in K.H.Cerny (ed.), Germany at the Polls. The Bundestag election of 1976; Emil Kirchner and David Broughton, 'The FDP in the Federal Republic of Germany: the requirements of survival and success,' in Liberal Parties in Western Europe; Yves Mény, Government and Politics in Western Europe: Britain, France, Italy, Germany; Geoffrey Pridham, Coalitional behaviour in theory and practice: an inductive model for Western Europe; Christian Soe, 'The Free Democratic Party', in H.G.Peter Wallach/George K. Romoser, West German Politics in the Mid-Eighties; Rüdiger Zühlch, Von der FDP zur FDP. Die dritte Kraft im deutschen Parteiensystem.

study. While this dissertation has tended to confirm most of Kirchner's findings, the much greater time span examined (1974-1990) has also led to some additional conclusions.

This study tries both to cover the research gap on the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 and, in doing that, to provide a slightly more comprehensive account than previous authors of not only how but why the Free Democrats with Genscher as Foreign Minister have conducted Ostpolitik the way they did.

Methodology

With the help of above's hypotheses, this dissertation examines the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 by systematically scanning both primary government and FDP documents. In terms of government documents, the proceedings of the Deutsche Bundestag (obtained at the Bibliothek des Deutschen Bundestags in Bonn) proved valuable as they provided the FDP's and the other parties' views on foreign policy. Moreover, this study relies heavily on speeches by Free Democrats, most notably Hans-Dietrich Genscher, that were not given before the Bundestag and printed in the government's Bulletin. Copies of these speeches were found at the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung in Bonn.

Concerning FDP documents, numerous sources in the Archiv des Deutschen Liberalismus in Gummersbach provided valuable information. The evolution of the FDP's programmatic positions on Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 has been traced by systematically scanning (1) the party's programmes, (2) the speeches and debates at all FDP party congresses, (3) the parliamentary fraction's and the FDP's official press releases (fdk). Furthermore, I consulted a number of FDP party officials who were active during the time period in question, which was useful in confirming the validity of information available in the open literature.

In addition, broadcast and television interviews with leading Free Democrats were a most useful primary source, as they provided the politicians' immediate reaction to nearly all international and domestic events during the time period in question. Copies of these interviews were obtained at the Bundestag Press Archives in Bonn, along with another central source of this thesis, that is innumerable national and international press accounts on German foreign policy/Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990. All translations of quotations from the documents named above are my own.

Chapter Structure

Since the Free Democrats were in government with two different partners from 1974 until 1990, the impact of the three parameters (international impact, domestic context, ideology) is examined during the Social-Liberal coalition (1974-82) and the Christian-Liberal coalition (1982-90) respectively.

Only regarding the ideological parameter is there a slight deviation from this pattern, (1) because the FDP's reliance on 'liberal' foreign policy values cannot be demonstrated without investigating the historical-ideological development of Liberalism. Chapter Two thus looks at the history of German Liberalism in order to answer which past experiences have either positively or negatively influenced the FDP's approach to foreign policy today. Second (2), the ideological parameter differs from international relations and domestic politics since by its very definition, ideology is a relatively *static* factor and hence unlikely to change dramatically over two decades. Consequently, Chapter Five analyses the influence of 'liberal' values on the FDP's Ostpolitik during the whole period from 1974 to 1990.

Concerning the parameters of international relations and domestic politics, in contrast, it is vital to investigate their impact during the Social-Liberal and Christian-Liberal coalitions respectively, in order to analyse how they both increased and constrained the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy. Chapter Three traces the influence of Germany's external framework on Liberal Ostpolitik from 1974 until 1982, while Chapter Six analyses the impact of the changes in international relations on the Free Democrats between 1982 and 1990. Similarly, Chapters Four and Seven examine how the FDP's different domestic constellations during the 1970s and 1980s, that is its respective coalitions with the SPD and the Union, both positively and negatively affected the Liberals' capacities for action in foreign policy.

Chapter Eight investigates to what extent the evidence presented in this study confirms the hypotheses that were forwarded in the introduction, and what lessons can be drawn about the FDP's special relationship with foreign policy by an international comparison with other liberal parties, both in terms of its function in the party system and its ideology.

Chapter II. The FDP's historical legacy - liberal foreign policy before 1974

Since this study proceeds from the assumption that the FDP's foreign policy can at least partly be explained by its liberal heritage, this chapter will attempt to trace the origins and the evolution of liberal foreign policy before 1974. The central question is *how* and *why* the German Liberals' historical-ideological development helps to account for the FDP's strong presence in foreign policy in the first place and, more specifically, for its concentration on the national question and Ostpolitik. This chapter will focus on the following four themes in trying to answer the above question: (1) the evolution of the link between liberalism and nationalism in Germany, (2) the relationship between domestic and foreign policy in liberal ideology, (3) the emergence of two distinct strands of liberalism (and its consequences), and (4) the liberals' changing attitude towards power over time. What follows is an attempt to trace the impact of these four themes on the evolution of German liberalism and its foreign policy from the nineteenth century to contemporary politics.

The link between liberalism and nationalism

Emergence of the link between liberalism and nationalism

Ironically, even though Napoleon introduced the values of the enlightenment to Germany, it was precisely these values which were to put an end to his control over Germany. From Napoleon's perspective, French troops had certainly taught the Germans too much by spreading the thoughts of liberty, equality and fraternity. The phase during which the German liberals remained content with just absorbing the values of the French enlightenment did not last very long. While initially there had been little resistance of the German population against Napoleon, soon the Germans wanted to use the tools of liberty, equality and fraternity for themselves. French foreign rule was a hindrance to their growing determination to control Germany's future alone. Napoleon's occupation and German impotence in face of his war measures led to an increase in national feeling and to the emergence of the political link between national feeling and liberal demands.

Besides foreign occupation, there was a second way in which Napoleon contributed to the rise of nationalism in Germany. One of the positive effects of his regime was that he deprived many small worldly and ecclesiastical potentates of their power which reinforced liberalism in

its fight against absolute authorities. Most liberals assumed that the freedom of the German Volk at home was inseparable from the freedom of the German Volk to define itself as a nation.¹ In other words, from the beginning, liberals have seen an automatic link between domestic and foreign policy. The subjected society of absolutist states should be turned into an independent nation, the authoritative state into a national constitutional state. As Friedrich Henning has said:

"It was of deep and fateful significance that liberalism - resistance by the German bourgeoisie against the absolutism of the 18th century and its demands for political, legal and economic freedom - woke up and became audible in Germany when the Germans were just being threatened by Napoleon's foreign rule, divided and split into many small states, and that the beginnings of liberalism were connected with the fight for national freedom."²

It was at this time directly after the Wars of Liberation when nationalism had a predominantly 'instrumental' character and was mostly seen as a means of reaching other liberal goals. In line with this view, the Southern German liberals welcomed the creation of constitutions after 1815 as an act of nation-building.

However, this subordination of the national element to the goal of creating a liberal constitution for all German states did not prove very durable. From disappointment within the individual states about the growing hesitance of the states to proceed with their constitutional promises - or else like in Prussia to realize their promises at all - grew the conviction that only the nation state would be able to break up the encrusted political and social structures in the individual states. In this situation, it was almost unavoidable that the original pragmatic concept of the nation state as means for liberalization and democratization began to change, and national unity became a goal in itself.³

The liberals first announced their new dual demand for freedom and national unity at the Hambach Festival in May 1832. However, soon after, they were confronted with the divisive effects of their new concept.

¹Sheehan, p.274

²Henning, Liberalismus und Nationalismus, p.13

³Gall, Liberalismus und Nationalstaat, pp.290-291

Now that nationalism was no longer only a means of liberalism but had developed into an objective of its own, the balance between national and liberal demands slowly began to be replaced by priority for one or the other. While the supporters of the liberal Carl von Rotteck advocated "...rather liberty without unity than unity without liberty...", the group around Paul Achatius Pfizer considered the realization of liberal values to be impossible without a united German state and therefore made national unity a priority over freedom in a constitutional state.⁴ The emergence of Pfizer's followers demonstrates that in Germany the appeal of nationalism started to work against other liberal ideas. These tensions had the consequence of fragmenting the previously united liberal party, thereby laying the groundstone for a century of liberal disunity.

The positive and negative legacy of the 1848/49 Revolution

The 1848/49 Revolution has affected the FDP's foreign policy in positive and negative ways, both of which will be considered in this section. On the positive account, the attempted Revolution marked the first pan-German success of political Liberalism. The liberals succeeded in taking over government in most German states, and for the first time, the bourgeoisie governed Germany. However, the Revolution's most important achievement was the creation of a liberal constitution, including a catalogue of Basic Laws. Basic rights had always been a liberal priority and can indeed be regarded as an especially characteristic document of liberal constitutional thinking then and today. As Paul Rothmund has said:

"The catalogue of the Germans' basic rights, first codified in Frankfurt in 1848, taken over by Weimar and now anchored in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, is besides the political parties the only heritage from the first German national Parliament."⁵

Eventually, however, the liberal dream of 1848/49 had to give way to the resurgence of reactionism because of two fundamental liberal weaknesses: disunity and lack of organization. The national assembly in

⁴Sell, pp.124-125; Federici, p.XXI

⁵Rothmund, p.53

the Paulskirche disagreed so strongly that the liberals split into two branches. The left-wing (progressive) liberals wanted people's sovereignty and a democratic constitution now and, if necessary, were willing to use force. The right-wing (national) liberals, in contrast, primarily aimed at unifying all German states, be it at the cost of a democratic parliamentary system, and only planned to act if times were favourable. The development of two distinct strands of German liberalism can thus be dated back to the time of the failed 1848 Revolution.⁶ Besides internal disunity, the liberals also suffered from a lack of organization in 1848/49. Initially, both Vienna and Berlin had promoted the creation of a pan-German constitution and a German nation state, but when the liberals failed to seize this chance by quickly devising a constitution, the opponents of parliamentarism got the upper hand again.

The liberals lost the Revolution but did not give up their thoughts. As this chapter and Chapter Five will seek to show, in the twentieth century, the Free Democrats were to take up both the positive and negative (in the sense of trying to avoid past mistakes) heritage from the Paulskirche Revolution. During the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, however, the opposite was to happen: not only did nationalism increasingly stifle all other 'liberal' values, but the ditch between the two strands of liberalism also grew deeper, eventually resulting in the complete collapse of German liberalism.

The rise of nationalism and the decline of liberalism during the Bismarck era

Considering that, by its very definition, German liberalism had from the outset aimed at fighting conservatism and authoritarianism, the fact that part of the liberals agreed to form an alliance with Bismarck after the failed Revolution of 1848/49 deserves some explanation. To begin with, since the liberals had achieved neither unity nor freedom during the Paulskirche events, they now faced a situation in which only one state was interested in one of the concepts - Prussia in unity without freedom. While the left-wing liberals still claimed that freedom was the precondition for German unity, the right-wing liberals held that in order

⁶Kirchner, Liberal Parties in Western Europe, p.64

to reach unity at last, they had no choice but to seek Prussia's assistance.⁷ Apart from the practical reason of Prussia being the only state interested in one of liberalism's goals, German right-wing liberals also allied themselves with conservative Bismarck for more ideological reasons. The right-wing liberals believed that through their subservience towards Bismarck, they could at least have *some* impact on the domestic construction of the Reich, and they also hoped to exert a taming influence on Prussia's foreign policy.

However, as events were to show, the liberals were incapable of realizing the goals that had made them make a pact with Bismarck. Their belief that they would be able to infiltrate the Prussian constitution with their values turned out to be an unrealistic assessment of Prussian power politics. Far from realizing the liberal conviction that national unification and domestic progress would be inseparably linked, the first pan-German constitution after 1871 proved the opposite: *because* of his foreign policy success, Bismarck had gained the right to reactionary measures domestically, and the German constitution contained no basic laws and very few other democratic rights.

The right-wing liberals' assessment of Bismarck's military politics proved to be equally unrealistic. Instead of Prussia ceasing to be an authoritarian state, the liberals themselves were to stop being 'liberal' by giving up most their previous foreign policy principles. In face of the Prussian army's dramatic victories in 1866 and 1870, the liberals dropped their traditional postulation that the use of military force be limited to the purpose of defence ('as much defence as necessary and as little as possible') and their previous suspicion of standing armies. The national liberals now readily accepted the fact that German unification was based on military victory instead of on the joint efforts for a democratic constitution. At the same time, the achievement of nationhood helped to produce a shift in emphasis from the liberal principle of national self-determination to the defence of national self-interest, which reflected the ever-increasing influence of conservative views on liberalism. Although the right-wing liberals had counted on Bismarck's

⁷Gall, Liberalismus und Nationalstaat, p.294 Note that the left-wing liberals now pleaded for a 'großdeutsch' solution, whereby Germany would become part of the Austrian Empire, while the right-wing liberals called for Germany to join Prussia ('kleindeutsch' solution).

use of force to achieve national unity, they had not expected that nationalism would overtake the importance of liberal values so much.⁸

A look at the left-wing liberals at the time of the Reichs foundation shows that, in contrast to the national liberals, they consistently refused to sacrifice liberal constitutional values for German unity. In 1861, part of the left-wing liberals founded the Progressive Party, which quickly succeeded in creating a political reservoir for almost all political liberalism in the country. Domestically, the Progressives demanded further development of the parliamentary legal and constitutional state, and in terms of foreign policy, they opposed Prussian militarism and colonial adventures. Even though the Progressive liberals thus nobly stuck to their principles, they did not have any power to exert them.

When Bismarck was dismissed by William II in 1890, he left the German liberals in a more or less crushed condition. Not only had the national liberals given up most of their previous ideology, but liberalism had also never been as disunited and consequently as weak as at the end of the Bismarck era. The next section will show that neither the progressive liberals' return to power nor greater foreign policy agreement between the two liberal wings was able to prevent the complete collapse of liberalism by 1914.

The Wilhelmine Age 1890-1914

After Bismarck's dismissal, initially the situation did not improve very much for the liberals until 1907, when the left-wing liberals entered a governing coalition with the national liberals and the conservatives for the first time in their history. However, even the joint participation of both liberal strands in power did not enhance their impact on German politics. Although the liberals held a two-thirds majority in the coalition, the conservatives had much more influence through their social ties with the military, the Court and government officers.⁹ The highly undemocratic way in which Germany decided to enter the First World

⁸Sell, p.235; Gall, *Liberalismus und auswärtige Politik*, p.39; Ullrich, p.378 In contrast to Germany, Italy - which was the other European country to complete its nation state very late - had managed to combine the creation of a nation state with a remarkably advanced constitution for the Europe of 1861.

⁹Sell, p.330 The Bülow coalition between the conservatives and the two liberal wings lasted from 1907 until 1909.

War best demonstrates the German liberals' failure to create a true parliamentary democracy before 1914. Despite a left-wing majority in the Reichstag since 1912, the Emperor and the right-wing started World War I without extensive consultation of Parliament's opinions and without any major objections on its behalf.

The two liberal wings' growing agreement on foreign policy after Bismarck's departure did not foster the liberal cause either. By the turn of the century, nationalism had become such a dominant element of the 'Zeitgeist' that not only right-wing but also left-wing liberalism had caught on to it. Given the right-wing liberals' affiliation with the goals of military preparedness and colonial expansion since Bismarck's time, it was not much of a surprise that the national liberals now promoted imperialism, annexations and national grandeur. More significantly, however, imperialism had also won over left-wing liberalism by the 1900s. After a generational change in leadership, the progressive liberals caught on to the 'mood of the time' and started to follow the widespread opinions of the bourgeoisie in favour of power politics and Germany's world importance. Since liberal ideology - apart from the national aspect - was largely incompatible with imperialism, many values had been sacrificed on the altar of nationalism, such as the principle of self-determination for all peoples and the traditional liberal aversion against expansionism.

In this situation, almost all liberals initially supported the outbreak of World War I. They saw it as a possibility to assert Germany's powerful international position and were as convinced as the conservatives that the cause of the war lay in the aggression of the Czar regime controlled by pan-Slavism, in England's envy of German economic strength and in the unjustified French claims to Alsace-Lorraine.¹⁰ As has been shown, liberalism's alliance with nationalism had meant the end for most of liberal ideology. Instead of proving a factor in Germany's increasing political liberalization, nationalism had only brought about greater conservatism, both at home and abroad, and eventually, the vast majority of liberals had been captured by the 'Zeitgeist' of militarism and expansionism. Thus, while disagreement over nationalism had split the German liberals since the 1848/49 Revolution, even when both wings of liberalism promoted nationalistic

¹⁰Stephan, p.97

objectives at the turn of the century, nationalism did not prove a good guide to political action.

Four years of war experience helped to produce certain shifts in liberal foreign policy values back towards more original convictions, however. The 1917 parliamentary alliance of Progressive Liberals, the Centre Party and the Social Democrats in the Reichstag provided the institutional foundation for such a value reorientation. In July 1917, their coalition formulated a Peace Resolution which emphasized the readiness for peace and renunciation of annexationism. Even though the Peace Resolution's concrete impact was very limited, its significance lies in the - be it still purely theoretical - resurgence of liberal foreign policy ideology after the First World War.

Nationalism and the collapse of the Weimar Republic

Much of liberal foreign policy during the Weimar Republic roots in liberal ideological traditions but there was some reweighting of policy priorities, reflecting both positive and negative past experiences. As overall trend, the liberals' rather fervent nationalism of the last forty or so years now took on a slightly more moderate character in favour of other liberal foreign policy principles, such as the belief that foreign policy could best be conducted on the basis of negotiations, compromise and acknowledging one's opponents' interests.

For some time after World War I, it looked as though the liberals were for once able to combine their two main goals of national unity and internal freedom. Due to their negative experience with nationalism in the past, many liberals now wanted to "...make up for that which had been missed in 1848..." and create a parliamentary democracy.¹¹ As an important first step, they re-founded the Progressive liberal party, which had traditionally strongly promoted a democratic constitution, under the name of German Democratic Party (DDP). Most architects of the constitution were members of the DDP, and as a result, the Weimar constitution of August 1919 contained Basic Rights and finally removed the Prussian three-class voting system in favour of general, equal and secret elections.

¹¹Dehler, p.223

While the liberals now attached more importance to the values of parliamentary democracy than in the nineteenth century, they still did not manage to cope with their past problem of internal disunity. Tragically, in 1918, the liberals again failed to create one strong united party and in this way effectively to implement their ideas. Instead, as mentioned above, the left-liberals founded the DDP, and the national liberals now formed the German People's Party (DVP). Despite such continued organizational disunity, the liberals benefited from the fact that three Foreign Ministers during the Weimar Republic were liberals. Each of these three Foreign Ministers - Walther Rathenau (DDP), Gustav Stresemann (DVP) and Julius Curtius (DVP) - roughly represented one of the three liberal approaches to foreign policy after World War I. How this manifested itself and how it affected German foreign policy during the Weimar Republic will be examined next.

Walther Rathenau, Foreign Minister from February - June 1922, represented the DDP's dual heritage of the 1848 tradition on the one hand and the moderate annexationism of the Progressive Party on the other hand. In terms of concrete politics and in comparison with the DVP, this manifested itself in a relatively weaker nationalistic orientation and a relatively greater conviction that a policy of fulfilment was the appropriate reaction to the Versailles Treaty. For instance, Rathenau firmly advocated a policy of fulfilment concerning Germany's reparations. Of all liberal strands during the Weimar Republic, the DDP's left-wing most strongly believed in pacifism and internationalism for reasons of principle and was convinced that a policy of fulfilment was appropriate on moral grounds.

Nevertheless, the DDP also demonstrated liberalism's traditionally ambiguous attitude towards the issues of nationhood and self-determination. On the one hand, the German Democratic Party claimed that self-determination was a general liberal principle, and used this claim to justify its plea for Austria's annexation (1848 tradition) and for promoting German interests in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the DDP showed no desire to extend the right of self-determination to other parts of the world, and also failed to consider that an alliance between Germany and Austria might lead to German hegemony in Europe and would therefore not be acceptable to other European powers.¹²

¹²Frye, p.133

At any rate, the majority of liberals during the Weimar Republic adhered not to Rathenau's but to Gustav Stresemann's (Foreign Minister between 1923 and 1929) foreign policy concept. While Stresemann employed the same liberal *means* as the group around Rathenau - a policy of fulfilment -, in reality he pursued the much more nationalistic goals of revising the Versailles treaty and restoring Germany's previous power position. Stresemann always remained convinced, however, that his objectives could better be reached by cooperation with the Allies than by openly challenging them.

Under Stresemann, the policy of fulfilment consequently became 'national Realpolitik.' Most of Stresemann's actions, such as ending the passive Ruhr resistance (thereby ensuring the Ruhr area would remain part of Germany), his support for the 1923 Dawes Plan and the 1929 Young Plan (which regulated the issue of Germany's reparations to the Allies), the Locarno Treaty of 1925 (which, based on mutual renunciation of force, served French security interests and started a decade of European cooperation) and Germany's entry into the League of Nations in 1926 should be viewed as a combination of 'liberal' politics and 'realpolitical' objectives. When the Foreign Minister died in 1929, Germany's international standing had improved greatly compared to 1918, mostly thanks to his negotiation tactics.

While Stresemann enjoyed strong support from both liberal wings, one faction of his own party also strictly opposed his policy of fulfilment on the grounds that Stresemann was selling out Germany's interests. Germany's last liberal Foreign Minister from 1929 to 1931, Julius Curtius, represented this right wing of the DVP which pursued almost purely national goals and strongly resisted a policy of rapprochement with the Allies. When Julius Curtius took over the Foreign Ministry in 1929, the DVP gained much more control over German foreign policy, which contributed to liberalism's slow erosion in the face of National Socialism.

Thus, in order to explain why only fifteen years after the end of World War I, Germany found itself governed by a totalitarian National Socialist government despite liberalism's promising start at the outset of the Weimar Republic - with a liberal constitution and three liberal Foreign Ministers in office - it is important to recall that in the end, two problematic characteristics of liberalism had reasserted themselves. The liberals' ongoing organizational disunity rendered them unable effectively

to resist National Socialism, and in terms of the traditional link between liberalism and nationalism, the latter had once more proved the stronger force. As Theodor Heuss has explained this true calamity of the Weimar Republic:

"...The development ... of democracy was accompanied by the atmosphere of nationalistic romanticism...These aspects were much more decisive for the functioning of the Weimar Constitution than...its legal paragraphs."¹³

From about 1929 onwards, many supporters of the two liberal parties thus defected to more right-wing and conservative groupings. By the time of the last free elections in March 1933, the situation had deteriorated so much that all the remaining five liberal members of the Reichstag voted for Hitler's Enabling Act even though two of them, Theodor Heuss and Hermann Dietrich, held reservations. With the Enabling Act, the last bits of democracy and parliamentarism were removed legally, and the new regime's definition of nationalism, i.e. extending the German 'Lebensraum' to the East, also drastically differed from the Liberals' national concept. Liberalism was banished by the Nazis, although in contrast to Marxism and Clericalism, Hitler did not perceive the Liberal movement as dangerous.¹⁴ The Liberals' only room for manoeuvre during the Third Reich was to meet secretly in small circles or to emigrate. Needless to say, the Liberals were in no position to prevent the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

Heritage reconsidered - liberal foreign policy after World War II

Organizational disunity finally overcome

This section will examine how liberal traditions have positively and negatively influenced the FDP's foreign policy after World War II by first taking a look at how Liberalism re-emerged in 1945 despite its

¹³Heuss cited in Bracher, p.14

¹⁴Stephan, pp.126-127

miserable condition before the war. One characteristic of post-World War II Liberalism was the continuity of personnel from the Weimar Republic, with Theodor Heuss, Reinhold Maier and Wilhelm Külz all having formerly worked for the DDP.¹⁵ A second factor of continuity was Liberalism's re-emergence along the lines of varying regional traditions, a development which was reinforced by the new fact of Germany's division into four occupation zones.

While Heuss and Maier continued the DDP's left-wing liberal traditions in the German Southwest (US and French occupation zones), national liberalism was resurgent in the DVP's tradition in the traditional strongholds, Hesse and North-Rhine-Westphalia (now the British occupation zone). The new national right consciously contrasted itself with Socialism and located itself to the right of the Christian Democrats. In the Soviet occupation zone, Wilhelm Külz founded the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (LDPD).

For a short time, the Liberals even succeeded in uniting all regional strands in a pan-German liberal party (Democratic Party of Germany), which was created in 1947 in Rothenburg and chaired by Theodor Heuss and Wilhelm Külz. Only one year later, however, after the East German Liberals' participation in the Communist party congress, the Western liberals decided that the LDPD's attitudes on freedom and democracy were too different. As a consequence, the pan-German Liberal Party broke down in all four zones, and a number of LDPD members changed over to the West German Liberals. This has been to the FDP's advantage, since these East German liberals - above all Hans-Dietrich Genscher - have cared about reunification especially strongly.¹⁶

In December 1948, the Free Democratic Party was founded in Heppenheim with the motto "unity in freedom."¹⁷ Even though regional differences persisted within the FDP, the main historical importance of Heppenheim lies in the fact that exactly one hundred years after the splintering of German Liberalism in 1848, the two competing liberal

¹⁵Külz had become Minister of the Interior in 1926, and Heuss had been a DDP Reichstag deputy.

¹⁶Stephan, p.137

¹⁷Heppenheim was chosen as location for refounding the liberal party because already a hundred years ago, in 1847, a prerevolutionary meeting of liberal and democratic personalities had taken place there. Theodor Heuss became the first FDP Chairman.

wings were again united in *one* party, the FDP. Such organizational discontinuities did not imply discontinuity of liberal foreign policy ideology, however, as we shall see next.

Link between domestic and foreign policy continues

Just as after World War I, in 1945, many Liberals initially believed that they could achieve both a democratic constitution and national unity for Germany. However, by 1947/48, most Liberals had realized that the growing East-West tension and Germany's impotence no longer allowed them to pursue democracy, freedom and unity simultaneously. In this situation, the vast majority of Liberals broke with the national-liberal tradition and decided that domestic freedom mattered more than national unity. During the summer of 1948, five Liberals were voted into the Parliamentary Council, whose task it was to create a Basic Law for all Germans. These Liberals, including Thomas Dehler, Theodor Heuss and Helmut Schäfer, decisively contributed to the construction of the Basic Law which was passed on 8 April 1949.¹⁸

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the Free Democrats saw the creation of a West German state and a German constitution as an end to the option of reunification. Instead, most Liberals kept emphasizing the Federal Republic's provisional character and considered West Germany as vicarious state for an "indivisible Germany."¹⁹ How the national thought continued to affect liberal foreign policy after the end of World War II will be examined in the next section.

Link between nationalism and liberal foreign policy continues

Even after the total perversion of national thinking by National Socialism, the nation remained a decisive factor in the Liberals' political thinking because nationalism during the Third Reich had nothing to do

¹⁸Kaack, *Die FDP. Grundriß und Materialien*, pp.13-14 Overall, the Parliamentary Council had sixty-five members. The Free Democrats played a mediating role in the Parliamentary Council, foreshadowing their later role as 'third force' in the German party system. The distribution of mandates in the Council, with the FDP holding 5 and the CDU/SPD 27 mandates each, meant that in case of controversy, both the SPD and the CDU had to try to win the FDP over to their side.

¹⁹Ott, p.103; Padtberg, p.31

with their concept of 'liberal nationalism.' Typically, Heuss, Maier and Dehler thought it necessary for the German people to acknowledge their guilt of Hitler's regime and to devote much attention to "...the most difficult task which we all face to build a new national feeling which foregoes cheap language and (will) lead to the real values."²⁰ In addition to their efforts morally to restore the German nation, most Liberals also attempted to prevent Germany's division by avoiding to opt for either the West or the East immediately after World War II. Only by 1947/48, when Germany's division had virtually become a reality after the United States' and Great Britain's fusion of their two occupation zones in a clearly anti-Soviet move, did the Liberals change their attitude and adjourned the pan-German option.

Nevertheless, the continued liberal interest in national issues clearly manifested itself during the first West German government, a coalition between the Christian Democrats under Konrad Adenauer and the Free Democrats. Although the Liberals and the Conservatives were united in their fear of Communism and in their desire to promote both West-integration and reunification, in two important ways, the Free Democrats pursued a distinctive approach: (1) on several occasions, the FDP asserted its views on the national question against the Christian Democrats, and (2) a few Free Democrats developed progressive theories about Ostpolitik that were later to determine liberal foreign policy. In a pattern that was to repeat itself several times between 1949 and 1974, most Free Democrats initially rejected their avantgarde members' suggestions, but eventually incorporated them into Liberal programmes and actions.

Although the CDU and the FDP agreed on the need to promote both West-integration and reunification, they differed on the order of priority for their objectives. For Adenauer's CDU, West-integration was the number one priority, followed by reunification, while the Free Democrats - in line with their liberal heritage - were mostly concerned with the prospects for reunification.²¹ At the root of these different priorities lay the parties' different perceptions of Germany's position on the continent of Europe: Adenauer regarded Germany as part of the

²⁰Theodor Heuss in a speech before the Free University of Berlin, in Casdorff, p.196

²¹Note that the FDP even initially opposed the Federal Republic's entry into the EEC, partly on the grounds that such an integrationist move would harm the prospects for German reunification. See Zundel, p.54, pp.60-61

Western world, while the Free Democrats saw Germany's position as that of a Middle European power, a view which was also represented by Hans-Dietrich Genscher in later years.

In terms of concrete politics, the Free Democrats' preoccupation with reunification manifested itself firstly in their concern with Berlin as the future capital of a reunified Germany. Hans Reif, the FDP's Bundestag deputy from Berlin, constantly strove for consolidating the ties between West Berlin and Bonn and actually achieved West Berlin's integration into the Federal Republic's financial system. Secondly, the Free Democrats asserted their national values during the Saar conflict in 1955, which arose over Adenauer's plan to integrate the Saarland into Western Europe.²² The Free Democrats blocked Adenauer's plans and instead called for a referendum in the Saar area, which proved that the majority of the population wanted to remain part of Germany. Thirdly, the FDP achieved the removal of the so-called 'linking-clause' from the German Treaty which provided for an automatic link of a reunified Germany with the Western European alliances. According to the Liberals, the Federal Republic was only a provisional government and must not decide for all of Germany before reunification had even taken place.²³

Furthermore, although during the early years of the Federal Republic, most Free Democrats shared the CDU's view that the Soviet Union needed to be contained by a policy of strength, in 1952, the Liberal Karl Pfeleiderer introduced an avantgarde plan that was soon to become the basis of the FDP's foreign policy. Instead of the need to counter and eliminate the Soviet threat in order to end Germany's division, Pfeleiderer argued that only if the West took Moscow's economic and military interests into account would there eventually be a chance for reunification.²⁴ Similarly, instead of making progress on reunification into a prerequisite for East-West rapprochement, Pfeleiderer urgently pleaded for an active German Ostpolitik (i.e. assumption of negotiations with the Communist states) on the grounds that detente was a prerequisite

²²Dittberner, p.36

²³Zundel, p.55 Note that - in contrast to their earlier position, during the actual process of unification in 1989-90, the Free Democrats strongly emphasized that united Germany would remain firmly committed to the Western alliances.

²⁴Zundel, p.57; Glatzeder, pp.64-65

for reunification. In contrast to the Hallstein Doctrine, Pfleiderer also called for the assumption of human contacts between the two Germanies as a basis for reunification.²⁵

Although the FDP's initial reaction to Pfleiderer's suggestions had been reluctant, during their time in opposition from 1956 until 1961, the Liberals embarked on a process of re-orientation and increasingly united behind Pfleiderer's suggestions. While the FDP's Berlin programme of 1957 still postulated reunification as an overriding priority, the Free Democrats now also argued that Germany's relations with Eastern Europe should be regulated "...in a peaceful manner," and in their 1961 election programme four years later, the Liberals argued that the West German government should "...serve detente between East and West by assuming diplomatic relations with the Eastern bloc..."²⁶ Furthermore, the FDP concretized its previous call for human contacts with East Germany and began to advocate a 'policy of small steps,' geared towards the slow improvement of inner-German relations.

Despite the Free Democrats' return to government in 1961, the construction of the Berlin wall in August 1961 proved the failure of both the CDU's and the FDP's Ostpolitik and started another process of rethinking within the Free Democratic Party. Once again, the FDP's re-orientation in Ostpolitik was based on suggestions by an innovative party member. In face of the escalating Cold War, Wolfgang Schollwer, adviser for pan-German questions, had already argued in 1962 that the Federal Republic should *postpone* the goal of reunification and for the time being focus on the improvement of East-West relations. This should be done by preliminarily respecting East Germany's sovereignty, dropping the Hallstein Doctrine and acknowledging the Eastern European borders.²⁷ In 1967, Schollwer expanded his earlier suggestions and argued that the FDP should replace its traditional top foreign policy priority of reunification by striving for a permanent pan-European peace

²⁵The Hallstein Doctrine of 1955 stated that West Germany would break diplomatic relations with any third state (except for the Soviet Union) that recognized the German Democratic Republic.

²⁶Juling, Programmatische Entwicklung der FDP, pp.153-154, p.163

²⁷Glatzeder, p.104

order, which would be the only way of "overcoming Europe's and with it Germany's division..."²⁸

Similarly to the Pfleiderer Plan, most Liberals only seriously considered Schollwer's concepts during another period in opposition, that is between 1966 and 1969, when the Federal Republic was governed by a grand coalition of Christian- and Social Democrats. While the national liberals (most notably Erich Mende, at that time FDP Chairman) continued to regard reunification as a first priority, the progressive wing in the FDP - represented by Walter Scheel, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Wolfgang Mischnick and Hildegard Hamm-Brücher - now began to advocate an Ostpolitik based on acceptance of the status quo. The progressive liberals' say in foreign policy greatly increased after Scheel's election as the new FDP Chairman in 1968, and at their party congress in Nürnberg in June 1969, the Free Democrats officially dropped the Hallstein Doctrine and incorporated their new efforts for a pan-European peace order, based on the mutual renunciation of force and preliminary recognition of the status quo, into their election programme.²⁹

Although the Free Democrats ultimately continued to opt for reunification, the FDP's election programme of 1969 nevertheless marked an important change, firstly because it replaced the FDP's previous main priority of reunification with the goal of a pan-European peace order, and secondly because it introduced the notion that Germany's division could and should only be overcome together with Europe's division. As we shall see, this 'Europeanization' of the German question has remained a central element in the FDP's foreign-policy making ever since. However, it was also of immediate importance in 1969, as it paved the path for the first Social-Liberal coalition in the Federal Republic's history.

In 1969, the Social-Liberal coalition with Willy Brandt as Chancellor and Walter Scheel as Foreign Minister was formed and immediately began to implement the new Ostpolitik. Based on the

²⁸Schollwer in Benz, pp.208ff. Note that in the same year Hans-Dieter Jaene, FDP deputy from Berlin, drafted a General Treaty for the regulation of inner-German relations which was based on full recognition of the German Democratic Republic as normal negotiation partner. Baring, p.227

²⁹The FDP's 1969 programme postulated: "...The divisions in Europe must be overcome by a European peace order, in which both East and West participate. Such a European peace order must not fail due...to territorial questions." Jüling, Programmatische Entwicklung der FDP, p.208

principles which had evolved during the previous decade, (1) renunciation of force and (2) de facto (but not de iure) recognition of the status quo and the borders in Eastern Europe, the Brandt/Scheel government now 'normalized' relations with Eastern Europe in a series of treaties. Since the Federal Republic realized that the Soviet Union was the key to relations with Eastern Europe and to an improvement of the inner-German climate, Bonn first signed a 'normalization' treaty with Moscow in August 1970, followed by the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin in September 1971 and the Basic Treaty on inner-German relations in December 1972.³⁰

While the Brandt/Scheel government theoretically held on to reunification as a long-term objective, in terms of practical politics, the Social-Liberal coalition focused on a policy of small steps in order to ease the human problems resulting from division and to keep the way open for German reunification in a future European peace settlement. In line with the FDP's traditional focus on the national question, Foreign Minister Scheel attached great priority to keeping the option of reunification open in the Ostpolitik treaties. In tedious negotiations with the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrej Gromyko, Scheel achieved that on the same day as signing the Moscow Treaty, the federal government sent a 'Letter regarding German Unification' to the Soviet Union. The letter stated that the Moscow Treaty did not conflict with Bonn's "political objective" to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German nation could regain its unity in "free self-determination."³¹

Overall, the Brandt/Scheel period had been dramatic and fast-moving, and together with the Social Democrats, the Liberals - and most notably their first Foreign Minister Walter Scheel - , had been able to implement most of the new concepts which the Free Democrats had developed during the 1950s and 1960s.

³⁰Treaties normalizing relations with Poland (December 1970), Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary (December 1973) were also signed under the Brandt/Scheel government.

³¹Bark/Gress, p.183; Baring, pp.339-344 Note, however, that the letter was not legally binding.

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has found that certain characteristics of and dilemmas inherent in German liberalism have greatly affected the German Liberals throughout their history and the Free Democrats since 1948. On the one hand, a look at the Liberals' contribution to the German constitutions in 1848/49 (Paulskirche), 1919 (Weimar) and 1948/49 (Basic Law) has shown the strong impact of the historical liberal conviction that a state's internal and external freedom are inseparably linked, in other words that only a democratic state can conduct a 'liberal' foreign policy.

On the other hand, we have also seen that in practice, the Liberals' dual objectives of a democratic constitution and national unification have not been complementary, but mutually exclusive instead. This incompatibility has in return forced the Liberals to attach priority to one or the other goal all throughout their history, with most of them concentrating on national liberalism. Such a need to set priorities had two equally weakening effects on Liberalism: firstly, it resulted in a chronic disunity of the liberal movement which rendered it incapable of making any strong impact on German politics. Furthermore, the Liberals - independently of whether they chose national liberal or democratic liberal values as priority - ended up sacrificing some liberal principles in any case and thus rendered the liberal movement fairly implausible.

This chapter has also traced Liberalism's traditionally ambiguous attitude towards power: for one thing, the Liberals have inherently mistrusted authoritarianism which resulted in their organizational weakness and in their failure determinedly to use certain situations to implement their goals, such as the 1848/49 Revolution or the 1907-1909 Conservative-Liberal coalition. For another thing, while the Liberals were aware that on their own they were too weak to effect anything and thus had to ally themselves with more influential forces, they tended to choose Conservative powers, which both under Bismarck and towards the end of the Weimar Republic eventually resulted in a complete collapse of Liberalism.

Most importantly, this chapter has sought to show how these historic liberal dilemmas have significantly affected the FDP's foreign policy making since 1948. Like their predecessors, FDP members have not only simultaneously aimed at internal freedom and national unity, but

have also been confronted with the need to choose between democracy and nation. However, in contrast to their liberal fathers, the Free Democrats have clearly favoured a free democratic Germany over a united, yet undemocratic country (at least until their options changed in 1989). Furthermore, from the 1960s onwards, the FDP increasingly recalled Stresemann's concept of embedding Germany's national interest in a wider European context, thereby 'internationalizing' the German question.

On the one hand, the Free Democrats have thus *continued* their predecessors' focus on democratic values and national unification, if in a substantially modified manner. On the other hand, the FDP has made concerted efforts to *discontinue* other aspects of its liberal heritage: (1) a look at the FDP's record of government participation since 1949 clearly demonstrates that the Liberals have overcome their traditionally ambiguous attitude towards power and (2), since the end of World War II, the Free Democrats have successfully avoided the Liberals' historical division into two strands, albeit at times at the cost of programmatic distinctiveness.

Chapter III. The Social-Liberal coalition 1974-82: the international framework

Compared to the rapid progress in Ostpolitik during the era Brandt/Scheel, the international situation which Chancellor Schmidt and Foreign Minister Genscher faced upon their assumption of power in May 1974 was much less conducive to the Federal Republic's Ostpolitik.¹ Since relations with Eastern Europe had already been 'normalized' with the help of the Ostpolitik treaties, the new Schmidt/Genscher government's task was to apply and consolidate the treaties of the era before. However, by 1974, it had become apparent that this task would not be an easy one, given the growing controversies over the implementation of the Ostpolitik treaties and the process of disillusionment in detente on the American and Soviet sides which had by then started to emerge. Furthermore, Bonn's chances for progress in Ostpolitik were constrained by the world economic crisis, which urgently required the federal government's attention.²

In the face of such intense external constraints on German foreign policy makers, this study's analysis of the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy between 1974 and 1982 will first focus on the international framework within which the Liberals' Ostpolitik was formulated and implemented during the Social-Liberal coalition. It should be stressed, however, that since international circumstances tended to affect West Germany as a whole and not only individual parties, there will only be special reference to the Free Democratic Party when international developments specifically affected it, or when the FDP's Ostpolitik in return had an impact on the development of international relations.

Firstly, this chapter will examine to what degree the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in foreign policy between 1974 and 1982 was determined by the overall condition of superpower relations and by the respective aspirations of the leadership in the Kremlin and the White House. It will also investigate how far Bonn's efforts for progress in inner-German relations were compatible with Soviet security interests and the overall East-West climate. Furthermore, we shall examine the effect on the FDP's Ostpolitik of West Germany's dependence on (1) the NATO security guarantee and on (2) the Western Allies' and Moscow's

¹During the Brandt/Scheel government, Helmut Schmidt had successively held the posts of Minister of Defence, Economics and Finance, and Hans-Dietrich Genscher had been Minister of the Interior.

²Pittman, p.11

cooperation for a solution to the German national question and the Berlin controversies.

Apart from the constraints on the FDP's Ostpolitik, this chapter will also address the question whether the Free Democrats themselves were able to exert some influence on East-West relations during the 1970s and early 1980s. In the course of this chapter, the impact of the above factors will be investigated by looking at the central areas of Germany's relations with Eastern Europe between 1974 and 1982: economic relations, Berlin controversies, national and humanitarian issues and the INF debate.

Economic relations

German-Soviet trade

After the Brandt/Scheel era, when normalization of East-West relations had been reached, the only field where both the Communist states and West Germany truly wanted to progress was economic cooperation, although for very different motives. The Eastern European states mostly cared about the economic advantages of trade with the Federal Republic since they needed Western economic help to overcome their backwardness in economy and technology. While during the 1960s and early 1970s, Bonn had also still seen the main benefit in trading with Moscow in the economic realm, and even though West Germany continued economically to benefit from Osthandel after 1974, over the years, Bonn's emphasis shifted to using German economic power to elicit Soviet *political* concessions, in other words to the use of 'positive economic leverage.'³

Although positive economic leverage was not exclusively employed by the Free Democrats, it will be considered here because it was a central aspect of German Ostpolitik during the Social-Liberal coalition. As this section will show, the Federal Republic's reliance on economic levers for its 'linkage' strategy towards Moscow was rather successful because it complemented well with the Soviets' use of positive political leverage in order to gain economic concessions from Bonn. Both sides approved of

³Stent, p.215

the 'material foundation' of Ostpolitik and benefited from the fact that the structures of the Eastern European and the German economies were complementary.⁴

The first big economic project between the Kremlin and the Federal Republic, concluded during Schmidt's and Genscher's visit to Moscow from 28-31 October 1974, had already demonstrated the negotiating partners' contrary priorities concerning economic cooperation. The project provided for the Germans to build a nuclear power plant at Kaliningrad from which the Soviet Union was to supply West Germany and West Berlin with electrical current. Moscow strongly supported the deal, not only because Kaliningrad would be the largest power plant to be built in the USSR ever, but also because the Kremlin would get the most modern technical know-how. German industry, on the other hand, hoped for a diversification of raw material and energy provision and for an increase in the employment rate. Apart from such economic interests, Bonn attached greatest importance to the political prospect that West Berlin would be included in the agreement. As Schmidt said: "...it would downright be a matter of political sex-appeal if we could this way combine the Soviet and the West-European systems via Berlin."⁵

From the very beginning, the project ran into several problems, however, demonstrating the limits of economic freedom in East-West trade due to political constraints. To begin with, the Free Democrats had to contend with some domestic political opposition to the Kaliningrad project, fearing the prospect of West German dependence on Moscow and East Berlin for energy provision and a possible sell-out of German know-how to the Soviet Union.⁶ In addition to such domestic reservations, there were some potential international hindrances to the project. The United States and Great Britain were delaying the necessary unanimous 'yes' vote in the Cocom export control of strategically important goods, giving a

⁴While West Germany exported finished manufactured goods such as machinery and chemical products, the Soviet Union exported raw material and semi-finished goods.

⁵Soviet television, 26.10.74, Interview with H.Schmidt, translation in Bull.126, 29.10.74

⁶Die Zeit, 14.3.75 The federal government tried to soothe such domestic-political reservations by pointing out that only 3% of German energy provision would stem from Kaliningrad, and that by the early 1980s, when the project was expected to be finished, the exported technology would no longer be so up-to date.

number of factual reasons but in reality objecting to such a big German-Soviet deal. Even though in the end a negative Cocom vote was not really expected, the FDP nevertheless had to deal with its Allies' opposition to an important economic agreement.

The Kaliningrad project was furthermore bound for stagnation because East Germany tried to change the part of the agreement that Bonn most strongly cared about. Instead of directly linking West Berlin and the Federal Republic by energy tracks that would allow West Germany to solve West Berlin's energy problems in case of an emergency, East Berlin wanted to provide West Berlin's energy from an East German plant, thereby depriving Bonn of any control over the situation while benefiting from the transfer of technical know-how. In the end, Moscow decided that the loss of the power plant was less harmful than incurring East Germany's anger over the political implications of the project for West Berlin.⁷ Consequently, the Kaliningrad negotiations were adjourned by 1976.

By the time of Brezhnev's visit to Bonn from 4-7 May 1978, the Schmidt/Genscher government's priorities in Ostpolitik (Osthandel) had shifted even more to the political aspects of economic cooperation than previously. Despite little progress in other areas, Soviet press expectations about some positive economic progress during Brezhnev's stay were fulfilled on 6 May 1978 when West Germany and the Soviet Union concluded a long-term agreement on economic and industrial cooperation.⁸ Although the accord had little direct economic benefit, it was praised by the German politicians precisely for its political benefits, reflecting a change of government reasoning. Bonn now argued that even if the agreements were not very beneficial economically, their positive political effects clearly outweighed the economic disadvantages of German-Soviet trade.

When Brezhnev next visited Bonn from 22-25 November 1981, detente policy had entered into a severe crisis and the federal

⁷Stent, p.230 Stent has pointed out that the USSR here refrained from simply imposing its will on the GDR because it had alternative sources of energy, and that, in the Kremlin's calculation of assets and liabilities, the potential economic gains from the Kaliningrad project were less important than preventing a confrontation with East Germany.

⁸The agreement, meant to run for the unusually long period of 25 years, provided for intensification of economic cooperation between Bonn and Moscow, such as joint development and production, and included West Berlin.

government's approach to Ostpolitik (Osthandel) into a third phase. Despite the difficult international situation, the Free Democrats still considered trade with the Soviet Union an important element of stability and detente in Europe and did not want current international tensions to affect Bonn's bilateral relations with the Communist states. By the time of this third phase of Osthandel, its economic strength had become such an important part of the Federal Republic's foreign policy that Bonn concluded a gas-pipeline deal with Moscow during Brezhnev's 1981 visit, even though the United States had just announced an embargo on high technology exports to the Communist bloc. Bonn's aversion to utilizing negative economic leverage against the Soviet Union clearly demonstrated that by the end of the Social-Liberal coalition, the Federal Republic had developed its own trade policy towards Eastern Europe and no longer accepted US definitions of what was permissible in this area.⁹

Economic relations with Moscow's satellites

Although German-Soviet trade grew considerably in the 1970s and Bonn became Moscow's most important Western trading partner, the Schmidt/Genscher government also tried to develop its economic relations with the other Communist countries. Following Brandt/Scheel's agreement on economic, industrial and technical cooperation with Rumania in 1973, Schmidt and Genscher signed similar bilateral agreements with Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria between November 1974 and May 1975. An additional factor in West Germany's economic cooperation with the Eastern European states was the constant competition between Moscow and its Warsaw Pact satellites for the better economic relations with Bonn. Considering purely economic factors, the federal government most successfully cooperated with Budapest due to Hungary's liberal laws for foreign capital shareholds, and more than half of all German industrial cooperation agreements with the Communist bloc were realized in Hungary.¹⁰

However, taking political factors into account as well, Poland, not Hungary, became Bonn's second most important Eastern European trading partner during the Social-Liberal coalition. Naturally, Poland

⁹Stent, p.238

¹⁰Link, p.306

also had to contend with its Communist partners for economic relations with Germany but this did not stop the Polish Head of State Edward Gierek and Chancellor Schmidt from concluding several German-Polish accords in 1975. These agreements provided for the biggest West German credit ever given to an Eastern bloc country in return for Warsaw's commitment to let 125.000 ethnic Germans emigrate from Poland. The Federal Republic's increasingly independent use of positive economic leverage was once again apparent during the summer of 1980, when Bonn gave a credit of DM 1.2 billion to Poland despite the Afghanistan crisis and US economic sanctions against the Warsaw Pact states.

Inner-German trade

In a parallel manner to Bonn's overall economic relations with the Eastern bloc, the FDP's chances for progress in inner-German trade were affected by the contrasting East- and West German motives. The German Democratic Republic's main interest in inner-German trade lay in the acquisition of Western technology and production goods, and as with all other Warsaw Pact states, inner-German trade affected the GDR's economy more strongly than the Federal Republic's in terms of its relative commercial importance. While West Germany was also concerned with the economic aspects of inner-German trade, i.e. the opportunities it provided for the export industry, the Free Democrats attached at least equally great importance to increasing the contact between West- and East German citizens.

After entering into office, Schmidt and Genscher soon demonstrated that the political implications of inner-German economic cooperation greatly mattered to Bonn by stating two preconditions for resuming inner-German trade that were much more political than economic. Firstly, the federal government demanded that the German Democratic Republic reverse its November 1973 doubling of the compulsory currency exchange requirement for West Germans and West Berliners travelling into East Germany, which had resulted in a rapid decrease of inner-German traffic.¹¹ Since East Berlin was also interested

¹¹Schmidt, DB, 135th sess., 11.12.74, government declaration; Plock, The Basic Treaty, p.113

in continuing good economic relations with West Germany, it announced in October 1974 that the exchange rate increase of 1973 would be reduced by two-thirds, and a couple of months later, the GDR fulfilled Bonn's second precondition for resuming inner-German trade by officially exempting pensioners from the compulsory exchange rate.

Although East Germany had not completely restored the 'status quo ante' in terms of the minimum compulsory exchange rate, the measure's entry into force in November 1974 preceded agreement on a number of issues between Bonn and East Berlin. In a process of 'do ut des,' the two German states tied up a package of agreements. While Bonn now extended the so-called swing credit (an interest-free West German credit to East Germany which was due to expire by the end of 1975) until 1981 at a fixed level, East Berlin reciprocated by signalling its readiness to take up negotiations about the transit routes to West Berlin.

Both in December 1975 and in November 1978, Bonn and East Berlin concluded a major traffic accord, which was based on a mutual strategy of 'linkage.' While West Germany benefited from the extension of the transit facilities to and from West Berlin, East Germany profited from Bonn's economic concessions, i.e. the Federal Republic's commitment to finance transit routes which would ultimately be East German infrastructure. Despite such considerable monetary obligations, Bonn argued "...that the agreed improvements and their political importance make the financial expense worthwhile."¹²

Significantly, the process of linkage between West- and East Germany continued in the late 1970s and early 1980s in spite of the general crisis of detente. Both in October 1979 and in April 1980, Bonn and East Berlin concluded agreements further facilitating travel between the two Germanies, which led Foreign Minister Genscher to express his hope that these inner German settlements would serve as an 'element of confidence-building in East-West relations' in a difficult international situation.¹³ However, for the remaining seventeen months of the Social-Liberal coalition, progress in inner-German transit questions was increasingly impeded by the international crisis.

¹²Bull.134, 17.11.78 In addition, West Germany had pushed through that the new transit ways would be fully included in the privileged traffic regulations of the Four-Power accord.

¹³fdk 124, 26.4.80, Genscher's speech at the FDP's state party congress in Bavaria on 26.4.80 in Munich

Although cooperation on inner-German issues had lost some of its momentum by the end of the Social-Liberal coalition, overall this section has shown that positive economic leverage was an important and successful aspect of the Schmidt/Genscher government's Ostpolitik even after the onset of the Second Cold War in the late 1970s. Next, we shall look at those areas of East-West cooperation where the Free Democrats could not rely on the concept of linkage for progress, such as the national question or the issue of West Berlin's status.

Berlin controversies

During the Social-Liberal coalition, the question of West Berlin's status emerged as one of the main controversies in Bonn's relations with the Eastern bloc. These disagreements particularly affected the FDP as the German party which for historical and ideological reasons strongly cared about West Berlin's role as yardstick of detente and as the place from which Europe's and Germany's division could potentially be overcome.

Controversies about West Berlin mainly arose from the different Eastern and Western interpretations of the Four-Power accord of 1971, in return reflecting different goals concerning West Berlin's status. The Soviet Union and East Germany relied on the part of the Four-Power agreement stating that West Berlin was *not* a "constituent part of the Federal Republic of Germany," hence certain state representatives (such as the Bundestag or other state organs) had no right to settle in West Berlin. Moscow and East Berlin most frequently cited this part since they aimed at turning West Berlin into a separate entity while simultaneously transforming East Berlin into an integral part of the German Democratic Republic. In reality, East Berlin was as little a constituent part of East Germany as West Berlin was one of West Germany.

Another part of the Four-Power Agreement said that the existing links between West Berlin and the Federal Republic should be maintained and developed. Here, the Soviet Union and West Germany decisively differed in their interpretation of "links." The Kremlin claimed that the Four-Power Agreement meant "loose ties" (Verbindungen) and on principle refused to include West Berlin in any agreements with Bonn.¹⁴

¹⁴Griffith, p.297

Moscow and East Berlin saw Berlin's Western orientation as a security challenge to the East German state and united in objecting to any specific ties with the Federal Republic. Bonn, and most notably the Free Democrats, in contrast, interpreted the Four-Power Agreement as allowing for "close links" (Bindungen) between the Federal Republic and West Berlin, reflecting the fact that the FDP was promoting close official government links with West Berlin.

In terms of concrete progress on West Berlin, the Free Democrats thus had to consider Soviet and East-German interpretations of the Four-Power Agreement and to defend maintenance of the status quo in West Berlin against Eastern attempts to deconstruct it. Furthermore, the federal government was well aware that Berlin's independence rested on American, French and English security guarantees and persistently urged the Three Western Powers to reconfirm their commitment to all of Berlin, both regularly at NATO encounters and spontaneously in the context of crises over Berlin. On the eve before the annual NATO conferences, the American, English, French and German Chiefs of State or Foreign Ministers would traditionally meet beyond the 'Berlin group' to discuss issues concerning Germany and Berlin. During the first NATO conference in Ottawa after Schmidt's and Genscher's entry into office, the four Foreign Ministers had already agreed on "the essential link between detente in Europe and the situation in Berlin."¹⁵ It was something completely new that the Allies should tie their detente policy to the German situation and the Berlin question, and Genscher had all reason to be very pleased with the outcome of the conference.

Despite their dependence on international factors for progress in the Berlin question, the Free Democrats nevertheless in various ways pursued their goal of intensifying the links between West Berlin and the Federal Republic. West Germany first attempted to extend Bonn's federal presence in West Berlin with its decision of June 1974 to establish a Federal Agency of Environmental Protection in West Berlin. This project had already been proposed under Chancellor Brandt and was one of the first issues with which Schmidt and Genscher were confronted upon formation of their government in 1974. While Foreign Minister Genscher was strongly in favour of the project, Chancellor Schmidt had

¹⁵Genscher, DB, 139th session, 19.12.74, government declaration on the NATO Council

misgivings, but for internal reasons eventually had to go along with the proposal.¹⁶

Initially, the Western powers objected to the federal government's decision, arguing that even though Bonn's action was not illegal, it risked renewed East-West complications. While West Germany did go ahead with the establishment of the Federal Agency, Genscher - aware of the importance of Allied support on the Berlin question - travelled to the United States the day after the decision: "On Thursday, the law will enter into force, on Friday I will be with the US President. That's perfect."¹⁷ During this trip, Genscher managed to get reassurance of US support for Bonn's political and legal standpoint on West Berlin. The Kremlin, in contrast, claimed that the Federal Republic's extensive interpretation of the Four Power Agreement was illegal and authorized East Berlin to disturb access to West Berlin a few days after the law about the Federal Agency had entered into force. These traffic hindrances were stopped in August 1974, however, and eventually the Soviet Union and East Germany began tacitly to accept the Federal Agency's location in West Berlin.

As already mentioned in the context of the Kaliningrad negotiations, the FDP's Berlin policy furthermore rested on the assumption that West Berlin could be included in all of the Federal Republic's international agreements according to the law of nations if this were mentioned explicitly in each case. Hans-Günter Hoppe, vice-President of the FDP's parliamentary fraction, typically explained the government's reasoning:

"...We expect the Soviet Union no longer to deny West Germany the right to include Berlin in all international treaties, after the Soviet Union as a signatory power (of the Four-Power accords) has granted precisely this right to the federal government."¹⁸

¹⁶Pittman, pp.50-51; The Times, 6.8.74 In his previous function as Minister of the Interior, Genscher had stated that locating the Federal Agency of Environmental Protection in West Berlin was intended as a political act, which seemed too provocative to Schmidt. See also Chapters Four and Five.

¹⁷Genscher cited in Der Spiegel, 29.7.74

¹⁸Hoppe, DB, 30.1.75, debate on German policy

Given this conviction, Genscher had already before his and Schmidt's visit to Moscow in October 1974 expressed the hope that the Kremlin would agree to West Berlin's inclusion in the three outstanding German-Soviet agreements on scientific-technological cooperation, legal assistance and cultural exchange which were otherwise ready for signing. However, Moscow was not ready to grant such an extensive interpretation of the Four-Power accord to Bonn, and thus the treaties remained unsigned all throughout the Social-Liberal coalition.

During the negotiations about the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, culminating in the Final Act of Helsinki on 1 August 1975, the Free Democrats were more successful with their request that West Berlin be included in the final document. This time, all nine EC Chiefs of Government agreed with Genscher's argument that there must be "no white spots on the map of detente" and jointly declared in May 1975 that the results of the conference had to apply everywhere in Europe.¹⁹ The Schmidt/Genscher government was similarly successful with its 1976 suggestion that deputies from West Berlin be sent to the European Parliament. When the European Summit decided in July 1976 to move towards direct elections to the European Parliament, it also provided for deputies from West Berlin to take their seats in the EP after 1979. Both the Three Powers and Genscher refuted Moscow's objections to the new regulations on the grounds that the West Berlin deputies would not be elected directly, but through the Berlin chamber of deputies.

Overall, Moscow and East Berlin were rather suspicious of the new West German Foreign Minister, as they realized that Genscher preferred to take a tougher line on the issue of West Berlin than his predecessor and the Social Democrats. By 1976, the Kremlin and the SED tended to attack Genscher when complaining about the Federal Republic's Berlin policy, and it seemed as though Genscher occasionally served the Warsaw Pact states as a suitable justification for blocking further cooperation with Bonn. The Soviet Union consciously emphasized the differences between Chancellor Schmidt and the Foreign Minister on the Berlin issue and indirectly appealed to Schmidt to use his overall competence in this area. However, Moscow's and East Berlin's attacks against the West German

¹⁹Genscher, DB, 183rd session, 25.7.75, debate on the CSCE Foreign Minister Genscher also demonstrated his conviction that West Berlin was part of the Federal Republic by demonstrably accompanying visitors from the United States, Great Britain or France to West Berlin.

government neither resulted in driving a wedge into the coalition nor in a significant reversal of Bonn's Ostpolitik.

Between 1974 and 1982, the FDP's attempts to extend West Germany's links with West Berlin were also constrained by the Warsaw Pact states' objective of turning West Berlin into a separate entity and of transforming East Berlin into an integral part of East Germany. The Soviet-East German Friendship Treaty of October 1975, for instance, tried to create the impression that West Berlin's ties with Bonn were not any closer than West Berlin's ties with any other state, for example the German Democratic Republic. Furthermore, in January 1977, East Germany abolished the military control points between East Berlin and adjacent parts of the GDR, which was a clear attempt to invalidate the Four Power status for the city and meant that East German laws now also automatically applied to East Berlin. Along similar lines, East Germany changed its electoral law in July 1979 so that in the future East Berlin's citizens could directly elect deputies to the People's Chamber.²⁰

Although on all these occasions, the Western powers immediately objected to East Germany's actions and increased their patrols in East Berlin, none of the Western protests really changed the Soviet Union's or East Germany's Berlin policy. Thus, with both sides' determination to assert their interpretation of the Four-Power accord, the FDP's chances for real advancement on Berlin issues during the Social-Liberal coalition on the whole were quite limited.

National issues/reunification

In a parallel manner to questions concerning West Berlin's status, the Free Democrats' striving for progress on the issues of national sovereignty and German state citizenship was also impeded by Bonn's and East Berlin's disagreement over the interpretation of the existing treaty basis. The problem here arose from the German Constitutional Court's ambiguous ruling of 1973 which on the one hand had confirmed the Basic Treaty's acknowledgement of the GDR as an independent state within the

²⁰Up to that point, deputies from East Berlin had been sent by the borough council of East Berlin instead of being elected directly.

meaning of international law and on the other hand had denied the existence of a separate East German citizenship.²¹

Just as with the Four-Power accord, Bonn and East Berlin relied on the part of the Basic Treaty/Karlsruhe Court verdict that suited them best for their national policy. The Federal Republic argued that the existence of a second German state did not mean a real solution to the German problem since the main characteristic of a nation state were the shared cultural values ('Kulturnation'). Schmidt and Genscher thus concentrated on maintaining the German people's right for self-determination, hoping this would one day result in reunification. The federal government also strictly relied on the Karlsruhe ruling that there was only *one* German citizenship. East Germany in contrast persistently dismissed the notion of a still open 'German question' on the grounds that two German states already existed ('Staatsnationen'). In contrast to Bonn, the SED leadership geared its efforts towards acknowledgement of the German Democratic Republic as independent state with independent East German citizens.

However, such inner-German disagreements about the issues of citizenship and nationhood mostly took place on a theoretical level and hence did not majorly impede practical inner-German cooperation. Only in the area of legal assistance to East Germans in third countries did the citizenship question emerge as a practical problem in inner-German relations. In this context, Foreign Minister Genscher's active opposition to the Austrian-East German consular treaty of January 1975 (recognizing an East German citizenship) should be mentioned. On the German Democratic Republic's behalf, this treaty clearly was an attempt to gain international recognition of an East German citizenship via consular treaties with third states. Bonn immediately protested, arguing that the Karlsruhe Court had charged the Federal Republic, not East Germany, with taking consular care of all Germans in third states. Genscher's attempts to prevent the signing of the Austrian-East German treaty failed, but for the rest of the Social-Liberal coalition, the West European states upheld Bonn's right to represent East Germans in all capitals.²²

²¹Plock, The Basic Treaty, p.94 The Karlsruhe Court has asserted that the two German states were to be understood as parts of a still existing pan-German state with one Staatsvolk.

²²Plock, The Basic Treaty, p.192 The Western states in fact recognized an East German citizenship, but without a GDR monopoly on the representation of its citizens when the latter sought the assistance of the Federal Republic in third states.

In addition to its insistence on only one German state citizenship, the FDP's Deutschlandpolitik between 1974 and 1982 was characterized by its struggle to keep the option of reunification open. This concern was most apparent during the negotiations of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, culminating in the Final Act of Helsinki on 1 August 1975. Since one of the CSCE's main objectives was to fix the status quo of borders in Europe, Bonn feared that Germany's division would become subject to a multilateral agreement. During the CSCE negotiations in Geneva, Genscher consequently had his negotiator Klaus Blech fight for the inclusion of a clause on the possibility of peaceful border change in the Final Act of Helsinki, thereby maintaining the German people's right to strive for reunification in free self-determination.²³

Of course, the Schmidt/Genscher government was also aware of the importance of Allied support for its objectives and hence attempted to ensure Allied backing during the NATO conference from 18-19 June 1974 in Ottawa. While the United States had previously shown little interest in allowing for a time-consuming quarrel with the Soviet Union about the so-called 'German question' and had instead pressed for a quick finish to the Geneva talks, in Ottawa, the German government managed to secure Allied support for the inclusion of the principles of peaceful border change, renunciation of force and self-determination in the Final Act.²⁴

During the actual Helsinki negotiations, Bonn could also count on EC and US support because not only the option of German reunification but also the possibility of European integration needed to be kept open. After the Final Act had been signed, Genscher thanked West Germany's Allies for supporting Bonn so "...emphatically in realizing the necessary formulations in the conference documents..."²⁵ Bonn noted contentedly that for the first time not only the Western but also the Warsaw Pact states had committed themselves to the possibility of peaceful border change. Despite Germany's unambiguous pursuit of its priorities during

²³Ambassador Blech in the foreign policy committee of the German Bundestag on 15.1.75, Link, p.298; Genscher, DB, 146th session, 30.1.75, debate on German policy

²⁴Genscher, DB, 110th session, 20.6.74, debate on the Ottawa Declaration

²⁵ZDF, 27.7.75, Interview with H.D.Genscher

the CSCE negotiations, it should also be stressed that the Federal Republic was careful to avoid making the CSCE into a conference about German problems.

While the Schmidt/Genscher government's national policy overall aimed at keeping the German question open and at maintaining the claim that there was only one German citizenship, the Free Democrats also had to contend with the fact that the German Democratic Republic pursued quite the opposite goals. To demonstrate its complete autonomy, East Germany undertook a constitutional change in September 1974 which replaced the formula of 'Socialist state of German nation' by the term 'Socialist state of workers and farmers,' stamping any joint cultural heritage with West Germany irrelevant. The Federal Republic's protests that German unity had its roots in history and could not simply be destroyed by changes in East Germany's constitution did not help. All throughout the Social-Liberal coalition, East Germany continued its emphasis on national independence, which was for instance apparent in the SED's omission of the traditional aim of German reunification from its May 1976 party programme and in the subsequent removal of any reunification passages from East Berlin's Friendship Treaties with other Warsaw Pact states.

Regarding the Federal Republic's Deutschlandpolitik between 1974 and 1982, we have thus seen that during the Social-Liberal coalition, the Free Democrats did not achieve their objective of removing the traditional postwar irreconcilability of East and West German positions on the issues of national unity and citizenship. It has also been shown, however, that these issues were not a major factor of conflict in the daily inner-German relations but were mostly disputed at a theoretical level.

Humanitarian matters

The area of humanitarian issues resembled the questions of nationality and Berlin's status in the sense that the completely different Eastern and Western ideological positions and the Eastern bloc's security interests theoretically prevented the FDP's desire for rapprochement. Nevertheless, there was quite substantial progress in the field during the Social-Liberal coalition, partly because the West skilfully managed to maintain a process of 'do ut des,' whereby the Kremlin agreed to certain

concessions in the humanitarian field in return for Western acknowledgement of Soviet foreign policy interests.

The Final Act of Helsinki

The single most important progress in the field of humanitarian questions between 1974 and 1982 was achieved during the negotiations resulting in the Final Act of Helsinki on 1 August 1975. Apart from its objective of keeping the German question open, the FDP's main priority in Helsinki was the inclusion of humanitarian principles in the Final Act, firstly because of the Federal Republic's national duty to care for the Germans on the other side, and secondly because of its desire to create instances of appeal for bilateral relations.²⁶ During the actual CSCE negotiations, the German policymakers' (and in particular the FDP's) emphasis on the issue of human contacts was of course modified by the views and priorities of its negotiating partners. However, West Germany's accent on the humanitarian aspects remained distinctive, and Bonn not only phrased the first drafts of all EC members in this area but also carried the main burden of the negotiations.

For a successful conclusion of the Helsinki negotiations, the Free Democrats inevitably also needed to consider Washington's and Moscow's interests. On the one hand, the Federal Republic had to contend with the United States' lack of enthusiasm about the very concept of a Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, given (1) US Foreign Minister Henry Kissinger's preference for bilateral negotiations with the Communist states to a multilateral forum and (2) the United States' preoccupation with the military rather than the political determinants of East-West rivalry, which resulted in a low US profile during most of the Helsinki negotiations until 1975.²⁷ On the other hand, the Schmidt/Genscher government had to take account of Moscow's

²⁶By 1973, the head of the Foreign Ministry planning staff and leader of the German delegation to the Helsinki preparatory talks, Guido Brunner (FDP), had already written about Bonn's priorities in its approach to the CSCE: "We intend to establish contact between people, contacts between professional groups, contacts from society to society, as autonomous factors in the process of detente." Brunner in *Europa-Archiv* 13, 1973, cited in Garton Ash, p.263

²⁷Hanrieder, Germany, America, Europe, p.204

preoccupation with the static rather than the dynamic elements of the Final Act.

In a process of 'do ut des,' both the Kremlin's interest in fixing the status quo of the borders in Europe (thereby acknowledging the Soviet Union's status as superpower) and the West's interest in creating possibilities for humanitarian improvements was incorporated into the final document. The Free Democrats here benefited from the fact that despite Kissinger's initial lack of interest in humanitarian matters, in the end, the US Foreign Minister used his personal influence with Andrej Gromyko to lay the groundwork for the Final Act in bilateral negotiations. These negotiations eventually resulted in a Soviet commitment to the freer flow of people and ideas in the Soviet Union (Basket III) in exchange for the Western recognition of the borders of Eastern Europe (Basket I).²⁸

In his concluding speech to the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Brezhnev said there were "no victors and defeated, no winners and losers."²⁹ Despite the package deal technique, it initially seemed as though the Soviet Union had gained most from the Final Act of Helsinki, and the Western powers were accused of having ratified Europe's post-war boundaries for nothing in return. Schmidt and Genscher, for their part, were content that through the inclusion of Basket III in the Final Act, there now was an official pan-European commitment to the goals that Social-Liberal Ostpolitik had placed in the forefront and partially achieved bilaterally. However, no less than the other Western CSCE participants did Bonn at first underestimate the impact of Basket III on the Eastern signatory states and on international relations in general. As Vojtech Mastny has expressed it:

"The notion that sovereign states be held accountable for the treatment of their own citizens to other sovereign states and

²⁸Andr n/Birnbaum, p.4 Moscow's commitment to Basket III became even more relevant for the West when all Helsinki principles were declared interdependent instead of being applied independently (as requested by the Kremlin). The regulation suggested by the Soviet Union would for instance have permitted Moscow to neglect the obligations anchored in Basket III while simultaneously insisting on Western adherence to the Baskets I and II.

²⁹Der Spiegel, 18.8.75

their citizens amounted to nothing short of a revolutionary innovation in the conduct of international relations."³⁰

The next section will consequently examine the effect of Basket III on Eastern Europe and, as a result, on the Social-Liberal coalition's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik.

Emergence of the dissident movements

Although the Final Act of Helsinki had not committed the Eastern European leaders to any humanitarian concessions, issues like greater freedom of ideas and movement had now been "de-tabooed." In the two years after the Final Act, dissident voices in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe started to make demands in accordance with Basket III, and several dissident movements formed. In May 1976, Juri Orlov (a Soviet physician) founded the so-called 'Helsinki group,' which aimed at watching over the proper implementation of human rights in the Soviet Union.

For fear of similar developments in its own country, Poland had initially not even included Basket III in its obligatory publications of the Final Act. However, this could not prevent the emergence of a powerful Polish Workers' Committee by 1976 which legally assisted demonstrating workers and formed an alliance with the dissident intellectuals. In Czechoslovakia, the so-called 'Charter 77' came into being to fight for realization of the human rights that the CSSR had recognized by signing the Final Act. While most of the Eastern European dissidents thus focused on the need for democratic reforms, Basket III probably had the strongest effect on the German Democratic Republic, which was apparent in the drastic increase of East German applications for emigration to West Germany (more than 100.000 by 1976) and the exodus of writers and other intellectuals.

Overall, the Final Act of Helsinki had started a process of political change with unexpected and undesired consequences for the Eastern European states, and by 1977, the dissident movements in the Warsaw

³⁰Mastny, Helsinki, Human Rights and European Security, p.12 In connection with the Federal Republic's efforts to create instances of international appeal for human rights, Foreign Minister Genscher's suggestion of 1976 to create an International Human Rights Court of the United Nations should also be mentioned.

Pact states had long transcended the beginning stage. How, then, did the Communist states cope with the increased internal resistance against their regimes, and how did this affect the FDP's Ostpolitik? In addition to rather futile objections to the Western strategy of "peaceful infiltration," Moscow and East Berlin hoped to set an example of deterrence by expelling some of their own dissident citizens. Beginning in mid-December 1976, it was reported that East Germans who had visited West Germany were denied re-entry into the German Democratic Republic, a step which coincided with an increased East German campaign against dissidents. The most spectacular case of expatriation was song-maker Wolf Biermann's expulsion from the German Democratic Republic on 7 November 1976, while he was on a concert tour to West Germany. Although East Germany had expelled Biermann to quell the domestic opposition, the opposite happened: about one hundred intellectuals heavily criticized East Berlin's decision, and a large number of famous writers left the German Democratic Republic under protest.

The Communist states furthermore defended themselves against 'Western ideological infiltration' after the Final Act of Helsinki by banishing many Western correspondents from their states who - in line with Basket III's requirement for more exchange of information - now reported more freely about the conditions in Eastern Europe. In December 1975, the German Democratic Republic expelled Jörg-Rainer Mettke, correspondent of the magazine *Der Spiegel* in East Berlin, since he had - rightly - claimed that the Socialist Unity Party of Germany enforced adoption of children whose parents had fled to the West by SED-loyal parents. Almost exactly one year later, the ARD's (First German television) correspondent in East Berlin, Lothar Loewe, had to leave because of spreading the news that the GDR killed human beings at its borders 'like rabbits,' an almost ironic accusation as the East German guns actually did contain ammunition normally used for rabbits.³¹ In January 1978, the German Democratic Republic again proved its apprehension about more journalistic freedom, when it completely closed the office of *Der Spiegel* in East Berlin, because the magazine had published a manifesto that was so precise in its criticism of the East

³¹Die Zeit, 31.12.76 Loewe had said: "Here in the GDR every child knows that the border troops are strictly requested to shoot at human beings like at rabbits."

German regime that only somebody with inside knowledge of the governmental system could have written it.³²

Apart from the GDR's expatriation of dissident citizens and expulsion of 'dangerous' Western journalists, the Schmidt/Genscher government's desire to continue detente with Eastern Europe was also constrained by the Communist regimes' practice of *denying* potential Western troublemakers, especially journalists and politicians, access to their countries. In March 1976, East Germany for instance prevented three West-German journalists from admission to the Leipzig Fair. The West German Minister of Economics, Hans Friderichs (FDP) ended his visit under protest, arguing that it was time for Bonn to demonstrate how seriously it took such offences. Thus, the first official visit of a West German Minister of Economics to East Germany, meant to be a sign of normalization, instead turned out to be the sign of a new phase of confrontation. Similarly, in January 1978, East Germany prevented Helmut Kohl, leader of the opposition in the Bundestag, from entry, arguing that his intended activities in West Berlin clashed with the Four-Power agreement. As *Der Spiegel* aptly commented, the German Democratic Republic behaved as though the CSCE had been a "Conference for Security and *Confrontation*.." ³³

President Carter's human rights campaign

From January 1977 onwards, the FDP's chances for progress in Ostpolitik were further limited by the new US President Jimmy Carter's human rights policy, which was significantly to affect the overall development of detente. While the previous US governments had been fairly uninterested in the negotiations on human rights and had been unwilling to interfere with the internal problems of the Eastern bloc, Carter felt an almost religious obligation to restore the 'moral authority' of US foreign policy and suddenly discovered the Final Act as a weapon in the new campaign for human rights.³⁴

³²In July 1978, the real author of the manifesto, Rudolf Bahro, who had worked in the ranks of the SED leadership, was arrested.

³³*Der Spiegel*, 22.3.76

³⁴Andr n/Birnbaum, p.27; *Die Zeit*, 25.2.77 However, Carter also said that there would be no link between human rights and arms control.

To Bonn's and the FDP's dismay, Carter's campaign already severely harmed relations with the Soviet Union during his first months in office. The Kremlin reacted to such "undue American interference" by stepping up its confrontation against the West on several levels, thereby decisively worsening the overall climate of detente. Moscow now arrested many of its leading dissidents (e.g. Orlov and Ginsburg), demonstrating to the West that it would not allow the United States to dictate the Soviet Union's behaviour towards its own citizens. Furthermore, the Kremlin tried to circumvent Western accusations by introducing the distinction between two kinds of human rights: 'bourgeois' human rights, as applied in the West, which were purely geared towards the imposition of Capitalism, and 'real' human rights, which could only be realized in Socialism and entirely fell within the Communist states' internal competences.³⁵

The first CSCE Follow-up conference in Belgrade

Although by the time of the first CSCE follow-up conference in Belgrade (4 October 1977 - 9 April 1978), both the Soviet and the American positions on human rights had been somewhat modified, the Schmidt/Genscher government's striving for a successful outcome of the conference was constrained by the remaining strong differences between the superpowers. On the one hand, the Kremlin had signalled its readiness for compromise by supplementing the Soviet constitution with ten principles from the Final Act (i.e. the freedom of the press, speech and demonstration) as of October 1977. On the other hand, the fact that the new rights were restricted to "preserving the interests of the Soviet state and for the purpose of strengthening the Socialist system" proved these changes to be largely symbolic.³⁶ Apart from its skilfully timed constitutional change, the Soviet Union pursued a strategy of damage limitation in Belgrade and was firmly determined to avoid any obliging obligations or further institutionalization of the CSCE process.³⁷

³⁵Die Zeit, 18.3.77

³⁶Die Zeit, 10.6.77

³⁷Andr n/Birnbaum, p.32 Most Eastern European countries were unhappy about the Soviet Union's behaviour in Belgrade. At Helsinki, it had seemed as though their national independence had been emphasized but by the time of the Belgrade conference,

Similarly to the Soviet Union's constitutional change in time for the Belgrade conference, Washington had also signalled some readiness for cooperation by June 1977. By then, Carter's understanding for the complications of the process of interfering in Eastern Europe seemed to have grown, and his public engagement on behalf of Soviet dissidents had noticeably decreased. Nevertheless, of the two main Western concerns in Belgrade, (1) controlling the application of the Helsinki principles and (2) checking the possibilities for a further extension of detente, the United States was clearly preoccupied with the former. Arthur Goldberg, who was appointed head of the US delegation in Belgrade, was fully committed to a full and frank review of the participating states' implementation of the Final Act of Helsinki, which implied some unavoidable confrontation with the Eastern bloc.

Washington's preoccupation with human rights also meant that the US delegation soon found itself ahead of its European Allies in Belgrade, most notably the Federal Republic of Germany. While the Free Democrats acknowledged that for the United States, human rights was a matter of high principle, the West Germans were particularly worried about their delicate contacts with the Eastern European states, which called for a much more pragmatic and less confrontational Ostpolitik. As Schmidt said in an interview with *Die Zeit* in 1978:

"...As regards human rights, the accents on this side of the Atlantic are overall more reticent than on the other side of the Atlantic - and that includes my government."³⁸

The Germans and most other Western Europeans believed that it would be counterproductive to criticize the Communist states too harshly on the implementation of Basket III and instead concentrated on preserving and extending the concrete achievements of detente in Belgrade.

Concerning the outcome of the CSCE follow-up conference in Belgrade, not only the aggressiveness of the United States but also the vulnerability of the Warsaw Pact states stood in the way of the FDP's desire for progress. Although the Western powers succeeded in committing the conference participants to a firm date for the next CSCE

the Soviet Union had stepped up bloc discipline due to the growing number of strikes and dissident movements since 1975.

³⁸Die Zeit, Interview with H.Schmidt, 21.7.78

conference in Madrid, and even though the Belgrade conference ended with a final communique (contrary to Soviet desires), this communique contained little but very vague statements and did not even address the question of human rights. The Soviet Union had thus reached its goal of getting through Belgrade without making any substantial commitments.

Overall, this section has shown that the FDP's success in the area of human rights during the early years of the Social-Liberal coalition contrasted markedly with the constraints which Schmidt and Genscher faced from about 1977 onwards. Despite the Free Democrats' successful striving for the inclusion of Basket III in the Final Act of Helsinki, and despite the latter's unexpectedly strong impact on Eastern Europe, by the late 1970s, the Communist states had greatly stepped up their demarcation against 'Western ideological infiltration,' which resulted in a setback for detente.

By the time of the second CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid, the prospects for success had declined even further. Due to substantial disagreement among the participants, this second conference lasted almost three years (November 1980 to September 1983) instead of the originally planned three months, and instead of human rights, one of the main topics in Madrid was the French proposal for a European disarmament conference, taken up by the states of the Warsaw Pact. This different focus reflected the fact that by the turn of the decade, the security aspects of detente had begun to overshadow the humanitarian aspects. Why the international environment had changed, and how Bonn and the Free Democrats reacted to the altered character of detente will be examined in the next section.

Managing the crisis of detente

Before discussing the link between detente and defence during the Social-Liberal coalition, it should be stressed (1) that similarly to the area of economic relations, the issue of global security tended to affect West German politics as a whole and not only the Free Democratic Party specifically, and (2) that in contrast to other areas of West German foreign policy, security matters were much more dominated by Chancellor Schmidt than by Foreign Minister Genscher, both due to Schmidt's constitutional position as Federal Chancellor and to his

personal interests. Although the Free Democrats thus played a limited role in the Federal Republic's security policy, a discussion of the shifts in global security after 1976 is nevertheless essential for defining the FDP's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik, given the central role of military questions in determining the overall climate of East-West relations.

From about 1976 onwards, the Soviet Union had drastically increased its level of arms in the area not covered by SALT I by modernizing its intermediate-range nuclear forces aimed at Western Europe. This shifted the global balance of power in Moscow's favour and meant that by 1976/77, the Schmidt/Genscher government's efforts to preserve detente were no longer in full accord with the superpower developments. The Atlantic alliance undertook its first attempt to remove the growing military imbalance between East and West by debating the production of the so-called neutron bomb. In July 1977, President Carter declared his readiness in principle to construct this new system, but soon afterwards he faced intense domestic opposition against the neutron bomb, largely on the grounds that a weapon which would destroy all living beings while leaving material goods untouched was immoral. Carter thus tried to avoid a final decision about the neutron bomb by making it dependent on West Germany's commitment to stationing the bomb on its territory before the final decision to produce it had even been taken.

Since the Federal Republic refused to fulfil this precondition, and since the domestic discussion about the neutron bomb had not left the US President untouched, Carter infinitely deferred the decision about the production of the neutron bomb in April 1978. The Europeans, and especially Chancellor Schmidt and the Free Democrats, were taken by surprise and let down by the US President's decision after they had tried to get the neutron bomb accepted at home. What remained was doubt on both sides of the Atlantic: in the Federal Republic of Germany about the leadership qualities of the US President, and in the United States about Bonn's readiness to contribute to the joint defence.³⁹ Even though Bonn tried to keep up the impression of intra-alliance agreement towards outside by pointing out that the final decision depended on the future behaviour of the Soviet Union, the result was clear: the entry into arms

³⁹Haftendorn, p.138

control via the neutron bomb had not been successful, and instead the disagreement between Bonn and Washington had grown.

After the attempt to remove the imbalance between the Warsaw Pact and NATO with the help of the neutron bomb had failed, Carter, Giscard, Callaghan and Schmidt met at Guadeloupe in January 1979 to discuss NATO's next steps. In Guadeloupe, President Carter's announcement that in the near future, the United States was prepared to station Pershing-II and cruise missiles in Europe was quickly accepted by all participants, if on the basis of rather vague information. After the Guadeloupe summit, Chancellor Schmidt succeeded in getting the missile deployment debate 'doubled' with arms control negotiations, which allowed the whole package to be rationalized as another step forward in NATO's Harmel Report policy of combining defence with detente.⁴⁰

Overall, the Schmidt/Genscher government here faced the traditional German problem of having to balance West- and Ostpolitik. On the one hand, by supporting Carter's military plans, Bonn took account of the 'linkage' between Washington's commitment of troops to Germany's defence and the Federal Republic's firm and visible commitment to NATO and the West. After all, the Allies' lingering doubts about Bonn's loyalty to the alliance had been apparent during the negotiations about the neutron bomb, when Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, had started referring to the concept of West Germany's 'self-finlandization.' On the other hand, towards the East, the Federal Chancellor tried to avoid the impression that Bonn was the pacesetter in the Western alliance for the modernization of Western missiles. Lastly, at home, Schmidt aimed at retaining his party's support by claiming that he was exercising a decisive influence on the Americans in keeping the arms control process alive and guiding them towards negotiations with the Soviet Union.⁴¹

On 12 December 1979, NATO officially approved the 'dual-track decision' in Brussels, providing for the alliance to produce and deploy

⁴⁰Johnstone, pp.45-47

⁴¹The domestic debate about the NATO dual-track decision centered on the facts that (1) while US cruise missiles would be deployed in Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy, the Pershing II missiles would be exclusively deployed on German soil. (2), whereas the cruise missiles would take two hours to reach the Soviet Union, the Pershing II missiles would only take fifteen minutes, which increased both German and Soviet anxieties. Die Zeit, 8.9.78; Pittman, p.112

intermediate-range nuclear missiles from 1983 onwards, unless the Kremlin had both destroyed its existing SS 20s and stopped any further production by 1983, in which case NATO would entirely forego the modernization of Western forces ('zero option'). Overall, the 'carrot and stick' approach underlying the NATO dual-track decision corresponded to the Federal Republic's own plans, and Hans-Dietrich Genscher remarked contentedly:

"...It must not be underestimated that the dual-track decision introduced a new peace-securing element into the international demilitarization discussion...Its decline of the arms race should set a precedent..."⁴²

The main question now was whether the Soviet Union would be ready to cooperate concerning the dual-track decision. During NATO's decision-making process, Moscow had already started an intensive propaganda campaign with the aim of preventing or at least delaying the decision. In a speech that he held in October 1979 in East Berlin, Brezhnev announced that the Soviet Union would withdraw 20.000 Soviet troops and 1.000 tanks from the German Democratic Republic if NATO renounced the modernization of its forces. After 12 December 1979, the Kremlin further intensified its propaganda campaign, and in particular warned that the introduction of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe would negatively affect German-Soviet relations.

By the end of 1979, Moscow's rearmament and NATO's response in the form of the dual-track decision had already severely strained East-West detente. When in December 1979, the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan, it became clear that detente was indeed undergoing a major crisis, and that the rapid deterioration of superpower relations was bound to affect the framework of Bonn's Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik. West Germany and the Free Democrats reacted to the changed international situation in four ways: firstly, the Schmidt/Genscher government firmly sided with the Atlantic alliance and clearly disapproved of Moscow's actions. Equally importantly, however, the Social-Liberal coalition reacted to the overall deterioration of East-West relations by attempting to save as much of detente as possible, both together with its European partners, and by trying its hand at the role of an 'interpreter' between the

⁴²Bull.23, 10.3.81

two superpowers. Fourthly, Bonn and the FDP attempted to shield at least inner-German relations from the crisis of detente and conducted a policy of 'damage limitation' towards the German Democratic Republic.

Bonn sides with the Atlantic alliance

On the one hand, the Free Democrats decided on clear solidarity with NATO in this difficult situation because the Germans were only too aware of their dependence on the Western alliance for achieving their goals in Eastern Europe and containing Soviet expansionism. As Foreign Minister Genscher remarked, Europe was not siding with Washington "...as a present to the United States but in order to realize (its)..own European interests."⁴³ In concrete terms, West Germany's solidarity with the United States after Afghanistan manifested itself in Bonn's eventual support for the American boycott of the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow. Along with most other EC countries, the federal government had initially been slightly more hesitant than Washington about boycotting the Olympic games because it feared for the further progress of detente. Nevertheless, in March 1980, Chancellor Schmidt advised the National Olympic Committee that West Germany not participate in the Olympic games unless the Soviet Union withdrew its troops from Afghanistan. Wolfgang Mischnick, head of the FDP's parliamentary fraction, typically noted:

"I do not conceal that for many of my colleagues in the FDP's parliamentary fraction, solidarity with the United States was a decisive factor in their agreement not to participate (in the Olympic games in Moscow)..."⁴⁴

Bonn furthermore demonstrated its commitment to the Atlantic alliance by approving a 3 percent increase of its expenditure on defence and

⁴³DFS, 13.3.80, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁴⁴Mischnick, 213th sess., 23.4.80, debate about the Olympic boycott Note (1) that the Federal Republic was the only major nation other than the United States to boycott the Olympic Games and (2) that although no West German athletes went to Moscow, German companies played an important role in providing much of the equipment of the games, for instance a new airport. Stent, pp.238-239

sending four German naval units on a demonstrative passage through the Indian Ocean.⁴⁵

On the other hand, the Afghanistan crisis revealed that by the end of the 1970s, Washington's relations had changed not only with the Warsaw Pact states but also with Western Europe. Whereas at the beginning of the decade, the Western alliance had agreed on a policy of detente as the best approach towards the Eastern bloc, by the turn of the decade, Bonn's and the FDP's continued desire for detente clashed with the growing superpower tensions. In face of the deteriorating US-Soviet climate, Washington now returned to a strategy of traditional containment and attached greatest priority to a strong defence, both in order to remove the military imbalance between East and West and for exerting political control over Soviet expansionist behaviour in any part of the world.⁴⁶

West German attempts to save detente with the help of EPC

Thus, although Bonn paid tribute to 'linkage' in the Atlantic Alliance by supporting the Olympic boycott and increasing its defence spending, the Schmidt/Genscher government also attempted to preserve the gains of Ostpolitik together with its Western European allies. This for instance manifested itself in the EC's comparatively mild reaction to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. While Washington was not prepared to negotiate with Moscow before the Soviet Union had completely withdrawn its troops, in February 1980, the European Foreign Ministers suggested a concept for Afghanistan's independence which provided for a step-by-step withdrawal of Soviet troops and parallel measures for restoration of an independent non-aligned Afghanistan under international control. Although the EPC's initiative failed due to Moscow's objections to a neutral status for Afghanistan, it was undoubtedly a signal that Western Europe would continue its interest in close cooperation with the Eastern bloc.⁴⁷

⁴⁵fdk 85, 15.5.82; Pittman, p.119

⁴⁶Haftendorn, p.256

⁴⁷Nuttall, p.158

Europeans and Americans furthermore somewhat disagreed over the question of whether a policy of 'carrots' (further economic and political cooperation with the Eastern bloc) or 'stick' (economic sanctions) would be the most appropriate reaction to Moscow's intervention in Afghanistan. Washington, for its part, decided to boycott all grain export to the Soviet Union in excess of the eight million tons negotiated by Kissinger in a long-term agreement and also put an embargo on electronic and oil-producing equipment. Bonn and the FDP, in contrast, hesitated to support Washington's policy of sanctions, (1) because the federal government feared that negative economic leverage would jeopardize the achievements of detente and (2) because for the Federal Republic, trade with the Soviet Union was of much greater economic importance than to Washington.⁴⁸

Bonn as mediator between East and West?

Apart from Bonn's efforts for retaining the benefits of detente through cooperation with its European allies, Schmidt and Genscher also tried to combat the danger that Washington and Moscow would entirely break off their lines of communication by acting as an 'interpreter' between East and West. Foreign Minister Genscher typically expressed the Social-Liberal coalition's determination to preserve the gains of Ostpolitik as follows:

"We do not want to give up anything, absolutely anything of what has become possible for Berlin, its security, the Berliners' mobility, travel opportunities to the German Democratic Republic and possibilities for Germans to emigrate from Eastern Europe. On the contrary, all this must be defended with 'teeth and claws'."⁴⁹

From about 1980 onwards, the Free Democrats thus attempted to save detente by making sure that the White House would remain committed to a policy of arms control. However, as will be shown next, such West

⁴⁸Pittman, p.119; Stent, p.236 Of the Western European states, only Great Britain was ready to support the United States' policy of sanctions fully.

⁴⁹fdk 124, 26.4.80, Genscher's speech at the FDP's state party congress in Bavaria on 26.4.80 in Munich; See also Bull.131, 11.12.80

German mediating efforts proved to be rather futile because Bonn did not sit at the bargaining table and was consequently limited to urging the United States and the Soviet Union to develop a more constructive policy.

While Chancellor Schmidt's March 1980 trip to Washington was indeed a success, as the United States expressed its continued readiness to assume arms control negotiations with Moscow, the US-German controversies before and during the G-7 summit in Venice only three months later clearly demonstrated how restricted the Federal Republic's room for manoeuvre in the alliance really was. Under pressure from his party, Schmidt had suggested in April 1980 that both sides should renounce the production of intermediate-range nuclear missiles for a certain number of years and use this period for negotiations. Typically for Western suspicions about Germany's loyalty towards the Atlantic alliance, in mid-August 1980, President Carter wrote a letter to Schmidt, in which he expressed his fear that the Chancellor might slide out of his commitment to both parts of the NATO dual-track decision.

Schmidt was extremely offended over the letter and brought the matter up with Carter in Venice before the start of the G-7 summit on 23 and 24 June 1980. On the one hand, Carter's and Schmidt's talks in Venice illustrated the value of multilateral summits in providing the occasion for bilateral contacts between the leaders, as the air was cleared and the US President assured the press that he had confidence in Schmidt.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the Venice talks highlighted the constraints on the Federal Republic's freedom of action in foreign policy, since Carter declined Schmidt's April proposal on the grounds that such a moratorium would freeze the present military imbalance between the two superpowers and would unnecessarily delay the United States' modernization of its missiles. After some unusually harsh confrontations during the summit, Schmidt finally accepted Washington's view as the joint Western negotiation position.

During Schmidt's and Genscher's trip to the Soviet Union from 30 June - 1 July 1980, Bonn again tried its hand at the role of a mediator between the two superpowers and achieved that after the visit, Moscow no longer made the ratification of SALT II and the suspension of the

⁵⁰Putnam/Bayne, pp.122-124 Venice was also a political success for other reasons, in that the allies now ended their earlier disarray over the Afghanistan crisis by issuing a joint a statement, which condemned the Soviet occupation as unacceptable and undermining peace in the world at large.

NATO dual-track decision into a precondition for starting arms control negotiations with Washington.⁵¹ Although the arms control negotiations between Washington and Moscow indeed started in October 1980 in Geneva, they only lasted for one month, because both the change of power in the United States and the reconfirmation of the Social-Liberal government in Bonn affected their further progress. On 4 November 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States which immediately influenced East-West relations since the new US administration took a much stronger rhetorical line towards the Communist states, talking much more than its predecessor about military strength and even military superiority. In contrast to the Reagan administration's increased emphasis on the rearmament aspect of the NATO dual-track decision, the reconfirmation of the Social-Liberal coalition in Bonn on 5 October 1980 strengthened the SPD's focus on the need for arms control.

Thus, while throughout 1980, the West German government had largely geared its mediating efforts towards securing Moscow's readiness to negotiate, in 1981, Schmidt and Genscher had to strive equally hard to ensure Washington's willingness for a resumption of the INF talks. The potential problem was President Reagan's belief that in order to negotiate with the Russians from a position of strength, the United States needed to increase its military strength *first*. Under these circumstances, the German government welcomed the news from Genscher's and Schmidt's trips to the United States (in March and May 1981) that Washington would hold on to both parts of the NATO dual-track decision and was ready to negotiate with Moscow.⁵²

At the end of 1981, the two superpowers actually resumed the arms control negotiations in Geneva. The federal government was trying to influence Washington to work towards the previously mentioned 'zero option,' by which NATO guaranteed completely to renounce any modernization of its intermediate-range nuclear forces if the Soviet

⁵¹Schmidt, DB, 229th sess., 3.7.80, government declaration about Schmidt's and Genscher's visit to Moscow from 30.6.-1.7.80

⁵²Bull.24, 13.3.81 As the time of the Western modernization of its nuclear forces was approaching, the Soviet Union also tried to influence the internal NATO negotiations. During his visit to Bonn in November 1981, Brezhnev suggested that if both sides adjourned the further production of nuclear missiles during the arms control negotiations, Moscow would be ready to withdraw a certain number of its missiles from the European part of the USSR, a concept which Reagan of course declined.

Union both destroyed its existing superiority in this field and reliably stopped any further production. Although it is somewhat difficult to believe that at this point of time, any government could still seriously expect Moscow to agree to this suggestion, the United States declared the zero option to be its official objective.⁵³ As expected, the Soviet Union rejected the zero option, claiming that approximate parity in Soviet and US intermediate-range nuclear missiles already existed, and that Washington was merely attempting to shift the military balance in NATO's favour. Given the multitude of pressures on both sides, the arms control negotiations did not yield any concrete results and were finally broken off by Moscow in November 1983.

The Polish crisis of 1981/1982

The Polish crisis in the winter of 1981/82, which had started with the workers' revolts in August 1980, again brought to the fore (1) the differences between Washington's and Bonn's approach to the Eastern bloc and (2) the growing importance of EPC in West Germany's foreign policy. The White House, for its part, reacted to the imposition of martial law in Poland with a policy of sanctions. By December 1981, Reagan had imposed restrictions on high-technology exports to Poland, banned new export licences for high technology and equipment (such as used on the trans-Siberian gas pipeline) to the Soviet Union and suspended both Polish and Soviet flights to the United States.

Washington's European allies, in contrast, reacted to the events in Poland in a much more measured way. Most Western Europeans, and especially the Germans, were eager to continue cooperation with the Communist countries, yet did not want to risk open disagreement with Washington. The Twelve thus decided to take a middle road by politically condemning the Polish military regime while continuing limited economic cooperation. On the one hand, the EC issued a political statement which called for the end of martial law and the restoration of a genuine dialogue with the Church and Solidarity in Poland.⁵⁴ On the

⁵³Link, p.339 Interestingly, the US hardliners ('hawks') were more in favour of the zero option than the softliners ('doves'). Many doves opposed the zero option on the grounds that it was too much of a maximum position and that it would - justifiably so - be evaluated as propaganda trick by Reagan and weaken his credibility.

⁵⁴Nuttall, p.202; fdk, 27.3.81 The Twelve also warned the Soviet Union not to interfere with the political developments in Poland.

other hand, Western Europe continued its economic aid to Poland in order to buy time for the Poles to create the basis for economic stabilization and reform.

During the World Economic Summit in Versailles in June 1982, the issue of East-West trade featured prominently, as the allies worked out a compromise in three hours of bargaining. However, the FDP's hopes that the fragile compromise would work quickly collapsed in face of the conflicting national press statements, which only fuelled the determination of hard-liners in the United States to step up pressure on its European allies, especially as no sign of real improvement emerged from Poland.⁵⁵ Two weeks after the Versailles economic summit, President Reagan, far from relaxing the US pipeline sanctions as the Europeans had hoped, announced that they were being extended to cover US subsidiaries and licencees abroad.

Thereby, the United States tried to prevent European subsidiaries of US firms from fulfilling signed contracts with Moscow, which entailed the delivery of Western European equipment for a Trans-Siberian pipeline in exchange for later Soviet deliveries of gas to Western Europe.⁵⁶ The European Community condemned Reagan's actions as 'contrary to the principles of international law,' and with support from their governments, most European companies ignored the restrictions by Washington. Only after protracted negotiations between the United States and the Europeans, partly in the EPC and partly in the Bonn Group (the FRG and the three Western Allies) did Washington lift the sanctions in November 1982, while the Europeans agreed to exercise greater restraint in trading with the East.⁵⁷

Overall, however, Schmidt's and Genscher's efforts to revive detente via a joint European policy towards Poland did not prove any more successful than West Germany's attempts at the role of an 'interpreter' between East and West. The Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan and the proclamation of martial law in Poland in December

⁵⁵Putnam/Bayne, p.137

⁵⁶Note (1) that this infringement on European sovereignty annoyed even the English Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and (2) that the potential damage to Western Europe was quite substantial, considering that the Federal Republic, for instance, expected its import of gas from the Soviet Union to rise from 16 percent in 1980 to 28 percent by 1990. Stent, p.213

⁵⁷Pittman, p.132

1981 had made clear that detente could not be separated from the worldwide developments, and that developments in Europe in many ways were intertwined with global East-West relations. Whether the Social-Liberal coalition's efforts to shield at least inner-German relations from the deterioration of detente were any more promising will be investigated in the next section.

The politics of damage limitation in inner-German relations

Concerning inner-German relations, the Free Democrats also initially tried to protect the gains of detente from the impact of the international crisis. Although the federal government was fully aware that the two Germanies could only move within the overall framework of East-West relations, the Social-Liberal coalition now argued that the two German states should contribute to an improvement of the international climate by keeping up their dialogue at the highest political level, thereby limiting mutual distrust between the two blocs.⁵⁸ Initially, the two German states were quite successful with this attempt, and despite the deterioration of the overall international situation, both inner-German economic relations and the treaty negotiations continued to progress well for some time after Moscow's intervention in Afghanistan.

Despite a short delay in the effects of the superpower crisis on the two German states, Schmidt's and Genscher's desire to shield inner-German relations was ultimately constrained by the general decline of detente. Due to the unstable situation in neighbouring Poland from 1980 onwards and the general worsening of the East-West climate, East Germany now tried to contain the danger that these events would affect its domestic stability with a dual strategy of physical and ideological demarcation. In terms of physical demarcation, East Berlin limited the free movement of West-German journalists in the German Democratic Republic in April 1979 since the Western media had become too much a focal point for internal opposition in East Germany. Furthermore, the German Democratic Republic again raised the minimum exchange requirement for citizens from the Federal Republic and Berlin in October

⁵⁸Hoppe, DB, 222nd sess., 17.6.80, debate about 17 June 1953

1980, thereby greatly complicating travel between East and West Germany.

Simultaneously, in his speech in Gera four days later (13 October 1980), Honecker outlined the principles of East Germany's future course towards the Federal Republic. This speech amounted to a clear ideological demarcation against West Germany since Honecker declared any further progress in inner-German relations dependent on Bonn's fulfilment of East Germany's maximum demands. The GDR for instance requested Bonn's recognition of a separate East German citizenship and transformation of the permanent representations into embassies. Since the German Democratic Republic knew very well that these points were completely unacceptable for Bonn both politically and constitutionally, the Schmidt/Genscher government evaluated the Gera speech as a signal that the German-German phase of detente was over.⁵⁹ By October 1980, East Germany was also under growing pressure from Moscow to threaten serious damage to inner-German relations, unless the Federal Republic withdrew its support for the stationing of US missiles on its soil after 1983.

However, neither the increase in the minimum exchange rate, nor the Gera speech, nor East Germany's pressure on Bonn to stop supporting the NATO dual-track decision, subsequently proved to be the break in inner-German relations it appeared to signal. On the contrary, East Berlin gradually dropped its position that inner-German relations could only progress if Bonn fulfilled East Germany's maximum demands, and Honecker even declared that difficult East-West politics must not affect inner-German relations.⁶⁰ Shortly before the outbreak of the Polish crisis, from 11-13 December 1981, Chancellor Schmidt even met Erich Honecker at the Werbellin lake near Berlin, which was the first German-German encounter on German soil since Brandt and Stoph had met in Erfurt and Kassel more than a decade ago.

The question arises, of course, why the Schmidt-Honecker meeting, which had been planned for a long time and had previously been cancelled several times by both sides, took place precisely at this moment of international crisis. To begin with, whereas East Germany's earlier cancellations of the meeting had most likely been due to Soviet

⁵⁹Link, p.375

⁶⁰Pittman, p.89

reservations about close inner-German cooperation, during his visit to Bonn in November 1981, Brezhnev explicitly welcomed Schmidt's intention of meeting Honecker in December.⁶¹ East Germany, for its part, was interested in the encounter, both because it provided an opportunity to demonstrate East Berlin's independent room for manoeuvre in international politics, and because the German Democratic Republic had a strong economic interest in preserving inner-German cooperation. Chancellor Schmidt, for his part, felt that despite the many uncertainties of the international situation, the time was right for an intensive inner-German dialogue.

The main purpose of the visit was to discuss the potential for progress in inner-German relations as well as the effects of the international situation on the two German states. The Federal Republic's attempt to use positive economic leverage by renewing the 'swing' credit in order to achieve East Berlin's reversal of its 1980 increase of the minimum compulsory exchange rate did not produce the desired effect, although by 1982, East Germany conceded slight improvements in the minimum exchange rate in return for the swing agreement.⁶² Nevertheless, this extension of the swing was the only concrete outcome of the summit, and overall, the Schmidt-Honecker summit mostly demonstrated the increasing 'internationalization' of inner-German relations. By the final day of Schmidt's visit, martial law had been imposed in Poland, and this further deterioration of East-West relations also overshadowed intra-German relations for some time.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown (1) that the Federal Republic's external environment in many ways constrained the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy between 1974 and 1982, as the goals of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik were 'incompatible' with the structures and opportunities of

⁶¹Pittman, p.90; p.139 Note (1) that Brezhnev's visit to Bonn was a remarkable achievement in itself, as it was the Soviet General Secretary's only trip to the West after Afghanistan, and (2) that by the time of Brezhnev's visit, East Germany had dropped its previous objections to the German-Soviet gas-pipeline deal and now permitted the delivery of natural gas from the Soviet Union to West Berlin.

⁶²Bull.63, 23.6.82

the international system, and (2) that despite such significant external constraints, the West Germans, and occasionally even the Free Democrats specifically, were able to exert some influence on East-West relations in the 1970s and early 1980s. Concerning the limitations on Bonn's capacities for action in foreign policy, it should first be stressed that after the real advances in Ostpolitik during the Brandt/Scheel era, when the major Ostpolitik treaties were signed, the period 1974-1982 was inevitably one of consolidation and stalemate. The task faced by the new federal government under Schmidt and Genscher, namely putting the Ostpolitik treaties into practice, was bound to be slower and more difficult by definition.

As shown on the preceding pages, the FDP's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik during the Social-Liberal coalition was to a high degree determined by the compatibility of its foreign policy goals with the aspirations of the respective US and Soviet leadership and the overall superpower climate. This was for instance apparent in 1974 and 1975, when the Free Democrats' strong interest in a successful conclusion of the CSCE negotiations in Helsinki clashed with the Nixon/Ford administrations' lack of enthusiasm about the very concept of a Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, given Washington's preoccupation with the military rather than the political determinants of East-West rivalry. Even the shift in US priorities to the humanitarian aspects of East-West relations upon Jimmy Carter's assumption of the Presidency in January 1977 did not make the FDP's striving for constructive relations with Eastern Europe more compatible with Washington's goals. On the contrary, Carter's human rights campaign severely harmed relations with the Soviet Union and merely left West Germany with the possibility of pleading for a less confrontational American attitude towards Moscow.

In addition to the changing priorities in Washington, the effect of the changes in Soviet foreign policy on the FDP's room for manoeuvre has been demonstrated. From about 1976 onwards, Moscow's modernization of its intermediate-range nuclear forces aimed at Western Europe shifted the global balance of power in the Soviet Union's favour, which not only increased the tension between the superpowers, but also underlined the Federal Republic's dependence on the overall East-West climate. Given the newly elected President Reagan's focus on containing the Soviet aggressor with the help of US military strength and the

Kremlin's lack of readiness for cooperation, the Schmidt/Genscher government's attempts to act as a mediator between East and West in 1980 and 1981 proved rather ineffective.

Apart from the FDP's dependence on the aspirations of the respective superpower leadership, a second major constraint on Social-Liberal Ostpolitik was the ultimate dependence of inner-German relations on the overall East-West climate. On the one hand, in 1979 and 1980, inner-German relations were surprisingly unaffected by the NATO dual-track decision and the Afghanistan crisis, since East Germany shared Bonn's interest in continued inner-German cooperation. On the other hand, the escalation of the Polish crisis in 1981 and its negative effect on inner-German dialogue clearly demonstrated the futility of Bonn's attempt to shield inner-German cooperation from a superpower crisis.

Furthermore, the FDP's capacities for action in Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1982 were limited by the politics of 'linkage' in the Atlantic alliance, in other words the trade-off between Western military and political support for the Federal Republic on the one hand and Germany's firm commitment to NATO on the other hand. As shown in the sections on Berlin and the national issue, the Free Democrats directly depended on Western backing for their attempt to extend the ties between the Federal Republic and West Berlin in the 1970s and were similarly aware of the need for their allies' support for progress on the national question during the negotiations in Helsinki. On the other hand, Bonn demonstrated its loyalty towards the alliance by joining the 1980 US boycott of the Olympic games in Moscow and by approving of the 1983 deployment of US Pershing missiles on German soil.

However, this chapter has also shown that despite the tight international framework for Social-Liberal Ostpolitik, the West Germans (occasionally even the Free Democrats specifically) were nevertheless able to exert some influence on East-West relations between 1974 and 1982. Firstly, there is the Federal Republic's use of economic leverage for fostering its relations with Eastern Europe, which is interesting for two reasons. On the one hand, an analysis of the Schmidt/Genscher government's economic relations with Eastern Europe has demonstrated that, although the Federal Republic could theoretically have applied both 'positive' and 'negative' economic leverage, Bonn only utilized positive

levers between 1974 and 1982, as this approach seemed more likely to secure the desired concessions.⁶³

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the Federal Republic's use of positive economic leverage underwent three phases during the Social-Liberal coalition. Phase one roughly lasted from 1974 until 1978 and marked the transition from Bonn's earlier exclusive focus on the economic benefits of trade with Moscow to the use of German economic power for eliciting both economic *and* political concessions from Eastern Europe, which was for instance apparent in the German-Polish accords of 1976 and in East Germany's loosening of travel restrictions in return for West German credits. During the second phase of German-Soviet economic relations, from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Bonn grew even more comfortable with the use of 'positive economic leverage' and finally dropped any hesitation of praising economic agreements with the Soviet Union solely for their political benefit. By the time of phase three, from about 1982 onwards, the Federal Republic's economic relations with Eastern Europe had become such an important and successful aspect of its foreign policy that Bonn increasingly refused to succumb to outside pressure in this realm.

In addition to West Germany's economic strength, the Federal Republic, and most notably the Free Democrats, also somewhat influenced East-West relations between 1974 and 1982 with the help of EPC. Since President Reagan's confrontational approach in the early 1980s did not match Western Europe's (and especially Bonn's) interest in continued good relations with the Eastern bloc, European political cooperation enabled the member states to take a more moderate position, reflecting their specific interests during the crises in Afghanistan, Poland and the ensuing quarrel about Washington's sanctions against the Soviet Union. The Free Democrats especially appreciated and contributed to the growing importance of EPC, (1) because, given its lack of full sovereignty, EPC was instrumental in the Federal Republic's striving for legitimizing and realizing its foreign policy objectives, particularly in the field of Ostpolitik, and (2) because EPC was especially important for the Free Democratic Party, since it provided an excellent way for Foreign Minister Genscher to increase his influence both at the European and at the domestic level.

⁶³Stent, p.240

It should also be stressed that despite Bonn's dependencies on the international system and the general deterioration of detente, in a number of ways, the Social-Liberal government managed quite well to opt for the continuation of Ostpolitik. On the one hand, for much of the period from 1974 to 1982, Bonn successfully convinced the Kremlin that it was safe to let inner-German cooperation evolve more intensively than before, even after the Afghanistan crisis in 1980. On the other hand, during their visit to Moscow in June 1980, Schmidt and Genscher persuaded the Soviet Union to go to the negotiation table in Geneva, and after Afghanistan, when relations between the superpowers were at their lowest, the Federal Republic was the only Western country to exchange visits with the Soviet Union at the highest level.

Lastly, the Free Democrats were able to contribute to international relations between 1974 and 1982 through their concentration on the issue of human rights and their striving for the inclusion of Basket III in the Final Act of Helsinki. Apart from the FDP's special contribution, this achievement is interesting because the fact that all participating states had *voluntarily* committed themselves to the humanitarian principles in Basket III and thereby internationalized the issue of human rights, provided the Free Democrats with a powerful argument in the debate about the place of human rights in international relations. Generally, the growing tendency after 1974 to deal with detente in multilateral (as opposed to bilateral) contacts such as the CSCE was of advantage for Bonn since, similarly to EPC, these multilateral forums helped the Federal Republic both to legitimize and achieve its foreign policy objectives.

Basket III is lastly interesting because its effect on the internal stability of the Communist regimes was much stronger than either the East or the West had expected. The two years after the Final Act saw the rise of a number of dissident movements in Eastern Europe, and although such liberalizing effects were increasingly stifled by the Communist regimes from about 1977 onwards, the increase in domestic resistance against the Communist regimes nevertheless demonstrated that the FDP's Ostpolitik had some influence on international relations between 1974 and 1982.

Chapter IV. The Social-Liberal coalition 1974-82: the domestic context

While Chapter Three has examined the impact of international developments on the FDP's foreign policy between 1974 and 1982, this chapter sets out to discuss the influence of domestic politics on the Free Democratic Party's Ostpolitik in an attempt to define and explain the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy during the Social-Liberal coalition. An examination of the domestic context requires a look at the following three general aspects of domestic politics: (1), the constitutional framework as anchored in the Basic Law, which raises the question how the distribution of power among the various policymakers affected the FDP's Ostpolitik in the 1970s and early 1980s, (2) the role of public opinion and of intra-coalition consensus for the FDP's foreign policy during the Social-Liberal coalition and (3) the structure of the German party system, which leads to the question of how the FDP's functional role as smallest party in the German system influenced its Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1982.

More specifically, the following steps will be taken in the course of this chapter. Firstly, it will mean examining how the FDP relied on Ostpolitik for distinguishing itself both from the SPD and from the Union, thereby increasing the likelihood of its survival in the German party system. Secondly, we shall investigate whether the CDU/CSU's role as parliamentary opposition had the effect of increasing or constraining the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy during the Social-Liberal coalition. Thirdly, this chapter will study how the Free Democrats utilized Ostpolitik during the 1976 and 1980 election campaigns both for securing their re-election and in their function as majority enabler after the elections. Fourthly, it will investigate how the distribution of power between the Chancellor's Office and the Foreign Office influenced the FDP's capacities for action in foreign policy during the 1970s and early 1980s. Lastly, this chapter will take account of the importance of public opinion and intra-coalition consensus for the FDP's Ostpolitik and for the survival of the Social-Liberal coalition between 1974 and 1982.

The FDP's foreign policy profile

Although Chancellor Schmidt and Foreign Minister Genscher were clearly committed to the continuation of their predecessors' Ostpolitik,

the new government's priorities were slightly different, as both Schmidt and Genscher favoured a more pragmatic and business-like approach to Eastern Europe, based on economic incentives rather than on substantive concessions to the East. Nevertheless, the new Chancellor and Foreign Minister were far from breaking with Brandt's and Scheel's Ostpolitik in substance. In his Government Declaration on 17 May 1974, Chancellor Schmidt stated that two factors, "continuity and concentration", would be the 'Leitmotiv' of the Social-Liberal coalition during the next four years, not least with regard to Ostpolitik.¹ 'Continuity' implied that the federal government did not intend to change its foreign policy course and would carry on its efforts towards peace. 'Concentration,' on the other hand, meant that the government wanted to focus on an active Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik, but within the framework of the world-wide detente process.

Considering the high degree to which not only the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister, but also their parties, agreed on the best approach towards the Eastern bloc, it was not easy for the Free Democrats to develop a specifically 'liberal' profile in this coalition. Nevertheless, this section will (1) examine the areas where the FDP's position *was* slightly different from that of the Social Democrats, and (2) investigate how the Free Democrats used such different nuances for distinguishing themselves in the German party system.

Chapter Three has already indicated the Social-Liberal coalition's frequent internal disagreement over the issue of West Berlin's status. From the beginning of the Social-Liberal coalition, Foreign Minister Genscher portrayed himself and his party as the promoter of Berlin's interests by taking a tougher line with the Soviets on Berlin issues, and the 1974 decision to establish the Federal Agency of Environmental Protection in West Berlin was only the first in a row of FDP projects trying to extend the ties between Bonn and West Berlin. Although the project had already been proposed under the Brandt/Scheel government and Chancellor Schmidt had duly addressed the thought in his 1974 Government declaration, after a talk with the Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Schmidt had reneged on this decision because he and most of the SPD thought it would provoke the Soviet Union and East Germany unnecessarily. Foreign Minister Genscher, in contrast, was not willing to

¹Bull. 60, 18.5.74

make any concessions on the matter so that, pushed by Genscher, Werner Maihofer and the governing Berlin mayor Klaus Schütz (SPD), Schmidt eventually gave in and decided to let the law pass.²

The effect of Genscher's decision to go ahead with the establishment of the Federal Agency of Environmental Protection in West Berlin certainly was to shape the FDP's profile against the SPD as the 'tough-liner Berlin party.' German newspapers reacted accordingly, and the *FAZ*, for instance, argued that it was clumsy of Genscher to make a conscious political demonstration out of the foundation of the Federal Agency of Environmental Protection. Despite the rather cool reception of Genscher's Berlin initiative by the press, in a poll of July 1974, 54% of the population tended to have a good opinion of Genscher.³

To Schmidt's dismay, Genscher unambiguously stated before their joint visit to the Soviet Union from 28 - 31 October 1974 that if Moscow did not agree to West Berlin's inclusion in the outstanding German-Soviet agreements on scientific-technological cooperation, legal assistance and cultural exchange, he wanted "...rather no agreements than ones that weaken Berlin's position."⁴ Although Chancellor Schmidt had made equally clear before their departure that he was much more interested in economic cooperation with the Kremlin than in controversies about West Berlin's status, it is noteworthy (1) that, due to Soviet opposition, the treaties remained unsigned all through the Social-Liberal coalition anyway, and (2) that, for the sake of coalition unity, Schmidt and Genscher strongly emphasized their cooperation during the trip in the ensuing report before the Bundestag.⁵

During the first month of 1975, Genscher demonstrated again that he would not make any concessions on Berlin issues: on 20 January 1975, a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

²Der Spiegel, 24.6.74 Many Social Democrats tried to delay the parliamentary process, especially since Chancellor Schmidt did not show much interest in the enterprise either.

³FAZ, 7.8.74; Noelle-Neumann, The Germans. Public opinion polls 1967-1980, p.185

⁴Genscher cited in Stuttgarter Zeitung, 23.12.74; Soviet television, 26.10.74, Interview with H. Schmidt, printed in Bull.126, 29.10.74

⁵See for example Schmidt, DB, 127th session, 6.11.74, government declaration on Schmidt's and Genscher's visit to the Soviet Union; Ronneburger, DB, 127th session, 6.11.74; Martin Bangemann in fdk 212, 31.10.74

(CEDEFOP) was established in West Berlin, which was strongly supported by the FDP on the grounds that there were already other centres in a similar field with which the new centre could cooperate. However, both Chancellor Schmidt and much of the German press again reacted quite negatively to the FDP's demonstrative support for West Berlin. Several newspapers claimed that, since in terms of purpose and geography, it did not make sense to establish the EC Centre in West Berlin, the explanation was Genscher's ever-lasting readiness to improve his profile in foreign policy and to portray the FDP as the Berlin party.⁶

In addition to their strong position on Berlin issues, the Free Democrats also pursued a distinct line on questions concerning Germany's division and human rights during the Social-Liberal coalition. As shown in Chapter Three, this was most apparent during the negotiations leading up to the Final Act of Helsinki on 1 August 1975, when the FDP was not only very concerned with the inclusion of a clause about the possibility of peaceful border change and free self-determination in the Final Act, but also fervently strove for the incorporation of humanitarian measures.

As tactician and leader of the FDP, Genscher's approach to Helsinki was certainly somewhat coloured by his awareness of the importance of public support for Social-Liberal Ostpolitik. Typically, the Foreign Minister stated in an interview in 1975 that "...in the end, detente policy will only fully be accepted by the public in all states if the citizens themselves get something tangible as result of detente..."⁷ However, in the autumn of 1975, the population's belief that it would live to see the opening of the East was very low. In an October 1975 public opinion poll, 63% of the population did not think they would see the day when they would be able to travel to East Germany just as easily as to Austria or to Switzerland, compared with only 20% who thought they would. The FDP's position in Helsinki can also partly be explained with its hope that the inclusion of a clause on peaceful border change "...might make it easier for the opposition to support the government's politics..."⁸ This last point leads to the question which will be examined in the next section,

⁶Der Tagesanzeiger (Zürich), 10.2.75

⁷DLF, Interview with H.D.Genscher, 27.3.75

⁸Noelle-Neumann, The Germans. Public opinion polls 1967-1980, p.123; Genscher cited in Die Welt, 29.3.75

namely how the interaction between the parliamentary opposition and government influenced the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1982.

Parliamentary opposition and foreign policy

Apart from the fairly difficult task of distinguishing themselves from their coalition partner, during much of the 1970s, the Free Democrats also faced a parliamentary opposition which vehemently rejected any Social-Liberal attempts to advance Ostpolitik. In order to shed some light on the issue of consensus and dissensus between government and opposition after 1974, this section will rely on Gordon Smith's cyclical model. This model examines the development of the West German parties' position on national issues in terms of cycles, and argues that these cycles have proceeded through similar stages: initially, there has tended to be foreign-political consensus between government and opposition, followed by a phase of strong polarization, lastly leading to subsequent realignment.⁹

Based on Smith's model, the evolution of consensus and dissensus on German foreign policy can be divided up into three cycles. Cycle one refers to the inner-German debate about Westpolitik, which finally ceased by 1960 when the Social Democrats had come to identify themselves with the government's policies. Cycle two covers the evolution of inner-German acceptance of Ostpolitik and traces the Christian Democrats' original support for the concept during the time of the Grand Coalition as well as their later all-out attack on Social-Liberal Ostpolitik after 1969. As will be shown in this chapter, the Union's opposition to Ostpolitik eventually ebbed from the late 1970s onwards.¹⁰ Since this section is concerned with the impact of the interaction between government and opposition on West German foreign policy during the Social-Liberal coalition, it will first concentrate on the second phase of cycle two - the Union's opposition against Ostpolitik - which still determined Bonn's politics after 1974.

⁹Smith, *Democracy in Western Germany*, p.181

¹⁰The third cycle refers to the evolution of inner-German consensus and dissensus on security questions, which was most prominent during the 1980s, and will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Typically, the CDU/CSU opposed the Final Act of Helsinki on the grounds that the national question was not kept open enough in accordance with the verdict of the Constitutional Court. The Free Democrats tried to overcome the Union's objections by arguing that, since reunification as demanded by the Basic Law was presently not possible, it was best to pursue a step-by-step policy, which, though far from perfect, served the reunification imperative and human rights better than no policy at all. According to Günter Hoppe, vice-President of the FDP's parliamentary fraction, the CDU/CSU would have to support Social-Liberal Ostpolitik if they really cared about reunification:

"Only since we have been trying to achieve concrete measures for the human beings in both German states, are we really taking the constitutional imperative seriously that everybody talks about, especially usually the opposition."¹¹

As it turned out, the FDP's strategy of appealing to the Union's political responsibility did not work, and the CDU/CSU (as only Western European parliamentary party) still asked the government *not* to sign the Final Act in the Bundestag debate about the CSCE. Shortly afterwards, the dissensus between government and opposition was to affect the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy even more strongly, as will be shown next.

On 9 and 10 October 1975, Genscher was in Warsaw where he signed the German-Polish Agreements which Schmidt and Gierek had negotiated in Helsinki. These treaties offered a real chance to patch up Bonn's relations with Warsaw, which for historical reasons had been more delicate than those with other Eastern bloc countries over recent years. The agreements also were a renewed attempt to commit Warsaw to the emigration of ethnic Germans, an obligation which Poland had already assumed in the Warsaw Treaty of 1970 but never adhered to.¹² Now Poland agreed to allow 125.000 ethnic Germans to emigrate in exchange for (1) a German trade credit of DM 1 billion on favourable

¹¹Hoppe, DB, 240th session, 11.5.76, debate on domestic issues and foreign policy

¹²Note that the Warsaw Treaty was not binding according to the law of nations. Instead of facilitating emigration for ethnic Germans who wanted it, Poland had actually restricted exit visas and disputed International Red Cross estimates of the number who wanted to leave.

terms and (2) DM 1.3 billion to be granted as a lump-sum to the Polish government for Polish war participants who had paid into the German social security system during the war without receiving pensions. The Polish Treaties thus provided a real chance for progress in German-Polish relations. Before they could be ratified, however, domestic developments manoeuvred the Free Democratic Party into a substantial dilemma.

Since one of the Polish Treaties, the pension agreement, directly affected state finances, the Bundesrat automatically had to vote on it. Thus, although the Bundesrat officially has no foreign policy competence, in this case, it nevertheless had a say in the ratification of a treaty in which foreign policy issues played a role.¹³ Until early 1976, this did not seem to pose a problem since the Bundesrat had previously behaved in a fairly disciplined way concerning foreign policy issues and had not abused its opportunities of opposing the federal government. The situation changed dramatically with the state elections in Lower Saxony on 14 January 1976, however, when three anonymous SPD or FDP deputies left the Social-Liberal coalition in Lower Saxony and surprisingly put Ernst Albrecht, a young CDU politician, into power. This election result shifted the power distribution in the Bundesrat, suddenly providing the CDU/CSU with a 26:15 majority in their favour. This new situation provided the Union with the theoretical possibility that they could block ratification of the Polish agreements in the Bundesrat.

Genscher thus faced an enormous dilemma: on the one hand, the German-Polish agreements were of utmost importance to him. At his first address as FDP Chairman, he had already said that in the near future, special attention in the field of Ostpolitik would have to be paid to German-Polish relations and to solving the problems inherent in this relationship.¹⁴ If he ignored the new power distribution, one of his favourite foreign policy actions - the treaty with Poland - threatened to fail due to the CDU/CSU's veto in the Bundesrat. On the other hand, it was Genscher's frequently declared coalition strategy that the Free Democrats should commit themselves to a coalition *before* the elections,

¹³This blurring of boundaries between domestic and foreign policy, thus enabling Parliament to take a role in the latter, is part of a general trend. See C.Carstairs and R.Ware, Parliament and International Relations, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991)

¹⁴Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hamburg, 30.9.-2.10.1974

which they had also done in Lower Saxony. Genscher feared that a Christian-Liberal coalition in Lower Saxony would damage the FDP's carefully constructed reputation as a loyal coalition partner.

The Free Democrats reacted to this dilemma by pursuing a double strategy for winning the Union's assent to the Polish Treaties both on the domestic and the foreign policy level. Domestically, the FDP on the one hand allowed no doubt that it would neither leave the Social-Liberal coalition at the federal level nor form a coalition with the CDU in Lower Saxony. Genscher explained this decision as follows:

"I think nobody will expect that the Free Democrats who made a coalition statement before the election..., who support the government in office, would here now switch sides because of the behaviour of a deputy whose name we do not even know..."¹⁵

Genscher's decision to adhere to the FDP's previous coalition commitments, thereby preventing the party's losing face as a disloyal coalition partner, was certainly not facilitated by Albrecht's indirect pledge to the FDP that he would pass the Polish Treaties if the Free Democrats formed a coalition with the CDU in Lower Saxony. Genscher's decision to reject this offer as a 'horse trading' which the FDP had never considered did not remain uncontested among the Liberals.¹⁶ On the other hand, the FDP signalled that while it was not ready to enter a coalition with the CDU in Lower Saxony, it was nevertheless ready to *tolerate* a CDU minority government in the same state - a diplomatic distinction indeed.¹⁷

¹⁵DFS, 16.1.76 Note that only eight months later, on 19 January 1977, the FDP did indeed enter a coalition with the CDU in Lower Saxony on the grounds that it wanted to defuse the confrontation in the Bundesrat.

¹⁶fdk 25, 12.2.76 For example, Martin Bangemann, Josef Ertl (right-wing FDP Chairman in Bavaria), Horst-Ludwig Riemer (right-wing FDP Chairman from North-Rhine Palatinate) and William Borm (left-wing liberal from Berlin) would have preferred a FDP-CDU coalition in Lower Saxony. Der Spiegel, 16.2.76

¹⁷In addition, the Party Chairman came up with the so-called 'loosening-up strategy,' by which he meant the need for the FDP slowly to open up towards the possibility of a coalition with the Union in the states while strictly adhering to its coalition commitment with the SPD on the federal level. Naturally, the Social Democrats thought much less highly of Genscher's 'loosening up' strategy and of the FDP's readiness to make concessions towards the Union on the Polish Treaties to get them passed by the Bundesrat.

In foreign policy terms, the FDP also pursued a double strategy: on the one hand, it criticized the Union for their resistance against the Polish Treaties and refuted the CDU/CSU's arguments, on the other hand, it tried to win them over to voting 'yes.' The Union's major criticism was directed against the fact that the emigration protocol lacked the binding nature of the credit- and pension agreements and only covered half of the estimated 280.000 ethnic-Germans who had applied for exit visas. In addition, the Union accused the Social-Liberal coalition of paying DM 2.3 billion for humanitarian concessions that had already been arranged in the 1970 Treaty with Warsaw, in other words, of paying twice for the same thing.

The FDP refuted all of this criticism from the Union, partly even attacking it for irresponsible political behaviour. Genscher rejected the CDU/CSU's argument that the Polish Treaties were not binding. He claimed that, on the contrary, all three agreements were completely equal in their validity according to the law of nations, and that, after all, the German government was not really in a position to doubt Poland's adherence to a protocol which had been signed by *both* Foreign Ministers. Furthermore, Genscher argued that a 'no' to the Polish Treaties would do so much harm to the interests of human beings that it was by no means justified: "Everybody will have to take a decision as though it solely depended on him whether the 125.000 Germans can now emigrate or not."¹⁸ Since the FDP refused to enter a Christian-Liberal coalition in Lower Saxony, and since it rejected the Union's arguments against the Polish Treaties, the Union voted more or less unanimously 'no' on the Polish Treaties in the Bundestag on 19 February 1976. This of course fuelled FDP fears that the CDU/CSU would vote down the Polish Agreements in the Bundesrat, where in this case they really had a decisive say.

However, Lower Saxony's Minister president Albrecht opened a door for ratification by indicating that the Union would *not* demand renegotiation of the treaties if the clause on the possibility of further emigration from Poland (after the 125.000 had left) were to be changed from "can emigrate" to "will emigrate." Franz-Josef Röder, CDU Minister president of the Saarland, also said that he would very

¹⁸Genscher, DB, 19.2.76, debate on ratification of the Polish Treaties

much welcome it if "a sign from Warsaw came once more."¹⁹ Although the Free Democrats had fiercely criticized the Union's stance on the Polish Treaties, they nevertheless eagerly took up this hint of a concession, to the SPD's utter dismay.

Genscher called up the Polish Vice Foreign Minister, Jozef Czyrek, who said that Poland would change the clause if Albrecht were then reliably to vote 'yes.' After Genscher had reconfirmed this with Albrecht, the Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski wrote a guarantee to Genscher in which Poland took on Bonn's official interpretation of the Polish agreements. As Genscher had stated from the outset, this sign from Warsaw did not change the treaties in substance. The letter did say, however, that emigration applications after four years (exceeding the number 125.000) were not only acceptable but *would* be accepted and thus provided the Union with "that degree of binding security that the federal government already ha(d)." ²⁰ Olszowski's letter meant an enormous victory for Genscher because he had satisfied Kohl and Albrecht's demands. On 12 March 1976, the Polish-German package was passed in the Bundesrat without dissent. Thus, twelve hours before the Bundesrat debate, the Polish Treaties had been saved. Genscher thanked Olszowski profoundly in his reply.

Overall, the inner-German debate over the Polish Treaties had shown that the Free Democrats, in contrast to the SPD, succeeded in advancing Ostpolitik *with* the opposition's assent and that the Liberals, positioned 'between' the two major parties, were playing an important role as corrective and stabilizer in Ostpolitik. Although some German newspapers argued that the Social Democrats were unhappy about the fact that "the ratification of the Polish Treaties had become an all-party enterprise under Genscher's management," the Social-Liberal coalition had generally managed to preserve its internal consensus. Chancellor Schmidt was even quite relaxed concerning the FDP's high profile after the Polish Treaties: "Let the FDP do so. That's their dramaturgy. If we were in their shoes, we would not act differently."²¹ Lastly, Genscher was content that he had proved his personal importance for the FDP's

¹⁹Die Welt, 23.2.76

²⁰Genscher cited in Frankfurter Rundschau, 6.3.76

²¹Schmidt cited in Die Welt, 24.3.76; Die Zeit, 19.3.76; Der Spiegel, 5.4.76

Ostpolitik and was riding high in popularity polls: in May 1976, 60% of the German population approved of Genscher as Foreign Minister.²²

The Bundestag elections of 1976

As the Bundestag elections on 3 October 1976 were approaching, the Free Democrats initially had little time to concentrate on Ostpolitik as a campaign issue since their position in the German party system was immediately threatened. The CDU/CSU decided to run the election campaign on the slogan: "Freedom instead of/or Socialism," naturally causing immense dismay on the FDP's behalf since the Union not only claimed the concept of freedom for itself but also insinuated that there were only two alternatives in the German party system. The Free Democrats reacted by stressing that no German party could really claim the monopoly of freedom for itself since the CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP were all democratic parties and that, even if others had now discovered the attraction of the term freedom, "unconditional promotion of individual freedom in state and society (wa)s and remain(ed) a hallmark of the Liberal Party in Germany."²³

Despite the importance of the freedom/socialism debate, this section will investigate how the FDP utilized Ostpolitik in the 1976 election campaign in order to secure its re-election. To begin with, when (in line with Genscher's general strategy of committing the FDP to a coalition partner before the elections), the Free Democrats announced at their 1976 party congress that they wanted to continue the Social-Liberal coalition after the Bundestag elections, Ostpolitik played a role in their choice of coalition partner. According to Genscher, it was the FDP's responsibility to ensure the continuation of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik which had provided West Germany with a unique advantage, despite the CDU/CSU's resistance. Some newspapers commented favourably that the Free Democrats had not been so united on a coalition statement in the last twenty years. Besides pointing out his party's importance for Ostpolitik, Genscher also emphasized his own personal importance for Bonn's

²²Noelle-Neumann, The Germans. Public opinion polls 1967-1980, p.185

²³Genscher, DB, 240th session, 11.5.76, debate on domestic issues and foreign policy; Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Freiburg, 30.-31.5.1976

foreign policy: "... I also ask you to vote for me so that I can continue my foreign policy."²⁴

Apart from being a factor in the FDP's coalition commitment, Ostpolitik played a role in this election campaign in various other ways. To begin with, although the Free Democrats as usual tried to portray the CDU/CSU's Ostpolitik as completely unrealistic, the fact was that, in contrast to 1972, conservative Ostpolitik no longer differed from the Social-Liberal position as much as it had done previously. By passing the Polish agreements, the Union had entered into phase three of cycle two, that is inner-German realignment over Ostpolitik, and become much more serious competitors for the Social-Liberal coalition than before. Furthermore, the CDU/CSU's call for a more realistic approach to the Eastern bloc corresponded closely to the public mood which was disappointed about the progress of Ostpolitik so far.²⁵

Even though in 1972, the German electorate had completely supported Ostpolitik, by the 1976 elections, such support had declined. More importantly, the issue areas where the FDP's profile was strongest - reunification and Berlin - had suffered most from a loss of public support. While in 1963, still 31% of the population had considered reunification to be the most important question with which the Federal Republic should occupy itself at present and 11% had said the same about Berlin, by 1976, only around 1% of the population considered these issues to be most urgent. As a matter of fact, in 1976, only 13% of the total population believed that East and West Germany would ever be reunited, and 65% thought it would never happen. In contrast, public support for 'Schmidt' issues such as economic problems was as high as 74% in 1976, compared to 21% in 1963.²⁶

Before the 1976 Bundestag elections, the Free Democrats thus faced declining public enthusiasm for Ostpolitik, the Union as more

²⁴Genscher cited in Kölnische Rundschau, 25.9.76; Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Freiburg, 30.-31.5.1976; SZ, 31.5.76. Martin Bangemann and Walter Scheel were among the few FDP politicians who challenged Genscher's strategy of committing the FDP to a coalition before an election. They argued that voters should decide about programmatic positions instead of about coalitions, and that coalitions were alliances which must eventually be terminated by natural developments. See Die Welt, 29.10.75, Interview with M. Bangemann and Der Spiegel, 8.3.76.

²⁵Clemens, Reluctant Realists, p.166

²⁶Noelle-Neumann, The Germans. Public opinion polls 1967-1980, p.127

serious Ostpolitik competitor and the need to distinguish themselves at least somewhat from the Social Democrats. In terms of foreign policy profile, the FDP truly conducted this election campaign as 'third force' by approaching the SPD on some issues and the CDU on others, while overall maintaining their independent liberal foreign policy stance. For example, the Free Democrats once again assumed a distinct position on the Berlin question. Before the October 1976 elections, Egon Bahr, the SPD's party director, had travelled to West Berlin where he met Brezhnev's personal secretaries. When Genscher heard of this initiative, he not only unfavourably remembered Bahr's special mission to the Soviet Union in March 1974, during which Bahr and Moscow had agreed on regulations for Berlin that the FDP considered unacceptable, but the Foreign Minister also disapproved of a strong SPD line on Berlin so shortly before the elections.

Promptly, in October 1976, Günther van Well, a member of the Foreign Office, published an article in which he argued for a tough approach on Berlin, based on strict legal adherence to the Four-Power accord.²⁷ Genscher had his press spokesman declare that the content of the article fully corresponded with his own opinion. In this way, Genscher had not given any ground to the Union for their attack on an amateurish Social-Liberal Ostpolitik and had demonstrated that the Liberals continued their strong support for West Berlin. Not surprisingly, the Social Democrats did not approve of van Well's article and criticized their coalition partner for provoking the Soviet Union and East Germany with legalistic interpretations of the Four-Power Agreement.

Another Ostpolitik matter occupying the Germans before the 1976 elections was the question of how to deal with East Berlin's border behaviour. During the tense summer of 1976, several West Germans were seized or shot at the inner-German border, which resulted in German-German relations suddenly dropping to their lowest point since the Basic Treaty. While the Social-Liberal coalition argued for a cautious reaction, many Union members called for retaliation. On this issue, the FDP sided with the Social Democrats and outright rejected the opposition's demand that West Germany employ economic sanctions against the GDR. Genscher argued that if Bonn imposed economic

²⁷Europa-Archiv, October 1976

sanctions, it would do damage to its international image, give up valuable export markets and endanger roughly 350.000 jobs. During the 1976 election campaign, the Social-Liberal government thus for the first time utilized trade with Moscow for its own domestic political purposes by emphasizing how many jobs depended on trade with the Soviet Union.²⁸

The incidents at the inner-German border so shortly before the elections were causing domestic-political problems for the federal government since it had to react to them without endangering detente. While the FDP agreed with the Social Democrats in refusing drastic measures such as economic sanctions, it nevertheless proved more of an Ostpolitik hardliner and closer to the Union than the SPD when Genscher suggested in 1976 establishing an International Court of Human Rights before the United Nations. Genscher argued that East Germany's border violations were a "classical case" for such a United Nations Court. With this call, the Free Democrats (1) accommodated the opposition's demand that Bonn file a protest with the United Nations Human Rights Commission, (2) distinguished themselves from the Social Democrats who had repeatedly warned of taking issues such as East Berlin's border behaviour before the United Nations and (3) shaped their profile as the human rights party shortly before the elections. Typically, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* concluded:

"It seems as though it was not the Foreign Minister but the election campaigner Genscher who after the deadly shots at the inner-German border spontaneously announced that he would bring the German problem before the United Nations."²⁹

While Ostpolitik had become a campaign topic with the incidents at the inner-German border, it hardly played a decisive role in the election's outcome. To the Social-Liberal coalition's disappointment, the Union scored the second best result of its history with 48.6%. The Free Democrats with 7.9% had clearly expected a higher result, as Genscher admitted in his speech at the Liberals' post-election party congress, but he also emphasized that the result had consolidated the FDP's position. The SPD's 42.6% proved just enough to form a Social-Liberal coalition

²⁸fdk 229, 17.9.76; Stent, p.218

²⁹SZ, 17.9.76; see also *Die Zeit*, 1.10.76; *WAZ*, 29.9.76; *Der Spiegel*, 27.9.76

which, as Genscher pointed out, meant that the government would continue its foreign policy.³⁰

Distribution of competences between the Chancellor's Office and the Foreign Office

Although the FDP and SPD had thus succeeded in winning a majority, the take-off for the Social-Liberal coalition did not prove easy this time. Immediately after the elections, the controversy about the distribution of competences between the Chancellor's Office and the Auswärtiges Amt reemerged which Schmidt had initiated earlier in 1976 by talking about uniting the competences for Deutschland- and Ostpolitik in the hands of *one* new state secretary, Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski. Wischniewski at that time was a state secretary in the Foreign Office and had good relations with Genscher. Nevertheless, Genscher at once strongly objected to the Chancellor's plan because he feared interference with his foreign policy competences. This resistance payed off when Schmidt announced shortly after the elections that there would be *no* shift in ministerial competences. Instead, Wischniewski became a new Minister of State with the task of coordinating policies between the Foreign Office and the Chancellor's Office. Even though the SPD had not strengthened its voice in German policy and Ostpolitik as dramatically as initially planned, the existence of the new Minister of State, Wischniewski, nevertheless had increased the Chancellor Office's say in both areas.³¹

This controversy provides a good opportunity to look at the general distribution of competences and cooperation between Schmidt and Genscher during the Social-Liberal coalition. As mentioned before, the Foreign Office was not officially responsible for German policy, according to the government's theory that the two German states were not foreign to each other. After the Guillaume affair in 1974, Schmidt acted accordingly for some time and wanted to make German policy absolutely into a 'matter for the Chancellor,' until some foundation of

³⁰Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Frankfurt, 19.-20.11.1976; Die Welt, 9.10.76

³¹Die Zeit, 14.1.77; FAZ, 24.1.77

Deutschlandpolitik had been reestablished. Thus, he initiated a secret exchange of letters with Erich Honecker in the autumn of 1974.

Although German policy officially was a matter of the Chancellor's Office and despite Schmidt's initial attempts to act accordingly, the overall reality in the Social-Liberal coalition was quite different. Due to the international crises that urgently required the Chancellor's attention and because of Schmidt's personal inclination for dealing with global economic and military issues rather than with the minute details of everyday inner-German relations, the management of intra-German detente had generally devolved on Foreign Minister Genscher.³² Genscher was much too careful ever publicly to admit this, however. On the contrary, whenever he publicly dealt with German policy, he made a point of reconfirming:

"...the federal government has decided for good reasons that not the Foreign Minister but the Chancellor's Office is responsible for relations with the GDR. This is more than just a ministerial decision, behind this is the federal government's political concept of its relations with East Germany."³³

For example, Genscher waited for two whole years before he officially met Michael Kohl, East Berlin's representative in Bonn, for the first time and explained this late encounter by the fact that the impression had to be avoided that de facto the Foreign Office was assuming competence over German policy. After his annual meetings with East Germany's Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer at the United Nations, Genscher usually hurried to confirm that the two German Foreign Ministers had only discussed international questions and not the inner-German relationship. Overall, Genscher's and Schmidt's cooperation was based on mutual trust and respect, if not on friendship. Both liked to stress that they agreed on all principal questions of foreign policy but nevertheless did not leave any doubts that the responsibilities between them were "unambiguously and clearly split" and that neither considered interfering with the other's affairs.³⁴

³²Hanrieder, Germany, America, Europe, p.210

³³WDR II, 28.8.76, Interview with H.D.Genscher

³⁴DFS, 28.7.75, Interview with H.D.Genscher; Die Welt, 14.8.74, Interview with H.Schmidt

The conflict about the distribution of power between the Chancellor's and the Foreign Office was not the only reason why the coalition negotiations after the 1976 elections proved more difficult than in 1974. Controversies further arose from the different way in which the SPD and the FDP viewed the role of foreign policy in this coalition. Many Social Democrats, especially Herbert Wehner, wanted to use foreign policy as the only unifying bond against the CDU/CSU and shape the Social-Liberal profile against the Union in this area. While Genscher concurred on the need to continue a Social-Liberal foreign policy, the FDP also wanted to keep its doors open towards the Union, for both strategic and ideological reasons. Naturally, this different view provided quite some potential for conflict, and the impact of the Social-Liberal coalition's growing disagreement over Ostpolitik will be examined in the next section.

Crumbling intra-coalition consensus over Ostpolitik

Initially, the government had little time to concentrate on the divisive elements of Social-Liberal foreign policy, however. In the winter of 1977/78, the coalition partners faced severe domestic problems such as the threat of terrorism, a high level of unemployment and bad prospects for German-German relations. Precisely because of this domestic political trouble, Genscher and Schmidt set their hopes on relief via an assertive Ostpolitik which meant that the two parties had to act together and not against each other. The SPD and the FDP thus appeared fairly united at the CSCE follow-up conference in Belgrade which lasted from 4 October 1977 until 9 March 1978. The government's ideal goal was to have some foreign-political success to show in time for the state elections that were coming up in 1978.

Over Belgrade, the FDP and SPD faced a Union that, encouraged by Jimmy Carter's plan to make Belgrade into a centre for human rights, wanted to provide a document stating all the human rights violations committed by East Germany. This plan also reflected a slight reorientation in the Union's approach to Ostpolitik, since by the time of Belgrade, the CDU/CSU were a little less focused on legal positions and had instead stepped up their pressure on the Social-Liberal coalition to make human rights into an issue of German policy. However, the

Schmidt/Genscher government rejected the Union's planned initiative on the grounds that a rigorous human rights campaign would endanger the progress of detente.

The Union's planned human rights paper entailed additional problems for the Free Democrats who had tried to portray themselves as the human rights party for some time, for instance with their 1976 United Nations Human Rights Court initiative. The Liberals thus attempted to play down the Union's efforts as not credible by stressing that those who had most objected to the CSCE only two years ago were now the strongest advocates of implementing the Helsinki principles. As Genscher said:

"It is the uncontestable merit of the federal government, of which we form a part, that through active influence on the Helsinki conference human relief, exchange of information, and cooperation have become a legitimate matter of discussion in Belgrade....Neither the Belgrade Conference nor the Final Act of Helsinki would exist if we had followed the CDU/CSU's advice not to sign Helsinki."³⁵

Due to a lack of international agreement, the final communique from Belgrade did not meet the expectations which the German parties and German public opinion had harboured. But at least the two governing parties had managed to put up a united front against the Union's attempt to portray itself as the human rights party at Belgrade, thereby avoiding further destabilization of the domestic situation.

Despite the coalition's united position in Belgrade, from about 1977 onwards, the coalition partners started to disagree over Ostpolitik more frequently than ever before. Considering the traditional importance of Ostpolitik as unifying bond for the Social-Liberal coalition (the first federal Social-Liberal coalition in West Germany's history had been formed in 1969, largely due to agreement on the best approach towards the Eastern bloc), this development was quite striking. Even though in the late 1970s, Ostpolitik still had more the effect of holding the government together than of dissolving it, compared to the beginning of the Social-Liberal coalition, this unifying effect had become very modest by the end

³⁵Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Kiel, 6.-8.11.1977

of the decade. The reasons for such growing Social-Liberal disagreement between 1977 and 1979 will be examined next.

As shown in Chapter Three, in face of Moscow's drastic increase of its intermediate-range nuclear missiles aimed at Western Europe from about 1976 onwards, the progress of detente became increasingly tied up with security-political questions. While the coalition continued to agree on the aim of preserving and promoting detente, there was increasing intra-coalition disagreement over the best means of achieving this objective. For ideological reasons, both the SPD's and the FDP's left-wing believed that the continuation of favourable East-West relations could best be guaranteed if the West attached the highest priority to arms control as a reaction to the Soviet Union's rearmament. Schmidt, Genscher and the right wings of their parties in contrast believed that Bonn had simultaneously to pursue arms control and an appropriate Western rearmament if detente were to be preserved. Further major Ostpolitik initiatives had to be approached with caution, particularly if they were incompatible with Bonn's Westpolitik.

The divisive line was thus not only *between* the SPD and the Free Democrats but also *within* each of the SPD and FDP. As a result of the different reactions to the growing link between detente and defence within the government, the SPD's left wing increasingly disagreed with the Chancellor. This forced Schmidt, who was obliged to his party, to make some concessions towards this Social-Democratic faction, which in return strained the coalition's unity. Furthermore, Schmidt himself assumed a slightly more left-wing position on a number of issues than the Free Democrats which led to further pressure on the coalition. Lastly, the FDP's former unity on foreign policy questions, which Genscher had so far skilfully managed to maintain, also started to crumble, and the FDP's left wing now voiced its disagreement with the Party Chairman more strongly than ever before in the Social-Liberal coalition.

In terms of concrete politics, such growing intra-coalition disagreement was for instance apparent at the beginning of 1979, when Herbert Wehner, head of the SPD's parliamentary fraction, requested that the federal government should provide the MBFR negotiations in Vienna with a new impetus through one-sided troop reductions. At the same time, Wehner accused the Foreign Minister and the Foreign Office of acting like a brake on these negotiations. Genscher reacted, (1) by publicly repeating Bonn's official position that West Germany could only

reduce its level of arms under the principles of 'parity and collectivity,' and (2) by pointing out that such SPD requests were not covered by the government declaration.³⁶ For the sake of governmental unity, Wehner wrote a letter of excuse to Genscher in which he played down the factual differences as "methodical differences." While the controversy had thus apparently been removed, Wehner had given a signal that Schmidt could not overlook.

The SPD's left wing also pressed for a more active detente concerning the implementation of both parts of the NATO dual-track decision. Although the Social Democrats had agreed to this decision in December 1979, soon afterwards, several factions of the party started questioning the necessity and urgency of rearmament. Schmidt tried to make concessions to his party and suggested in April 1980 that if Moscow did not agree to stopping the production of further intermediate-range nuclear missiles, it should at least agree to stopping their *deployment* to enable the start of arms control negotiations.³⁷ While the FDP agreed that strong efforts for disarmament negotiations were vital, Genscher refuted any suggestions for a moratorium on NATO's modernization on the grounds that further concessions towards the Soviet Union would only destabilize the balance of forces in the negotiations:

"One thing is for sure: we cannot count on Moscow's readiness for realistic arms control- and demilitarization negotiations as long as those who offer Western concessions support the Soviet Union's hopes that it can reach agreement at a better price for itself."³⁸

When the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan in December 1979, Social-Liberal disagreement over the appropriate reaction further drove the coalition partners apart. The majority of the FDP argued that Moscow's invasion was not only a conflict with the Third World but affected East-West relations as well since detente was indivisible. West Germany should now show absolute solidarity with the United States to

³⁶Link, p.303 The principle of 'parity' provided for equal troop reduction on both sides, while 'collectivity' meant that the Western alliance could only *jointly* decide to take on disarmament obligations.

³⁷FAZ, 16.4.80

³⁸Bonner Rundschau, 3.5.80, Interview with H.D.Genscher

improve the situation. In contrast, many Social Democrats, regarding detente as geographically divisible, were much less concerned with the Kremlin's blow against detente than with what they perceived as Washington's 'overreaction' to Afghanistan.³⁹ In addition to the SPD's disagreement with his politics, Genscher this time also had to contend with some inner-FDP opposition. William Borm, member of the FDP's Board, argued that detente had always been divisible for good reasons and that it was now time for an encompassing arms control initiative.

When President Carter decided to boycott the Olympic games in Moscow in 1980, the SPD rejected this step as unnecessarily provocative and argued that such a boycott would not get a single Russian soldier out of Afghanistan. Although eight Bundestag deputies refused to support the government's recommendation that athletes from the Western states not participate in the Olympic games, the National Olympic committee narrowly voted to stay at home. Genscher, who had already fairly early on indicated his and the FDP's support of the Olympic boycott, disapproved of the government's lack of agreement over this issue.⁴⁰

A last factor of pressure on the Social-Liberal coalition was the Union's growing rapprochement with Social-Liberal Ostpolitik. As the SPD left grew increasingly disenchanted with Schmidt's and Genscher's pragmatism, the Union became tacitly reconciled to it. Between 1977 and 1980, Kohl was attempting to promote a more flexible, constructive Union stance on dealing with the East. The Union was not ready, however, to admit that its acceptance of Ostpolitik would be a revision of its foreign policy, just as the SPD had accepted the Christian-Liberal coalition's Westpolitik with its Godesberg decrees of 1959.⁴¹ Kohl's open effort to set the Union on a new course thus never gained real momentum. Nevertheless, during the years 1977-79, the Union did indicate increasing acceptance of Social-Liberal policy. On the whole, in trying to show that Union orthodoxy was compatible with continuation of

³⁹Many Social Democrats unequivocally opposed Washington's economic sanctions against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, in contrast to Genscher's call for solidarity with Washington, Willy Brandt suggested that West Germany should now make use of its position *between* the superpowers and attach the highest priority to agreement with its European partners, especially France.

⁴⁰Der Spiegel, 28.4.80; Genscher cited in Bonner Generalanzeiger, 25.4.80

⁴¹Clemens, Reluctant Realists, p.174

the Eastern dialogue, the Union was moving slowly towards the government's position on Ostpolitik.

The Bundestag elections of 1980

As the Bundestag elections on 5 October 1980 were approaching, various factors seemed to indicate that the existing governmental structure might change after the elections. To begin with, the growing estrangement over the best approach to Ostpolitik between the SPD and FDP seemed reason to question the coalition's longevity. There were also indications that Genscher was preparing his party for a change of coalition partner. In 1976, he had already called for a strategy of 'loosening up' the Free Democrats' commitment to Social-Liberal coalitions on the state level. Soon after the federal elections of 1976, the FDP had indeed entered into two coalitions with the Union in Lower Saxony and Saarland. When Alois Mertes suggested in the late 1970s that Genscher might well remain Foreign Minister in a Christian-Liberal coalition, there were also first indicators of a rapprochement between the Free Democratic Party and the Union.⁴²

A change of the existing governmental structure furthermore seemed quite plausible because a number of factors threatened the Free Democratic Party's very existence in the German party system. For one thing, the local and state elections of 1978 and 1979 had revealed an unmistakable loss of support for the Free Democrats, causing substantial concern among the party. The FDP's survival also seemed threatened by the emergence of a fourth party, the 'Greens' who were mainly concerned with environmental issues. Although in public statements, FDP representatives tried to play down the potential threat of the Greens, at their party congress in June 1979, the Liberals acknowledged that the Greens could threaten the FDP's parliamentary existence.⁴³ The Free Democrats were also worried about the Union's decision of the summer of 1979 to run Franz-Josef Strauß for Chancellor candidate. This way, the FDP's nightmare of an electoral polarization, an election campaign

⁴²Clemens, Reluctant Realists, p.185

⁴³Genscher's and Verheugen's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Bremen, 15.-17.6.1979

dominated by the two Chancellor candidates Strauß and Schmidt, whereby the Liberals would be forgotten, threatened to become reality.

Nevertheless, as this section will show, during the 1980 election campaign, the Free Democrats were once again able to utilize foreign policy for ensuring their re-election in a Social-Liberal coalition. Ironically, the Liberals benefited from the Union's choice of Chancellor candidate since they decided to turn the potential threat of Strauß' candidature into an advantage for themselves. Hoping to avoid the danger that the FDP would be ground down in the election campaign between the two big parties, the Free Democrats decided to concentrate on Foreign Minister Genscher's personality instead of presenting four cabinet members as a 'Liberal team' in the manner of the 1976 election.⁴⁴ Hans-Dietrich Genscher was well known after his four years as Foreign Minister, and he had a relatively high and consistent popularity ranking. During his four years in office, Genscher had managed well to combine official duties of high publicity value, such as trips to Washington and Moscow, with a very heavy speaking schedule and thus seemed perfect for presenting a less refined and more popular image of the FDP than in 1976.⁴⁵

In addition to running a personalized election campaign, the Free Democrats now removed any speculations about the Liberals' readiness to drop the SPD after the 1980 elections by overwhelmingly approving of the continuation of the Social-Liberal coalition at their party congress in Freiburg. The FDP had regarded Strauß as its political enemy ever since the *Der Spiegel* affair of 1962, and Strauß in turn made no secret of his contempt for the Liberals. In face of the CSU Minister's candidature, the old coalition partners SPD and FDP thus united once again.

The Free Democrats also benefited from Strauß' candidature since they could now run the election campaign on the functional component of their self-image as coalition 'corrective' instead of on substantive issue positions. The Liberals exploited the Strauß factor as "a challenge to all liberal forces" but also presented themselves as alternative to left-wing radicalism in their election platform for 1980: "Without the FDP, the SPD's left and the CDU/CSU's right wing would gain harmful influence

⁴⁴Soe, *The Free Democratic Party: Two Victories and a Political Realignment*, p.121

⁴⁵Noelle-Neumann, *The Germans. Public opinion polls 1967-1980*, pp.185, 205; *The Economist*, 8.2.82

over practical politics."⁴⁶ Wherever he spoke, Genscher stressed the need for maintaining the Liberals as the guarantor of moderation and stability in Bonn. Genscher even suggested that Schmidt needed 'help' against the SPD's left wing which had started criticizing the Chancellor on many issues where Schmidt agreed with the FDP.⁴⁷

In terms of foreign policy, the FDP's strategy largely corresponded with its overall strategy for the 1980 campaign: on the one hand, the Free Democrats clearly signalled that they wanted to continue the Social-Liberal coalition, also for foreign policy reasons, but on the other hand, the Liberals portrayed themselves as necessary foreign policy 'corrective' for both the SPD and the CDU/CSU. The Free Democrats skilfully used the polarization between the two big parties, with the SPD accusing Strauß of lacking the true will for peace and the Union attacking the Social Democrats as the 'Moscow fraction,' for presenting themselves as indispensable foreign policy balancer in the German system. Typically, Jürgen Möllemann, the FDP's security expert, claimed that only the FDP could grant the much-discussed balance between detente and defence:

"...it is very clear from this discussion that of all parties represented in the Bundestag, only the FDP grants a balanced relationship of the two pillars of security policy - namely detente and defence. The CDU exaggerates the aspect of defence, the SPD somewhat neglects it compared with its detente considerations."⁴⁸

Despite such moderate demarcation against its coalition partner, the Free Democrats in the 1980 election campaign again supported Social-Liberal Ostpolitik more strongly than they had done in the previous two years. Apart from the threat of Strauß' candidature, the Liberals now also reconfirmed their commitment to a Social-Liberal policy of detente because of the ongoing public support for Ostpolitik. Although in January 1980, 61% of the population had stated that their opinion of Russia had deteriorated in the last two years (in February 1977, only 25% said the

⁴⁶FDP's election programme 1980 in Friedrich-Naumann Stiftung, Das Programm der Liberalen, pp.13-14

⁴⁷In an interview with *Stuttgarter Zeitung* on 21.8.80, H.D.Genscher said: "...I do not want to expose the Federal Chancellor to the SPD's autocracy."

⁴⁸Möllemann in fdk 119, 24.4.79

same), 74% of the population had declared themselves for continuing detente in the same month.⁴⁹ Overall, however, the FDP's attempts at programmatic distinction could barely conceal the fact that substantive issues did not play a major role in these elections.

The last Social-Liberal cabinet - breakdown of the coalition

The results of the 1980 election campaign were very favourable for the Free Democrats who pushed up their share of the vote by almost one third (10.6%), while the Social Democrats remained nearly stationary (42.9%). Although this gave the coalition a large enough majority to stay in power, the fact remained that not the SPD but the FDP had reaped the 'Schmidt bonus,' and that the Social Democrats were very disappointed about the unbalanced gains from the elections. Instead of consolidating the coalition's strength, the 1980 election campaign had thus increased the potential for conflict within the coalition.⁵⁰ This section will examine how the ongoing erosion of intra-coalition consensus over Ostpolitik and security policy eventually resulted in the breakdown of the Social-Liberal coalition by 1982.

Soon after the elections, the government's problems were enhanced by the growing controversies within the Social Democratic Party. While hitherto, Willy Brandt, Party Chairman, had officially supported Schmidt's foreign policy, after the 1980 elections, the SPD's disagreement over security policy began to extend even to the party leadership. This was most apparent when Brandt travelled to Moscow in May 1981 in an attempt to save as much of detente as possible. In contrast to Genscher, who welcomed Brandt's efforts for an improvement of the climate, this trip finally destroyed any confidence between the Chairman and Chancellor Schmidt, especially when Brandt claimed afterwards that his talks with Brezhnev had undoubtedly shown the Soviet readiness to negotiate and suggested that the blame for the failed negotiations should perhaps much rather be sought in Washington.⁵¹

⁴⁹Noelle-Neumann, The Germans. Public opinion polls 1967-1980, pp.430,466

⁵⁰Jäger, Republik im Wandel, p.171; Clemens, Reluctant Realists, p.205 Compared to their electoral success in 1976, the CDU/CSU had scored relatively low at 44,5% this time.

⁵¹Filmer/Schwan, p.231

In addition to the crisis in the SPD's leadership, Schmidt could no longer fully count on his party's support for his security policy. Most members of the SPD now claimed that they had only approved of the NATO dual-track decision under the condition that the demilitarization talks had a 'political priority' over NATO's modernization of intermediate-range nuclear missiles.⁵² Since there had not yet been any serious negotiations between Washington and Moscow by early 1981, large parts of the SPD no longer felt committed to their 'yes' to the rearmament part of the NATO dual-track decision. More than 10.000 SPD members signed the so-called 'Krefeld appeal,' requesting West Germany's withdrawal from the NATO dual-track decision.

With his primary intention still being to hold on to the Social-Liberal coalition at this point of time, Schmidt now thought it necessary formally to be assured of his party's support for his security policy. Before his trip to the United States in May 1981, Schmidt thus threatened to resign if the Social Democrats withdrew from the NATO dual-track decision. About half a year later, the Chancellor even resorted to the strongest disciplining means at his disposal according to the Basic Law, when he asked both his party and his coalition partner for a vote of no confidence. On 5 February 1982, the Bundestag voted on Schmidt's petition, which resulted in the coalition's unanimous 'yes' vote for the Chancellor.⁵³ Although the vote of no confidence resulted in a confirmation of the coalition's support of Schmidt, the fact that such a vote had to take place in the first place was the best sign that the coalition was crumbling.

Apart from the growing disagreement over detente and security policy within the SPD, the Social-Liberal coalition was facing increasing pressure due to internal controversies within the Free Democratic Party. The FDP's May 1981 party congress in Cologne, dominated by a security-political discussion, clearly demonstrated the left- and right wing rift within the party. Similarly to Schmidt's struggle in the SPD,

⁵²Der Spiegel, 5.1.81

⁵³Note (1) that with 269 votes, Schmidt even gained three more votes than in the secret Bundestag elections in 1980, and (2) that this procedure was a novelty in German politics, as the only other vote of no confidence that had been held in the Federal Republic's history had resulted in a 'no' and led to the end of the Brandt-Scheel government in 1972. This time, the vote of no confidence was meant to and did confirm the confidence in the Chancellor.

Genscher had to fight for support of the NATO dual-track decision in the FDP. While it used to be Genscher's strength that he knew how to reconcile the two wings in the FDP, by now, the Party Chairman was seen as belonging to the FDP's right wing around Count Lambsdorff, characterized by its loyalty towards NATO. In Cologne, William Borm sharply attacked Genscher's security policy and requested more distance from Washington. Parts of the FDP now also promoted security-political goals which clearly contrasted with the Liberals' election programme of 1980.⁵⁴

Since Genscher at this point of time still primarily aimed at prolonging the Social-Liberal coalition's survival until 1984, the Foreign Minister resorted to similar means as Chancellor Schmidt to ensure the FDP's support for the rearmament decision: he threatened to withdraw from office if the FDP party congress questioned his position. In addition to Genscher's desire to give Chancellor Schmidt a sign of his reliability and to demonstrate the importance he and his party attached to security policy, the Foreign Minister also feared for a loss of confidence with his NATO partners if his party no longer backed the government's security policy. While Genscher managed to ensure the support of a majority of the FDP in Cologne, one third of the delegates still openly refused to support the NATO dual-track decision.

The climate within the FDP deteriorated further when William Borm published an article in the magazine *Der Spiegel* in which he attacked Hans-Dietrich Genscher for his "unchecked rejection of Soviet demilitarization offers."⁵⁵ Borm argued that the Foreign Office under Genscher attached conditions to disarmament that made progress practically impossible and that the Federal Republic was both underestimating its own and exaggerating the Soviet Union's military strength. The controversies between Borm and Genscher again erupted openly when part of the FDP was planning to participate in peace demonstrations in Bonn on 10 October 1981. Borm wrote an open letter to numerous members of the government in which he claimed that this powerful peace movement was the result of the government's failure to undertake certain efforts for peace. Genscher this time officially put Borm in his place: "..While (Borm) of course has the right to speak for

⁵⁴DFS, 5.3.82, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁵⁵Der Spiegel, 24.8.81

himself, he does not have the right to speak for the Free Democratic Party. Where are we, after all?..."⁵⁶ Genscher did not want any FDP members to participate in the demonstrations because the goals of the demonstrators clashed with the government's security policy.

While both the SPD's and the FDP's internal conflicts over Ostpolitik were increasing, the Union's rapprochement with Ostpolitik continued to evolve. In contrast to its rather vague reconciliation with Social-Liberal foreign policy before the 1980 elections, the CDU/CSU now approached the government much more concretely. At its Hamburg party congress in November 1981, the CDU eased the path for a Christian-Liberal coalition by its official acceptance of Ostpolitik. During early 1982, an equally evident softening occurred in the Union's position on German-German relations. The CDU/CSU now less and less tied negotiations to preconditions of any sort, and discreetly, if not secretly, the party in 1982 held an increasing number of talks with East German officials to discuss how a new Union government would approach inner-German relations.⁵⁷

In face of the growing intra- and inter-coalition disagreement over Ostpolitik and the opposition's increasing rapprochement, both the Social Democrats and the FDP slowly grew more and more aware that their coalition might not last until 1984. From the summer of 1981 onwards, both coalition partners thus readjusted their previous strategies of holding on to the government with all means. Instead, the FDP and SPD became more reticent about their mutual commitment to the Social-Liberal coalition. The two parties now tried to portray each other as deviator from previous Social-Liberal positions in an act of pre-emption since they were equally determined to refuse any responsibility for a possible collapse of the coalition.

The Free Democrats indicated their growing doubts about the longevity of the Social-Liberal coalition by making concerted efforts at clarifying their liberal (as opposed to Social-Democratic) positions on economic and security-political issues. In a public letter of 20 August 1981 to leading party members, the so-called 'Wende' letter, Genscher

⁵⁶WDR/NDR, 3.10.81, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁵⁷Clemens, *Reluctant Realists*, pp.222, 226

clearly stated the FDP's position on economic and social questions.⁵⁸ While Genscher's letter caused much speculation, it hardly points to the fact that the Party Chairman wanted the coalition to break down over domestic issues. Similarly, Genscher pleaded for a clear liberal stance on foreign policy. The Foreign Minister repeatedly emphasized that the FDP was sticking to the government programme of 1980 with its clear commitment to both parts of the NATO dual-track decision: "It will not be due to the FDP whether this coalition will survive for four years or not."⁵⁹

In addition to clarifying the FDP's substantive positions, by mid-1982, Genscher also more strongly than previously praised the Union for moving towards the government's policy. Genscher commented very favourably on the Union's official acceptance of Ostpolitik, and when asked whether it would be difficult to conduct Ostpolitik with the Union in the future, Genscher replied: "No, if the Union continues to follow this tendency."⁶⁰ The impression of a Christian-Liberal rapprochement was further intensified in June 1982, when during a meeting in Bonn, leading CDU/CSU politicians argued that the central elements of Genscher's foreign policy were identical with the Union's concepts.

Despite such FDP efforts to gain some distance from its coalition partner, observers did note Genscher's ambivalence. The Foreign Minister was neither aggressively distinguishing the FDP from the SPD nor did he seem entirely convinced that Union fundamentalists were in fact ready to live with continuity in German foreign policy. Genscher's actual strategy in this difficult situation was to *wait* until 1984 and prepare the FDP for a change of coalition partner by then. Partly, this decision was based on Schmidt's continuing popularity. If the Free Democrats openly left him, they could not only seem illoyal and suffer electoral penalty, but the FDP could also split so much over this move that it would threaten its existence. The Liberals thus hoped that the SPD would betray Schmidt, which put them in a waiting and passive position. Apart from their determination to avoid the blame in case the coalition

⁵⁸In the 'Wende' letter, Genscher spoke of the need for a turnaround (Wende) in the country's policies in order to revive private enterprise, curb runaway social programmes and remove obstacles to productive effort.

⁵⁹DFS, 15.4.82, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁶⁰SZ, 15.3.82; Die Welt, 16.6.82

broke down, the FDP also could not become more active because it was split into two wings itself. The Free Democrats could not use security policy for coalition conflicts because on the issue of the NATO dual-track decision, they were split the most.

Certainly, the FDP also decided to wait and see because the Free Democrats somewhat benefited from the growing polarization of the German party system. The magazine *Der Spiegel* argued in March 1981 that, due to the coalition's conflicts, Genscher had long since been the strongest figure at the top of the government in Bonn and that the Foreign Minister had in fact become the 'secret Chancellor' without changing the coalition. At the beginning of 1981, Genscher also for the first time surpassed Schmidt in popularity: on a plus-minus scale from plus 5 to minus 5, Schmidt had sunk from a popularity of 2.7 (summer 1980) to 2.1, whereas Genscher had stayed at the level of 2.2.⁶¹

While the FDP thus decided to focus on substantive positions to avoid any possible blame for the end of the coalition and generally assumed a waiting position, the Social Democrats were equally busy with the question of how they could best portray the FDP as deviator from Social-Liberal politics at their party congress in March 1982. Faced with Schmidt's repeated threat of resignation and with the Chancellor's suggestion that the final decision about the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Germany would only be taken in the fall of 1983 and "in light of the results of the negotiations in Geneva," the Social Democrats approved of this suggestion with a great majority.⁶² Such comparatively strong SPD support of Schmidt in the NATO dual-track issue made some Liberals who otherwise wanted to leave the coalition more hesitant. In the long run, however, the Chancellor's demonstration of his party's support could not cover up the fact that many SPD members felt highly uncomfortable with their decisions in Munich.

In addition to the growing doubts within the coalition about this Social-Liberal partnership's duration until 1984, several external factors now also indicated the crumbling of the governing coalition. After the Bundestag elections of 1980, more and more Social-Liberal coalitions on the state level lost their majority, which increased both the SPD's and the FDP's fear about the government's stability at the federal level. In

⁶¹Der Spiegel, 23.3.81; Die Zeit, 13.1.81

⁶²Filmer/Schwan, p.216; Jäger, *Republik im Wandel*, p.218

January 1981, the Social-Liberal coalition in Berlin lost its majority, which was of symbolic importance since the very first Social-Liberal coalition in the Federal Republic's history had been formed in Berlin in 1963 (it had been the forerunner of the Social-Liberal coalition at the federal level from 1969 onwards). Equally significantly, after some initial resistance, the local FDP decided to tolerate a CDU minority government under Richard von Weizsäcker in Berlin.

In the end, it was Schmidt who decided to change his strategy from passive waiting to an active working towards the end of the coalition. The Chancellor returned from his August 1982 holidays probably determined to end the Social-Liberal coalition by putting the blame on the FDP and Genscher.⁶³ It was not in Schmidt's interest to delay what now appeared to have become an inevitable divorce. In the urgent domestic negotiations, Schmidt had much more in common with the Liberals than with his own party, and the SPD felt betrayed by Schmidt's concessions towards the FDP in this area. At the same time, Schmidt realized that there would be no US-Soviet rapprochement concerning arms control which made the stationing of intermediate range nuclear missiles from autumn 1983 onwards all the more likely. Schmidt had severe doubts about governing with a SPD that had moved so far away from his own political positions.

By charging the Liberals with disloyalty, he could hope to revive his own party and draw sympathy votes in the upcoming state elections in Hesse and elsewhere. Being aware of his party's eroding support for the government's security policy, Schmidt's plan was to construct a domestic political position that would inevitably lead to a break with the Liberals and allow him to blame the coalition's failure on the FDP. The Chancellor was greatly aided in his plan by Count Lambsdorff's growing determination to confront the SPD more harshly on economic issues. In the cabinet session of 1 September 1982, Schmidt asked the Minister of Economics to work out his economic goals. Initially, the FDP leadership did not know about this Lambsdorff paper, and when Genscher and Mischnick saw it shortly before Count Lambsdorff passed it on to the

⁶³Filmer/Schwan, p.248

Chancellor a few days later, both urgently, but unsuccessfully, asked the Minister of Economics not to give it to Schmidt.⁶⁴

As Genscher and Mischnick had feared, Schmidt now indeed used Lambsdorff's far-reaching proposals to justify the breakdown of the coalition. In this situation where the Chancellor felt he had to decide between the Social-Liberal coalition and his party, Schmidt chose the SPD and returned to emotional solidarity with his party. On 9 September 1982, the Chancellor addressed the FDP's political ambivalence in a Bundestag speech and asked opposition leader Helmut Kohl for a constructive vote of no confidence on the grounds that the Social-Liberal coalition's course had moved away too much from Social-Democratic principles. His speech was brilliant because it created the impression that it had been the Liberals who had deviated from Social-Liberal politics.⁶⁵

In his defence during the Bundestag debates of 15 and 16 September 1982, Genscher essentially stuck to the FDP's previous strategies of vagueness and praising the Liberals' reliability in foreign policy. In his speeches, Genscher presented himself and the FDP as true guarantors of foreign political continuity and urged the SPD to support unambiguously his concept of West German foreign and security policy.⁶⁶ Essentially, Genscher thus did not give up his vague stance on the coalition issue even now and still pursued his strategy of blaming the SPD for a possible breakdown of the coalition:

"Indeed, this was one of the problems in the coalition between Free and Social Democrats because our citizens have been able to observe how more and more SPD members have stopped supporting the government's foreign and security policy since the federal elections in 1980, and how foreign and security policy became an instrument of war within the Social Democratic party against Chancellor Helmut Schmidt...These

⁶⁴Die Zeit, 10.9.82; DLF, 16.9.88, Interview with W. Mischnick (fdk, 16.9.88)
Note that Schmidt himself identified with many positions in the paper but this did not play a role now.

⁶⁵Soe, *The Free Democratic Party: Two Victories and a Political Realignment*, p.129
Schmidt pointed out that the FDP had only achieved such excellent election results in 1980 because of his own popularity and directly blamed Genscher for the breakdown of the coalition: "Since August last year, the FDP-Chairman has very systematically and step-by-step moved away from all previous declarations." Schmidt, DB, 118th sess., 9.9.-1.10.82, government declaration

⁶⁶Genscher, DB, 118th sess., 15.-16.9.82, government declaration

internal Social-Democratic rifts have certainly contributed to the government's increasing problems."⁶⁷

In the morning of 17 September 1982, Schmidt received Genscher and Mischnick and asked the FDP ministers to resign. The four liberal ministers turned in their resignations immediately. Genscher reported to the FDP's parliamentary party later in the day where he received an almost two-thirds' approval for immediate coalition negotiations with the Christian Democrats. Several left-wing Liberals tried to fight the decision but failed since Genscher did have a majority of the FDP, albeit a very small one, behind him. Many of these left-wing Liberals were at any rate less concerned with the actual change of coalition partner than with the 'putsch from above,' the manner in which the FDP's leadership had enforced the change on the party.⁶⁸ Overall, despite many defections, a party split was avoided, and 1 October 1982 was set as the date for the vote of no confidence. On that date, Chancellor Schmidt was defeated in the Bundestag by a seven-vote majority and replaced by Helmut Kohl.⁶⁹ Kohl's government declaration indicated how far the Union had adopted to the existing foreign policy.

Although the approval of a Christian-Liberal coalition by the Bundestag and the FDP's success at maintaining the Liberals' unity seemed to signal that the Free Democrats were coping with the change of coalition partner quite well, the FDP's public image had suffered tremendously from the events during the past months. Schmidt's thesis of the FDP's and Genscher's betrayal of the Social-Liberal coalition started to take its course and was intensified when the former Chancellor justified his procedure by reference to alleged secret agreements between Kohl and Genscher to form a coalition. This created the impression that Kohl and Genscher had already agreed on the questions of personnel in a new Christian-Liberal coalition while the Social-Liberal coalition was still going on.

Genscher was now the 'ugly boy' of the nation and had to deal with a lot of bad and hostile press coverage of the Wende, blaming him. In

⁶⁷DLF, 3.10.82, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁶⁸Soe, The Free Democratic Party: Two Victories and a Political Realignment, p.129

⁶⁹256 deputies voted for the constructive vote of no confidence, 235 against it, and there were 4 abstentions. A handful of FDP dissidents had voted against Kohl.

reality, there had been no such agreement between Kohl and Genscher whose last encounter had taken place in May 1982. Nevertheless, the majority of the German citizens interpreted the FDP's change of coalition partner as 'treason.'⁷⁰ Since Genscher had never explicitly talked about his intentions in 1982, many members of the German government but also large parts of the German public had grown quite suspicious of him. As the Foreign Minister admitted in an interview with *The Guardian* later in the same year, he had erred in handling the switch of coalition partner by "acting too late."⁷¹

Conclusion

Looked at overall, this chapter has shown that while to a certain extent, the domestic factors enabled the FDP to exert a disproportionately big influence over foreign policy between 1974 and 1982, in many ways, the domestic-political constellations during the Social-Liberal coalition were not very favourable for the Free Democratic Party. On the one hand, concerning the distribution of power between the Chancellor's Office and the Foreign Office, the FDP benefited from Chancellor Schmidt's personal preference for global matters rather than the minute details of inner-German relations. As a result, Schmidt left much of Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik to Foreign Minister Genscher who dominated Bonn's German policy in this coalition, although for constitutional reasons, he could not admit so in public. During the Social-Liberal coalition, the FDP furthermore profited from its successful resistance against Schmidt's 1976 attempt to unite the competences for Ostpolitik and German policy in the hands of one new state secretary, Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski. On the other hand, we have also seen that precisely Chancellor Schmidt's expertise in matters of economics and foreign policy and the high level of agreement between the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister over the best approach towards Eastern Europe generally rendered it difficult for the FDP to develop an independent profile.

⁷⁰Jäger, *Republik im Wandel*, p.261; Filmer/Schwan, pp.263, 265

⁷¹The Guardian, 6.11.82

In terms of favourable domestic constellations, the Free Democrats also benefited from Hans-Dietrich Genscher's double function as Foreign Minister and Party Chairman between 1974 and 1982. Genscher very well knew to how hide the FDP's weaknesses, such as its frequently fickle role when it came to the choice of a coalition partner and the party's lack of clearly liberal programmatic positions. With his strategy of committing the FDP to a coalition partner before the elections and with his consequent and exclusive emphasis on the Free Democrats' positive aspects, Genscher at least managed to save the FDP from a complete loss of power in 1982, be it at the cost of renewed suspicion about the Free Democrats' opportunistic traits. In general, Genscher, who himself termed the FDP a 'party of Ministers,' seemed to see nothing wrong with his strong leadership role, being well aware of his own importance for the Liberals during elections.

Regarding the issue of parliamentary opposition in the Bundestag and Bundesrat, however, the domestic situation was complicated for the Free Democrats for most of the 1970s. The Conservatives' fierce resistance to Social-Liberal Ostpolitik not only resulted in heated parliamentary debates about the Final Act of Helsinki, but also nearly led the Union to block passage of the 1976 Polish Accords in the Bundesrat. Nevertheless, it has also been demonstrated that the Union's growing acceptance of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik from the late 1970s onwards (1) finally put an end to the inner-German dissensus over Ostpolitik (phase three of cycle two) and (2) paved the path towards the Christian-Liberal coalition at the federal level from 1982 onwards.

This chapter has also shown that the Free Democrats were not very successful in seizing public opinion for themselves between 1974 and 1982, firstly because of the high level of agreement in Social-Liberal foreign policy for most of the period, and secondly because when the FDP and the SPD began to disagree more strongly about Ostpolitik from about 1978 onwards, public opinion and the growing peace movement were much more in tune with the Social Democrats and the emerging Green Party than with the Free Democrats, least of all the wing around Hans-Dietrich Genscher. For most of the Social-Liberal coalition, the Free Democrats should thus be classified as 'followers' rather than 'leaders' of public opinion. Similarly, while the high level of intra-coalition agreement over Ostpolitik for most of the 1970s made it difficult for the FDP to develop a clear liberal foreign policy profile, the

growing erosion of such consensus after 1978 proved no more advantageous, as it eventually led to the collapse of the Social-Liberal coalition in September 1982.

Chapter V. The impact of liberal ideology, 1974-90

Chapter Four has shown that Genscher used certain methods to shape the FDP's profile in the party system, thereby ensuring its survival and guaranteeing the broadest possible support for his policies. For example, the FDP strongly strove for an independent profile in the areas of reunification and Berlin, and the Liberals also tried hard to portray themselves as the party of 'human rights' and the 'United Nations.' Furthermore, the Free Democrats continuously claimed that of all West German parties, they offered the best balanced approach to the issues of detente and defence. While it seems fairly logical that a small party such as the FDP should employ strategic means to provide itself with an influential stance in the German party system, the question remains open as to *why* the FDP chose precisely the issue areas named above to distinguish itself.

This chapter sets out to investigate why certain issues became more highlighted than others in liberal Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik during the 1970s and 1980s. Since by its very definition, ideology is a static factor and hence unlikely to change dramatically over two decades, this chapter analyses the influence of 'liberal' values on the FDP's Ostpolitik both during the Social-Liberal and during the Christian-Liberal coalition. The question is how far factors such as history, ideology or past experience help to explain the Liberals' focus on the issues named above. Furthermore, it will be investigated whether great Liberals of the past, such as Immanuel Kant or more recently, Gustav Stresemann, still served as role models for the FDP in any way. Lastly, we shall pay attention to the issue of 'Genscherism' and to the question whether and how far Genscherism is something distinctive from general liberal values and ideology.

National unification and the principle of self-determination

Throughout the whole period from 1974 to 1990, the Free Democrats distinguished themselves with their emphasis on striving for national unification. In order to explain this focus, Chapter Two has already traced (1) the historical development of the link between German Liberalism and nationalism and (2) the FDP's continued striving for 'freedom and unity' after 1949. This section seeks to investigate other historical and ideological factors which have contributed to the Free

Democrats' concentration on national issues during the Social-Liberal and Christian-Liberal coalition.

Remembering Stresemann's appeal that Germany should attempt to realize its goals in *cooperation* with its alliance partners instead of *against* them also helps to explain the Free Democrats' approach to reunification. Apart from the principal liberal belief in solidarity beyond the nation state, the FDP was very aware that its only chance ever to achieve reunification lay within the larger framework of European peace-building: "The more European German politics is, the more national it is..."¹ Thus, Genscher made no bones about including the most difficult and burning problem of German foreign policy, the country's division, in the FDP's overall policy of detente and self-determination: "We as Germans must say: only if we fight for the right of self-determination everywhere, we can also credibly demand it for us Germans..."²

Another factor in the Liberals' concentration on reunification certainly also has been their fundamental belief in law as the regulator of international relations. Liberals have historically believed that a proper foreign policy could only result from the laws anchored in a democratic constitution. The FDP has thus tended to pay much attention to the Basic Law (created with the help of some Liberals) as the framework for German foreign policy-making and especially to the constitutional imperative for achieving reunification. In Roger Tilford's words, German foreign policy makers, particularly members of the FDP and the Christian Democrats, have demonstrated a kind of "legalistic mentality."³

In addition, the FDP's special focus on reunification has been reinforced by former LDPD members who changed over to the West German Liberals after the LDPD in the Soviet zone was dissolved into the SED bloc. Those 'East German' Liberals, for example Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Martin Bangemann, Wolfgang Mischnick and Hermann Oxfort have cared about reunification especially strongly. As Genscher said in an interview with *Welt am Sonntag*:

¹Wirtschaftswoche, 16.9.88, Interview with H.D.Genscher; Mayall, Nationalism and International Society, p.30

²Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Kiel, 6.-8.11.1977

³Tilford, p.18

"Certainly the experience I have had immediately after the war as young law student and junior lawyer in my middle-German native country has formed me. The big disappointment was that the attempt to build a democratic community was stifled by a Communist dictatorship even during the first months. When I came to the Federal Republic - at age 25 - the most important task to me seemed to help constructing the democratic state. Especially to keep the German question alive. To complete the unification of the Germans - according to the Basic Law's commission."⁴

For those FDP politicians who left the German Democratic Republic, their controversies with the East German regime have thus coloured their definitions of a state's domestic and external freedom and their desire to see the two German halves reunited.

The FDP has inherited the Liberals' heritage as the party of national unification, albeit in a slightly modified manner. On the one hand, restoration of Germany's unity has remained the main value of foreign policy-making for most Liberals, based on the traditional conviction that a nation could only be completely free if it were unified. Given the continued liberal belief in an inherent link between a people's internal and external right for self-determination, most Free Democrats were convinced that history had not yet spoken its last word on Germany's division and that the national values would assert themselves in the end. As Genscher said: "We cannot accept this division as history's last word on the German nation. This word will be spoken by the German people themselves."⁵

On the other hand, from the experience with Bismarck and during the Third Reich that a nation state without a democratic order was no value in itself, the Free Democrats have modified the previous liberal concept of the nation state. After 1949, the German Liberals have attached greater priority to the aspects of *internal* self-determination - domestic freedom, a democratic constitution and human rights - than to *external* self-determination at any price. The conviction that a nation was

⁴Welt am Sonntag, 14.4.74, Interview with H.D. Genscher

⁵Bull.111, 26.9.74, Genscher's speech before the 29th Assembly of the United Nations in New York on 23.9.74

only of value if certain principles were realized in it has given the Free Democrats the patience to put up with Germany's division.⁶

What was more, while in this view, reunification without self-determination, a democratic constitution and human rights could not be imagined, the reverse order was very well conceivable. Most Free Democrats believed that the West Germans had already realized their right for internal and external self-determination which meant that, in case of reunification, the East Germans would most likely be the only ones still to exercise this right. While the CDU's left wing largely shared the concept of the nation and self-determination with the Liberals, the other parties in the Federal Republic took a different position.

The CSU and many right-wing Christian Democrats, for instance, believed that the *whole* German people was denied the right for self-determination which meant that German reunification could only be achieved if the Germans in both states exercised their right of self-determination. On the one hand, the Social Democrats agreed that the Germans had a right for self-determination and that the national question was still open. On the other hand, they believed that for the time being, self-determination must be subjected to the primary goal of securing peace.⁷

The Free Democrats also adhered to their conviction that German self-determination could theoretically happen without reunification of the two German states after the climate of East-West relations decisively improved in the late 1980s. In her speech at the FDP's Bundeshauptausschuß in 1988, Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, the FDP's General Secretary, termed reunification of the human beings in the two Germanies "more important than reunification of the two German states."⁸ Similarly, the Free Democrats kept emphasizing after the fall of the wall that the West Germans must not expect the East Germans unconditionally to accept the Federal Republic's societal order. On the

⁶'FDP's Perspectives of liberal German policy', decided at the FDP's Party Congress in Mainz, 27.-29.10.1975, in Verheugen, Das Programm der Liberalen, pp.222-228

⁷In a draft for its 1989 party platform, the SPD stated: "..The national question has not yet been solved, but it is subordinated to the requirements of peace..." Zimmer, pp.98, 123

⁸Schmalz-Jacobsen's speech at the FDP's Bundeshauptausschuß in Berlin, 19.11.1988

contrary, the Liberals argued that the GDR citizens now had to exercise the right of self-determination and choose their future model of societal order themselves.

The Berlin factor

Another striking element of the FDP's Ostpolitik-making between 1974 and 1990 was its concentration on the Berlin question. Historical reasons partly account for the importance the Liberals attached to Berlin: Berlin had been the capital of the German nation state when it was first created in 1871, and since 1949, the Free Democrats have always believed that it had to become the capital again if Germany were to be reunited. Since Berlin historically was so inseparably linked to the Liberals' desire and hope for reunification, the FDP cared about it just as 'passionately' as about the national question. Genscher repeatedly stated that, while the FDP accepted Bonn as the Federal Republic's capital, the Liberals' hearts in reality beat in and for Berlin. Bonn was fine as long as Germany remained a divided country, but Germany's real capital in the long run would have to be Berlin: "Just as the English love their London, the French their Paris and the Russians their Moscow, we stand by our Berlin, its freedom and its vitality."⁹

Besides its importance for historical-emotional reasons, Berlin was at the very centre of the FDP's foreign policy thinking and hence of decisive importance. The FDP's plan to work towards a condition of peace in Europe in which the German people could regain its unification in free self-determination had to *start* from Berlin. Berlin thus played a relevant role both as reminder of Germany's division and as a national appeal to overcome this condition:

"The Berlin question is inseparably tied to the German question. Until its solution, Berlin remains the expression and symbol of the Germans' division resulting from WW II and a request to all political forces to overcome the division in a peaceful way."¹⁰

⁹Genscher cited in Berliner Morgenpost, 5.9.76

¹⁰Bull.67, 21.6.78 This was a joint Berlin statement by all German parties, initiated by the FDP because it considered the Berlin issue too vital for Germany to allow for any domestic controversies about it.

Just as well as Berlin symbolized the Germans' chances ever to overcome their division in a peaceful way, the FDP also attached great importance to the Berlin question because it regarded Berlin as a yardstick of detente. The Liberals believed that detente had to start and to prove itself in this city where the East-West contrasts were strongest. Genscher repeatedly cited Brandt who had said: "The bilateral relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union cannot be better than the situation in Berlin."¹¹

The FDP's focus on Berlin can also partly be explained by its evaluation of the Soviet Union's and the German Democratic Republic's aims over Berlin, at least before Gorbachev assumed power in 1985. Genscher and most of the FDP believed that the Soviet Union in the long run wanted to isolate West Berlin from the West and to turn it into a separate entity. While the Christian Democrats largely concurred with this conviction, the SPD's view here differed from the Liberals: rather than evaluating Moscow's Berlin intentions as *aggressively* oriented towards extending its realm of influence, Social Democrats viewed the Eastern Berlin policy as *defensive* and explained this with the Soviet Union's and the GDR's deep insecurities.

From these different perceptions of Moscow's and East Berlin's motives flowed different strategies for dealing with the Berlin problem. Since the FDP regarded Berlin's status as immediately threatened, they tried to solve the Berlin problem by striving for more West German federal presence in Berlin in accordance with the existing law.¹² In practice, this amounted to the Liberals' demonstration of their interpretation of the Four-Power agreement at every possible opportunity. Since the Social Democrats evaluated Soviet and East-German actions in Berlin more as defensive than as aggressive, they did not think it so important constantly to point out their Berlin interpretation or even to create situations where they could demonstrate their view. As Dietrich Stobbe (SPD), mayor of Berlin, said in 1976: "The Four-Power agreement is not made for harping on principles."¹³ Much more than in demonstrations of firm legal positions, the SPD

¹¹Genscher, DB, 115th session, 18.9.74, government declaration

¹²Hoppe, DB, 7th sess., 19.1.77, debate about the government declaration; Genscher, DB, 34th sess., 20.6.91, debate about the German capital

¹³Stobbe cited in Der Spiegel, 13.12.76; Die Zeit, 4.7.75

believed in practical improvements for Berlin, for example by strengthening its economy.

Although the Free Democrats had strongly promoted Berlin as pan-German capital all throughout the Social-Liberal and Christian-Liberal coalitions, their support for Berlin as capital of a unified Germany was no longer so unanimous when the option actually arose in 1989/90. Some Free Democrats now argued that, given Berlin's association with Reichs continuity and its former militarist connections, Bonn should remain the German capital since it symbolized forty years of German democracy since the war.¹⁴

However, most Free Democrats held that Berlin should become the pan-German capital, precisely *because* Germany had overcome its militarist history. In their view, Germany had thoroughly proved its democratic intentions since 1945 and now needed to move its capital to Berlin since this would symbolize the beginning of a new, yet more promising phase in German history: the replacement of the Cold War order by a European peace order and the end of both Germany's and Europe's division. After the centre of German politics had clearly shifted Eastwards with the opening of Eastern Europe, German politics must now pay tribute to this new development by being formulated in and executed from the centre of the new Europe.¹⁵ According to the Liberal supporters of Berlin, a 'yes' for Berlin was furthermore necessary to demonstrate solidarity with the new German states.

Human rights and the issue of non-intervention

Another area in which liberal foreign policy between 1974 and 1990 has been characterized by clear priorities is that of humanitarian issues. Much more than the Social Democrats and the Union, Genscher and the FDP have emphasized the need for humanitarian measures to maximize individual freedom for people in all states in the world. Therefore, this chapter will next examine the question why the Liberals have cared so strongly about humanitarian questions.

¹⁴Adam-Schwaetzer, DB, 34th sess., 20.6.91, debate about the German capital

¹⁵Lüder, DB, 34th sess., 20.6.91, debate about the German capital

To begin with, however difficult it may be to define the concept 'liberalism' appropriately, most Liberals everywhere would probably agree that striving for greater individual freedom is one, if not *the* central element of liberal ideology. With the liberal striving for individual freedom comes the desire to maximize individual freedom for all human beings. Hence, Liberals have been guided by the conviction that detente must not remain something abstract for the human beings but that it must aim at increasing all human beings' individual freedom. The fact that the FDP, which liked to see itself as a party of 'rationally justifiable' progress, *equated* progress and human rights has also played a role in the Liberals' concentration on the human rights question: "...Progress can always only be evaluated by checking whether the individual human being gets more human rights."¹⁶

So much in terms of explaining the liberal efforts to maximize human rights for all human beings. How should the Liberals go about achieving this goal, however? The Free Democrats were bound to run into ideological conflicts here because their aspiration to maximize human rights worldwide was not very compatible with other liberal principles. The FDP faced the difficult question what to do with those states that did not *want* to maximize human rights for their citizens. The essential dilemma here was the contradiction between individual liberty and national self-determination since after all, it was also a liberal principle to request maximum internal and external freedom for all states. How the Liberals coped with this dilemma will be shown next.

In many ways, the Free Democrats initially made clear that they did not intend or expect a destabilization of the Communist regimes with their demand for greater realization of human rights. The Liberals repeatedly stated that it was not the purpose of their foreign policy to influence conditions in other countries in a missionary way. Apart from their aversion against exporting ideology, the Liberals further abstained from interference with the Communist regimes because they feared that detente would be impeded if the Federal Republic tried too hard to destabilize its negotiation partners. The FDP believed that in dealing with the Communist countries, West Germany had to respect the Warsaw Pact's basic interests just as much as their own:

¹⁶Die Welt, 28.9.74, Interview with H.D.Genscher

"The Communists can only take on our concept of freedom for the price of self-defeat. We know that we cannot expect and achieve this, and we ought to adjust to it in our practical politics..."¹⁷

Since the principal differences between the two societal systems could not - and should not - be removed for the time being, the Free Democrats thought that they at least had to opt for the best cooperation presently possible. The Liberals were convinced that despite substantive ideological differences, the area where West Germany's interests could be made compatible with those of the Eastern states had not yet been examined and defined with the necessary thoroughness.

Despite this readiness for cooperation and for a power-political coexistence between the different systems, the FDP also always made very clear that detente must by no means be confused with Western domestic political adjustment to Communism and that any ideological cooperation was completely taboo. Genscher repeatedly stressed that any Communist attempts "to creep into power in felt slippers..." would immediately remove the basis for successful detente.¹⁸ Thus, for the time being, the Free Democrats neither thought it possible nor intended to change the Communist systems with their human rights policy. Instead, the Liberals pleaded for as much cooperation as possible in the interest of the human beings concerned.

A closer look at the party's statements shows, however, that the FDP's *long-term* expectations and goals concerning the human rights dilemma did not correspond to its short-term expectations and behaviour. Despite all their emphasis on peaceful coexistence of the two systems, most Liberals were convinced that in the end the liberal idea would assert itself over Communism for several reasons. For one thing, the Liberals believed that the Communist regimes had no future because they ignored fundamental human desires for self-determination, individual rights and national unity, in contrast represented by the FDP. Similarly, the Liberals also partly interpreted the East-West tensions as conflict between two concepts of legitimacy and believed that the Communist systems had little future because they entirely lacked any support by their population. As

¹⁷Hoppe, DB, 29th sess., 26.5.77, debate on German policy

¹⁸ZDF, 25.1.76, Interview with H.D.Genscher

the Liberals saw it, the Communist regimes, completely out of tune with the human beings' desires and entirely lacking any democratic legitimacy, were "...turning against the wheel of history which they c(ould) maybe retard for a while in their sphere of influence but which they c(ould) not stop...."¹⁹ In the long run, Communism, the reactionary force, thus plainly had no chance to survive against Liberalism, the progressive force. Genscher even went so far as to term Socialism "an historical error."²⁰ The FDP thought that destabilization of the Eastern bloc would eventually be unavoidable because the liberal idea was morally superior and much more catching:

"The Liberal does not simply accept things the way they are now. He checks whether they can be improved, in the sense of more freedom for the individual, and then he goes ahead to improve them... There is a reason why Communists and Fascists have always seen their true enemy in Liberalism. They know: the liberal idea is infectious, it is attractive for human beings, it cannot be hushed up. The Liberal is always convincing where he makes his deep principles, his ideas also practically visible."²¹

The FDP's claim that it did not aim at the destabilization of the Communist regimes was thus modified by its principal conviction that the Western democratic systems would in the end assert themselves over any dictatorial regime.

The Free Democrats' approach to the rival claims of human rights and non-intervention was similarly ambiguous and showed strong traces of Immanuel Kant's legacy. On the one hand, the Liberals had inherited Kant's belief that the principle of non-intervention was a prerequisite for the achievement of peace among nations. Kant's fifth preliminary article for "Perpetual Peace" read that no state should interfere *by force* in the constitution or government of another state. On the other hand, Kant had been well aware that the rule of non-intervention was not fully compatible with the other articles in his pamphlet, particularly the first

¹⁹Bull.123, 31.10.78, Genscher before the UNESCO in Paris on 30.10.78

²⁰Esprit, August 1976, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²¹Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hamburg, 30.9.-2.10.1974

definitive article which read: "The civil constitution of every state shall be republican."²²

As John Vincent has pointed out, the essential question in this context is which is the more pressing imperative: the rule of non-intervention or an international society made up of republics? Kant had clearly regarded republicanism as prior to non-intervention. In other words, Kant's principle of non-intervention could only apply unconditionally in an international society made up of republican nations.²³ As long as the world did not yet consist of democracies only, Kant had implied an exception to the principle of non-intervention if by intervention a democratic state could be established or a dictatorial regime destroyed. Faced with the Cold War situation, the German Liberals were neither able nor wanted to make direct use of Kant's exception to the principle of non-intervention during most of the 1970s and 1980s. However, as will be shown next, most Free Democrats have nevertheless been guided by Kant's legacy that the principle of non-intervention could be modified if it served the liberal cause.

Let us now take a look at Liberal actions between 1974 and 1990 which showed the FDP's special commitment to human rights. The Free Democrats demonstrated their commitment to human rights by fervently advocating the inclusion of Basket Three during the CSCE negotiations leading up to the signing of the Final Act of Helsinki in 1975. What were the results that the FDP expected from its active participation in the CSCE, then? The Free Democrats here essentially demonstrated the same clash between short-term and long-term expectations as overall in the human rights dilemma. In terms of short-term expectations, the Liberals made it clear that the CSCE was not out to change the political, economic or social system of any of the participating countries and that they would adhere to the principle of non-intervention which had also been anchored in the Final Act. As Genscher said: "The Final Act is not an instruction

²²Kant, 'On Perpetual Peace,' in Reiss, p.99. Note that 'Perpetual Peace' essentially consisted of two sections: the first section contained six 'Preliminary articles' which are best understood as a set of rules that could and should be applied in the absence of perpetual peace. A full system of peace required realization of the three 'Definitive articles' which were discussed in the second section. The distinction between preliminary and definitive articles was based on Kant's reasoning that the absence of war was not yet the same as peace. Brown, pp.34-35

²³Vincent, Nonintervention and International Order, p.57

for the export of societal systems..."²⁴ Since Helsinki, the Foreign Minister had repeatedly warned of expecting spectacular results immediately, arguing that the CSCE was the best possible solution in the *present* situation since it provided a chance to bring at least step-by-step progress for the human beings.

Despite their repeated warning that the CSCE was but a chance and that it would be both unfair and unrealistic to expect dramatic results, the Free Democrats nevertheless had not given up hope that in the *long run* Basket III might possibly effect some liberalization of the East. In the FDP's view, the principle of non-intervention would in the end be subordinated to the principle of human rights for two reasons: firstly, since the Eastern European states had voluntarily signed the Final Act and had thereby committed themselves to humanitarian principles based on Western definitions, they could no longer justifiably complain about Western interference with their domestic affairs. Secondly, in line with Kant's legacy, the Free Democrats tended to view their influence in Eastern Europe not as interference with the Soviet Union's domestic affairs but as a way of saving the Eastern European people from the dictatorial interference of the Soviet government suppressing fundamental human rights.²⁵ The FDP's assumption that any action less than dictatorial interference (which was happening in the Soviet Union) was not illegal was clearly coloured by Kant.

When the perspectives for a substantial improvement of the human rights situation in the Communist states - and hence for realizing the Liberals' long-term goals - greatly increased in face of the opening up of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, the Free Democrats became more outspoken in their approach to the human rights issue. While the FDP still warned against using Western economic and technological superiority for an attempt to destabilize the Eastern European states, the Free Democrats also signalled their active support for those states that were engaged in a process of realizing 'liberal' values, i.e. individual freedom, human rights and a democratic constitution. As Hans-Dietrich Genscher expressed it:

²⁴Bull.38, 3.4.85, Genscher's speech before the demilitarization conference in Geneva on 2.4.85

²⁵Genscher, DB, 78th sess., 10.3.78, SPD/FDP's inquiry about the FRG's role in the UN; Vincent, Human Rights and International Relations, p.67

" I have frequently stated that it is not our goal to destabilize our Eastern neighbours. That would be irresponsible and unreasonable. We are interested in the reform processes taking place without destabilizing effects... According to our concept of freedom, the introduction of more civil rights will contribute to a state's and a society's inner *stability*, whereas the means of repression will have a destabilizing effect in the long run."²⁶

Although most Liberals admitted that they had not expected the developments of the late 1980s to happen so fast or even in their lifetime, they nevertheless viewed the breakdown of Eastern Europe as a triumph of liberalism.²⁷ At the Liberals' party congress in Hanover in 1990, Otto Lambsdorff typically expressed this view:

"Today is a historical day for the Liberals and for Germany...We can be proud of our liberal ideals. It is our liberal values which have asserted themselves in the GDR's peaceful revolution and in the Central and Eastern European states' reform process."²⁸

According to Genscher, the Free Democrats had never before felt so confirmed in their history. The Liberals' sense of triumph becomes somewhat more understandable if one considers the special characteristics of the Eastern European Revolution which, unlike other Revolutions, did not aim at overthrowing the existing world order but rather at replacing the Communist system with the Western democratic values.²⁹ For a moment, the FDP's aims of global human rights and worldwide democracy indeed seemed within reach. The next section will look at this traditional liberal objective of a democratic world order based on international law in more detail.

²⁶SZ, 21.6.89, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²⁷Note that in November 1987, Genscher had for instance still expressed his view that Gorbachov "...absolutely certainly does not aim at doing away with Socialism and replacing it by a free-democratic order..." NDR II, 25.11.87, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²⁸Lambsdorff's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hanover, 11.-12.8.1990

²⁹Halliday, p.2

United Nations/International law

As indicated above, another striking aspect of the FDP's foreign policy-making has been its concentration on international law. Therefore, this chapter will now examine to what degree the Liberals' commitment to the United Nations and to international law can be explained by their ideological heritage. To begin with, while the Free Democrats have inherited Kant's recognition that man is neither fundamentally good nor naturally peaceable, they have also shared Kant's view that the situation can be improved and power can be tamed by international law. Furthermore, the Liberals have proceeded from the assumption that the individual and not the state plays the key role in politics and in ideology. Hence, international relations are not about states but about the individuals of which these states are composed.

The combination of these two beliefs, in the room for improvement and in the priority of the individual over state autonomy, accounts for the FDP's attempt to secure peace by building a commonwealth of nations based on international law and international institutions. The Free Democrats have proceeded from the assumption that every individual has certain basic rights which the state must secure domestically and the United Nations internationally.³⁰ According to liberal reasoning, the individual in the state thus needed to give up some of his personal freedom in order to have it secured by the state, just as the nation in the international scene out of voluntary self-interest needed to give up some of its national independence in order to guarantee its survival with the help of international law.

Furthermore, based on their conviction that the individual mattered more than the state, the Free Democrats have attempted to extend the framework of morality beyond the borders of the state, trying to develop an international morality that could be applied globally. Kant had already called for a "public law of mankind", making a "violation of law and right in one place felt in all others." The Free Democrats have inherited the belief that states have no right to autonomy when this autonomy could

³⁰Bull.122, 26.10.78, Genscher's speech before the German society of the United Nations on 24.10.78; See also Henry Shue's book "Basic Rights," in which he maintains that there is a set of economic rights that are as basic as civil and political rights. Shue argues that it is the primary duty of governments to secure the rights of all men. Shue, pp.18-34

involve the violation of universally applicable standards of human behaviour. As Genscher said in 1983:

"If the individual is not protected from injustice and arbitrariness in a state, this affects the community of states as a whole. The effects of an absence of rights and disdain of human beings do not stop at the borders."³¹

Notwithstanding the strong link between Free Democrats' belief in international law and Kant's legacy, one other aspect seems noteworthy in this context. Although Genscher already stressed that the Liberals based their support for the United Nations on Kant's "Perpetual Peace" in his first speech before the UN in 1974, the Foreign Minister had left out an important detail. While Kant had indeed laid out the basic principles of international cooperation in his pamphlet, and while these principles have been anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, due to the different 'Zeitgeist,' Kant had not considered an institutionalization of the principles of international peace necessary.³²

Apart from Kant's influence, the Liberals have also considered the United Nations very important for reasons of historical experience. During his 1974 speech before the United Nations, Genscher explained that due to Germany's situation as a divided country, the Germans were especially aware that states were incomplete constructions. According to Genscher, Germans thus tended to have comparatively little confidence in their state's ability to cope with big international issues and were prone to believe that peace, freedom and human dignity could only be ensured by a reliable order of international relations.

Although the Liberals also had to acknowledge that claim and reality of the system of the United Nations were still far apart, they refuted any scepticism towards the United Nations, arguing that it after all was "...the only worldwide forum of an institutionalized dialogue we

³¹Kant, 'On Perpetual Peace,' in Reiss, pp.105-108; Bull.97, 27.9.83, Genscher's speech on occasion of the tenth anniversary of the FRG's membership in the United Nations

³²Bull.111, 26.9.74, Genscher's speech before the 29th Assembly of the United Nations on 23.9.74; Brown, p.35

have."³³ Instead of criticizing the United Nations' lack of efficiency, the Liberals have attached much greater importance to extending its competences. The FDP was convinced that with growing recognition of global interdependence, the role of the United Nations also had to increase and that the structure of the organisation continually needed to be adjusted to the change of international circumstances and tasks.

The Liberals' enthusiasm for the United Nations can also partly be explained by their conviction that institutionalized international cooperation provided a good base for promoting specifically German interests. The FDP viewed the United Nations as the ideal forum to discuss all the principles and goals of German foreign policy-making before the whole world, which of course also included addressing the specific German problems and reminding the UN members that such a problem existed in the first place.³⁴ However, the Liberals not only used the United Nations *theoretically* but also regarded it as an important means of achieving an *active* solution to the German problem. For example, part of the FDP's motive of requesting an increase in the United Nations' competences certainly was the Liberals' hope that this would allow for a solution of the German problems in the pan-European framework: "The stronger the United Nations are, the stronger is every member state in its right for self-determination and every human being in his human rights."³⁵ However, the FDP also knew that it was not the United Nations' primary function to solve the German problems and thus made concerted efforts to avoid bringing German issues too much into the foreground.

Let us now take a look at specific FDP actions which demonstrate the Liberals' commitment to the United Nations and international law. In 1976, Genscher suggested that a United Nations' Court of Human Rights be created. One of his motives here was the Liberals' fundamental conviction - as shown above - that they needed to try and proceed from the proclamation of human rights to their worldwide realization and

³³Bull.111, 26.9.74, Genscher's speech before the 29th Assembly of the United Nations on 23.9.74; Bull.22, 20.2.79, Genscher's speech on "Security and detente" on 16.2.79 in Bonn

³⁴DLF, 29.9.76, Interview with H.D.Genscher

³⁵Bull.107, 28.9.78, Genscher's speech before the 33rd General Assembly of the United Nations on 26.9.78

institutionalization. Furthermore, 1976 seemed the appropriate point of time to introduce such an initiative since the European Convention of Human Rights had finally entered into force the same year. As Genscher said: "...If we take the term freedom seriously,...then we have to make sure that these human rights pacts do not yellow in the United Nation's archives but that they become reality..."³⁶ Precisely in order to implement these pacts, Genscher suggested the creation of a Human Rights Court of the United Nations. While so far, the organization could only morally appeal to its members to adhere to their human rights obligations, such a UN Court in contrast would be able to maintain action against human rights violations, thereby drastically increasing the chances for realizing human rights worldwide.

The FDP further argued for increasing the United Nations' competences on the grounds that the human rights issue by now had been removed from national sovereignty anyway. Hence, UN competences could no longer be rejected as interference with a state's internal affairs:

"The European Convention of Human Rights declared promotion of human rights to be one of the basic goals of the world organization. That way it withdrew the question of human rights from purely national control and turned it into an international question. It became legitimate to ask other states to realize human rights. No one can refute criticism of his behaviour in this area as interference with his internal affairs."³⁷

Such Liberal statements of course also could not do away with the problem that the Western definition of human rights as *individual* rights clashed with many Eastern and Third World states' definition of human rights as *collective* rights. But, the Free Democrats argued, the creation of a UN Court of Human Rights would at least be a step in the right direction. Genscher refuted all accusations of being an idealist, arguing that he was very well aware of the fact that it would be a long time until this human rights court could be established. Nevertheless, according to

³⁶Genscher cited in Deutsche Zeitung, 10.9.76

³⁷Bull. 122, 26.10.78, Genscher's speech before the German society of the United Nations on 24.10.78

Genscher, for a true liberal it was absolutely vital at least to attempt the creation of such a UN Human Rights Court:

"...I believe that in questions of principle, and the human rights court *is* a question of principle, a politician's efforts must not proceed by chance. For the liberal this is, if you like, a creed.."38

Detente or defence?

So far, this chapter has attempted to explain the Free Democrats' focus on a number of foreign policy issues - national unification, human rights and international law - which have all been characterized by their underlying idealism. A look at the Liberals' approach to the issues of detente and defence manifests, however, that their foreign policy cannot merely be classified as 'idealist' since the FDP's position here was much more guarded. It will be shown next that in terms of the balance attached to detente and defence respectively, the Free Democrats assumed a middle position between the SPD and the CDU/CSU. This was largely based on the three parties' different perceptions of the Soviet Union's intentions and capacities, which in return led to different strategies for dealing with the balance between detente and defence. The first question consequently is how the German parties generally evaluated the Soviet Union's foreign policy intentions and which strategies flowed from these evaluations.

Apart from a small wing around Chancellor Schmidt, the majority of Social Democrats tended to see the Soviet Union and East Germany as insecure regimes, yearning for economic, technological and military recognition by the West. Hence, the SPD mostly interpreted Moscow's actions as defensive and refuted the assumption that the Soviet Union pursued principally expansionist goals.³⁹ The Social Democrats' approach was largely based on Brandt's assumption that in an age of conflicting blocs, joint security could only be reached through cooperation with the potential opponent. Most Social Democrats believed that Bonn's primary

³⁸Der Spiegel, 6.9.76, Interview with H.D. Genscher

³⁹Horst Ehmke, for instance, said in the Bundestag debate on security policy on 8.3.79 (141st sess.): "It is not at all true...that the Soviet Union is generally expansionist in its foreign policy..."

efforts should be geared towards detente with Eastern Europe instead of at increasing Germany's defence capacities.

In contrast to the SPD's fairly optimistic view of Moscow's intentions, most Union members shared an essentially pessimistic view of Soviet politics. The detente policy of the 1970s had not been able to remove the anti-Communist convictions in the Union, and most Christian Democrats still perceived the Kremlin as a substantial threat. The Union largely viewed Moscow's foreign policy as expansionist, aiming at hegemony and at a Communist world revolution. In the Union's view, the West could only conduct a policy of detente with Eastern Europe from a position of military strength since it believed the Soviet Union would abuse any sign of Western weakness.⁴⁰

While the Social Democrats broadly represented an 'idealist' approach and the Christian Democrats represented 'realist' convictions, the Free Democrats assumed a middle position. On the one hand, the Free Democrats proved 'realists' in their approach towards the Soviet Union since for most of the 1970s and 1980s, they believed (1) that Moscow's armament could not be viewed as purely defensive, as it exceeded the level necessary for defence and (2) that the Soviet Union was prone to use its political and military potential above all where it considered the risk to be low. Consequently, there was no point in one-sided concessions in disarmament, as requested by a majority of the Social Democrats. In 1974, Genscher had already said: "...we do not succumb to the illusion that detente by itself already would mean more security..."⁴¹ Similarly, the FDP was convinced that the Kremlin's possibly expansionist tendencies needed to be contained by a strong and united Atlantic alliance. The Free Democrats had always warned Germany of being pushed into choosing between the apparent alternatives "detente or transatlantic cooperation" and strongly disapproved of any SPD claims that there was equidistance between the Federal Republic and the superpowers.⁴²

⁴⁰Zimmer, p.117 Note that the more radical faction in the Union, the so-called 'Steel helmets,' aimed at deterring and containing Soviet military strength with the long-term objective of destroying Soviet hegemony. The less radical faction in the Union were called 'Genscherists' since their position on detente and defence greatly resembled that of the Free Democrats.

⁴¹Genscher's speech at FDP Party Congress in Hamburg, 30.9.-2.10.1974; See also fdk 76,13.3.80; HR, 2.1.77, Interview with H.D.Genscher; WDR, 29.3.80, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁴²Genscher, DB, 203rd sess., 28.2.80, debate about the government declaration

On the other hand, the FDP's approach to Eastern Europe was also somewhat coloured by 'idealist' convictions. This was for instance apparent in the Liberals' view that an arms race would not effect Soviet counterconcessions (as a majority of the Union argued), but would lead the Soviet Union to pour all its energy into armament. The Liberals shared the SPD's conviction that the Soviet Union's determination never to be militarily inferior again had been coined by the Second World War: "As Germans we are aware that the Soviet Union's frequently exaggerated security desire has also been influenced by the darkest Chapter of our own history."⁴³ The Free Democrats also proved to be idealists in their defence policy because of their ongoing belief that the situation in the Soviet Union would eventually improve.

Overall, the Free Democrats differed from the two other parties because of their conviction that the issues of detente and defence were *equally* important and could not be treated separately. This clearly manifested itself during the debates about the NATO dual-track decision in the late 1970s, when - compared to the other parties, the Free Democrats found it least difficult to accept the duality of the NATO dual-track decision. Most Social Democrats (apart from the wing around Chancellor Schmidt) faced a dilemma here because they regarded detente as prior to defence and consequently feared that NATO's rearmament would happen at the cost of detente. The Union, for which defence was the Federal Republic's highest priority, faced the opposite problem: many Christian Democrats feared that the arms control offers in the NATO dual track decision would get in the way of the necessary rearmament. Many Union members had only agreed to the dual-track decision on the assumption that there definitely needed to be some kind of modernization of NATO's Pershing missiles.⁴⁴

For most Free Democrats, the concepts of detente and defence were completely interlinked, and hence their compatibility did not pose any serious problems. The FDP was principally ready for arms control, and certainly preferred it to modernization, but if Moscow did not cooperate, the West needed to rearm since otherwise the balance of military forces would be shifted in the Soviet Union's favour. Western failure to redress

⁴³Bull.119, 5.11.83, Genscher's speech on the principles and elements of a European peace order on 2.11.83 in Helsinki

⁴⁴Zimmer, p.113

such a shifted military balance would result in less, not in more world security and would endanger world peace. Hence, the Free Democrats were more 'idealist' than the Union because they did not consider Moscow's containment more important than detente, and more 'realist' than the Social Democrats because they did not consider detente prior to defence.

The 'idealist' element in the Free Democrats' security policy manifested itself more strongly from the mid-1980s onwards when the climate of East-West relations greatly improved. When Genscher thought that Gorbachev was finally ready for true progress in arms control between East and West, he strongly appealed to both the Union domestically and to Germany's allies internationally to use this chance and to free themselves of their Cold War way of thinking:

"If there should be a chance today that, after 40 years of East-West confrontation, there could be a turning point in East-West relations, it would be a mistake of historical dimension for the West to let this chance slip just because it cannot escape from a way of thinking which invariably expects the worst from the Soviet Union."⁴⁵

Just as the Foreign Minister had warned the Social Democrats of proceeding from Germany's equidistance between the two superpowers in the early 1980s, he now appealed to the Union to "adjust to the thought that responsible demilitarization creates more and not less security..."⁴⁶ After all, Genscher argued, Germany could not only trust the Americans when they were developing a new military programme and distrust them when they conducted demilitarization negotiations with the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

So far, this chapter has sought to explain why certain issues became more highlighted than others in the FDP's Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik during the 1970s and 1980s by looking at the Liberals' history, ideology

⁴⁵Bull.13, 4.2.87, Genscher's speech before the World Economic Forum in Davos on 1.2.87

⁴⁶Welt am Sonntag, 17.1.88, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁴⁷Note that the FDP's ideological approach to the issues of detente and defence had the additional functional effect of reinforcing the party's strategic position in the middle of the German political spectrum.

and past experience. However, the FDP's foreign policy between 1974 and 1990 has also been decisively influenced by Foreign Minister Genscher, who for most of the period in question also held the functions of Party Chairman and Vice Chancellor. In fact, Hans Dietrich Genscher's impact on German foreign policy has been such that his politics has been labelled 'Genscherism,' and this chapter will next examine what lies between the term Genscherism.

Genscherism - merely a label of convenience?

This section will attempt to define Genscherism by addressing four questions: first, how far it is something distinctive from principal liberal values and ideology? Second, what has Genscherism meant for those who have created the term? Third, to what extent can Genscherism merely be seen as an expression of German public opinion, as some of his opponents have suggested? Fourth, how far has Genscher's foreign policy been influenced by developments in the international system?

The first question is to what degree Genscherism consists of a particular set of foreign policy aims and values. If examined under the aspect of continuity, it seems feasible to define Genscherism as a certain approach to foreign policy. After all, since he became Foreign Minister in 1974, Genscher consistently pursued the same three foreign policy objectives which were all interlinked. Firstly, Genscher always emphasized that the main pillar of West German foreign policy must be a firm commitment to the Atlantic alliance and to NATO. Secondly, the Federal Republic must strive for extending the European Communities and European cooperation in general. Thirdly, from the basis of such firm Western integration, West Germany must conduct a policy of detente towards Eastern Europe, aiming at the long-term replacement of bilateral relations with a multilateral framework based on joint efforts towards peace. Only within such a pan-European framework could - and did - German unification eventually become possible. Thus, a central element of Genscher's foreign policy approach was the Foreign Minister's belief that his search for common ground between East and West was thoroughly compatible with a strong Atlantic alliance and an increasingly coherent Western European community. Genscher's concept here was based on NATO's Harmel Report of 1967, which called for a

dual policy of combining a credible deterrence policy with cooperative efforts towards the East.⁴⁸

However, objections to defining Genscherism as a set of values seem justified on the basis of two considerations: for one thing, none of the goals Genscher advocated were new or creative. For another thing, none of these goals were seriously contested by the other Liberals, and most were not even questioned by the other democratic parties. The idea that West Germany needed to be firmly integrated into the Western community of states had dominated the Federal Republic's foreign policy making since Adenauer. Nor was the concept that Germany should pursue a policy of rapprochement with Eastern Europe necessarily a novelty in German politics. This also addresses a more general 'liberal' problem since many of the values advocated by modern Liberalism - i.e. worldwide peace and more human rights - tend to be supported by all democratic forces. Hence, it is sometimes difficult to claim that Liberalism is the original or justified political representative.

The above factors rendering a clear attribution of Genscher's foreign political convictions to his person difficult were enhanced by Genscher's tendency towards diplomatically ambiguous, non-binding statements. As the magazine *Der Stern* once aptly commented, "...no word in his many speeches could ever be interpreted against Genscher."⁴⁹ Genscher's reticence to make strong statements only confirmed his opponents' conviction that Genscherism was more opportunism than substance and that the Foreign Minister was putting office before policy. Note that even the former Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt once called Genscher "a tactician without a concept."⁵⁰

Returning to the question whether Genscherism can be defined as a set of foreign policy values, it seems that Genscher's foreign political beliefs represented not so much his own personal concepts as more generally 'liberal' principles, largely in line with FDP thinking. Many of Genscher's ideals were not his personal inventions but related to

⁴⁸As shown above, Genscher's Ostpolitik was further characterized by the special importance he attached to the issues of national unification, supporting Berlin, promoting human rights and strengthening the United Nations.

⁴⁹Stern, 4.11.76

⁵⁰Schmidt cited in *The Economist*, 31.1.87

international relations generally.⁵¹ In an interview with the magazine *Bunte* in 1991, the Foreign Minister answered the question 'what is Genscherism' as follows:

"Foreign policy based on the basic values of human rights, freedom and self-determination, and consequently...in accordance with our Basic Law. Genscherism rejects any power politics. We are no longer yearning for more power."⁵²

This definition seems to confirm that Genscherism can hardly be seen as a distinct foreign policy ideology. Perhaps Genscherism should be more accurately rephrased as 'Genscher as representative of German Liberalism.'

Since it is not possible to define Genscherism as a set of personal foreign policy values, maybe a look at the origins of the term will provide an explanation for what lies behind Genscherism. The term 'Genscherism' was first introduced by the Social Democrats in the autumn of 1982. It then disapprovingly referred to the FDP's continued support for the rearmament part of the NATO dual-track decision in face of the SPD's shift towards the left.⁵³ It is important to note that although the SPD used the term Genscherism in the sense of the FDP's turn towards a 'pro-Atlanticist policy,' it was in fact not the Liberals who had changed their position but the Social Democrats. The NATO dual-track decision had provided for an approach combining arms control efforts with NATO's readiness for modernizing its Pershing missiles. Although Moscow had not reduced its level of intermediate-range nuclear missiles by 1982, most Social Democrats then no longer supported the rearmament part of the NATO dual-track decision and accused the FDP of succumbing to Washington's power politics.

From about 1986 onwards, Genscherism received a completely new meaning. This time, the emergence of the term was related to the democratization process in Eastern Europe and to Genscher's early plea for supporting Gorbachev's reform efforts. In the mid-eighties, Genscherism came to mean exactly the opposite from a pro-Atlanticist

⁵¹Kirchner, Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism, p.164

⁵²Bunte, 21.3.91, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁵³Meiers/Tanner, p.2

policy, namely a "...certain craven enthusiasm for Mikhail Gorbachev and for his arms control proposals..."⁵⁴ This time, the term had been created in the United States and Great Britain and largely reflected Anglo-American irritation about Genscher's detentist policies and exasperation with his personality. For instance, in 1988, Jim Hoagland of the *International Herald Tribune* called Genscher a "master contortionist," even questioning the Foreign Minister's personal integrity, while the US ambassador in Bonn, Richard Burt, once called Genscher "a slippery man."⁵⁵

Apart from their concern with what they considered Genscher's smug personality, Genscher's critics also fastened upon him as the personification of their concerns about the Germans in general. Some critics in Washington expressed their fear that Genscherism in reality was a German shift towards neutralism, while others were worried Genscher was aiming at reunification at any price, no matter how many concessions to the Eastern bloc might be required. Others argued that Genscher was continuing the bad German historical tradition of seeking to promote German interests by positioning the country as a makeweight between Western Europe and the Russians. As *The Economist* expressed it in 1989, "The worry is that the Genscher push for a new Europe is really a push for a mightier Germany..."⁵⁶ These fears were only enhanced when, convinced that East-West relations had reached a historical turning point, from 1986 onwards, Genscher started to insist on the need for further arms control with unusual German self-assertiveness. The Foreign Minister now not only nagged the US administration to continue talks that led to the INF treaty in 1987, but in 1989, Genscher also successfully opposed the modernization of NATO's short-range nuclear missiles.

In terms of the question whether the term Genscherism can be defined by examining its evolution, three aspects deserve special attention. Firstly, the term appeared twice during Genscher's term in office, referring to exactly the opposite aspects of the Foreign Minister's foreign policy approach. Secondly, both times the reference to Genscher's foreign policy was critical. Thirdly, even though his

⁵⁴IHT, 18.8.88

⁵⁵IHT, 18.8.88; Capital, 1.2.89

⁵⁶The Economist, 13.5.89

opponents focused on certain aspects of Genscher's foreign policy, suggesting it had evolved in a dangerous direction, the fact was that the Foreign Minister's stance remained the same throughout his time in office. As the *Europäische Zeitung* commented in 1989, it was not Genscher who had changed but his political environment.⁵⁷ In Emil Kirchner's words, Genscherism as created and applied by his opponents, should thus be seen more as a "label of convenience" than as an ideology or strategy.⁵⁸

Since neither ideology nor terminology sufficiently define Genscherism, this section will now examine which other factors had an impact on Genscher's foreign policy. In particular, the question whether public opinion was a more important motive behind Bonn's foreign policy than Genscher's personality or ideology will be addressed next. In order to determine the role of public opinion in Genscher's foreign policy, this section will look at the three foreign policy events and developments that evoked the most intensive debates about Genscherism: the NATO dual-track decision of 1979, the Foreign Minister's early plea for supporting Gorbachev's reform efforts from 1986 onwards and Genscher's opposition to the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles in 1989. In line with their view of Genscher as opportunistic politician without a clear concept, many of his critics have accused Genscher of arbitrarily following public opinion trends and of abusing them to his advantage. A closer look at the Foreign Minister's most controversial foreign political decisions suggests, however, that public opinion could not have been the major determinant behind Genscherism.

As mentioned above, the term Genscherism first appeared in the context of the FDP's continued support for the rearmament part of the NATO dual-track decision in 1982. In the same year, the Free Democrats left the Social-Liberal coalition, whereby their determination to ensure the continuity of foreign policy played a significant role. If public opinion had been the main factor behind Genscher's foreign policy here, the question arises why the Free Democrats should have insisted on the application of both parts of the NATO dual track decision: after all, large sections of the German public violently protested against the deployment of US missiles on German soil. What was more, after the breakdown of

⁵⁷*Europäische Zeitung*, 1.6.89

⁵⁸Kirchner, Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism, p.172

the coalition, the FDP's remaining time in power was immediately and severely threatened. Rather than following public opinion, the Foreign Minister had adhered to his principal conviction that cooperative efforts towards Eastern Europe needed to be combined with a credible deterrence policy, even though this had caused quite some domestic trouble for the FDP.⁵⁹

From 1985 onwards, Genscher proved once more that he was determined to hold on to both parts of the Harmel Report. Given his firm belief in the chances arising from Gorbachev's readiness for reform and disarmament, Genscher now advocated substantial efforts at detente. Significantly, Genscher started calling for taking Gorbachev seriously *before* public opinion caught onto it. Much has been made of Genscher's 1987 speech in Davos where he pleaded for taking Gorbachev at his word, but as a matter of fact, Genscher had already advocated the same in a speech in Vienna half a year earlier: "To me, it seems better to take Gorbachev at his word concerning his readiness for a new beginning and for new openness..."⁶⁰ Initially ahead of both domestic and international opinion with his call for taking Gorbachev seriously, from about 1987 onwards, the Foreign Minister's approach found increasing favour with the German public.

By 1989, when Genscher decisively influenced NATO's decision to postpone the modernization of its short-range nuclear missiles, public opinion was still very favourably predisposed towards Gorbachev and disarmament. In the latter case, it is thus possible to speak of some interaction between Genscher's decision and public opinion.⁶¹ On the whole, however, it has been shown above that at least during the 1980s, Genscher was much more a 'leader' than a 'follower' of public opinion

⁵⁹Despite the temporary clash between public opinion and Liberal foreign policy, it should also be stressed that the FDP's change of coalition partner ensured the Free Democrats' remaining in power.

⁶⁰Bull.96, 29.8.86, Genscher's speech in Vienna on 27.8.86 before the 'Danube-European Institute'

⁶¹In his article on "Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism", Emil Kirchner suggested that Genscher was capable of grasping control of German security making between 1987 and 1989 because of the favourable groundswell of public opinion for disarmament and Gorbachov. After the INF treaty and in face of Gorbachov's reforms, the Germans' perceived Eastern Europe as less threatening and hence dropped their support for a strong West German defence. Kirchner, p.166

which renders a definition of Genscherism as the expression of German public opinion implausible.

Given the fact that Genscherism can neither satisfactorily be explained with the help of ideology nor with the help of public opinion, we shall now lastly examine the question whether Genscherism was determined by the impact of international developments on German foreign policy. More specifically, the question is whether changes in the international system were more important than the positions taken by Genscher. While Genscher's policies seem to have changed little, the international political environment changed considerably in the mid-1980s. Many have thus argued that the changes brought about by Ronald Reagan's tough foreign policy course and Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika were much more relevant than Genscherism.

Without doubt, the breakdown of Communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and German unification would not have been possible without Gorbachev and were probably triggered to some extent by Reagan's arms race. The main question here thus concerns the role of Genscherism *within* this larger given framework of international relations. The international developments in the late 1980s very favourably corresponded with Genscher's overall ideology which had two effects: firstly, the fact that the German Foreign Minister was predisposed towards the reform movements in Eastern Europe somewhat contributed to their success. For instance, it was Genscher who achieved the release of the East German citizens from the West German embassy in Prague in September 1989. Furthermore, during the unification process, the Foreign Minister's NATO plan and his quick embrace of the 2+4 concept also contributed to the successful completion of German unity.

Secondly, the Eastern European and German revolutions corresponded exactly to the Liberals' aspirations in international relations. In 1989, Genscher expressed the positive correlation between his foreign policy aspirations and international developments by stating that nothing was more powerful than an idea whose time had come. The German Liberals greatly benefited from the fact that after the breakdown of Eastern Europe, the former Communist states were not looking for an alternative to the prevailing world order but rather wanted to be incorporated into the Western world as rapidly as possible. While the Liberals benefited from Gorbachev's reform efforts and the Eastern

European states' readiness to take on the Liberal values of the West, it is still not possible to define Genscherism as the influence of international developments on Germany. As shown above, what mattered most was the favourable *interaction* between Genscher's foreign policy aspirations and international developments. Genscher nevertheless did not resist the temptation to point out that the critics of his 1987 speech in Davos had been proved wrong: "Many of those who then disapprovingly created the phrase 'Genscherism' have now become Genscherists themselves..."⁶²

Overall, this section has tried to show why Genscherism cannot be defined as a set of foreign policy values attributable solely to Genscher. We have also seen why the term Genscherism, as invented and used by the Foreign Minister's opponents, is not very helpful for defining Genscherism. It has furthermore been discussed why, despite strong public support for Genscher from the mid-1980s onwards, Genscherism cannot merely be seen as an expression of German public opinion. Equally, although superpower relations have set the framework for German foreign policy making, this section has attempted to demonstrate why the claim that these international preconditions were much more dominant than Genscherism cannot be sustained.

In face of the difficulties encountered in defining Genscherism, the question arises whether the term is at all justified. Phrased alternatively, would German foreign policy between 1974 and 1990 have been different without Hans-Dietrich Genscher as Foreign Minister? Obviously, this counter-factual question cannot be answered fully but it helps in the attempt to define Genscherism. Emil Kirchner has argued that Genscherism must be seen as a *reaction* to both external changes (superpower rapprochement, Gorbachev's reform process) and to internal German developments (decreased perception of threat from Eastern Europe, greater search for national identity and unity, greater German self-awareness).⁶³ This definition of Genscherism as reaction to long-term changes in Germany's internal and external framework has led Kirchner to conclude that Genscherism as phenomenon would not disappear even if the Foreign Minister left the political scene.

As shown above, Genscherism has clearly been favourably influenced by the international developments of the late 1980s, and

⁶²Die Welt, 17.10.89, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁶³Kirchner, Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism, p.172

Genscher has also occasionally relied on German public opinion to promote his cause. However, while Kirchner's argument certainly holds good for the particular case study around which his article is organized (Germany's opposition to the modernization of NATO's short-range nuclear missiles in 1989), it does not fully explain 'Genscherism' during the whole period from 1974 until 1990. Let's thus once again return to the central question at stake: what lies behind Genscherism?

This section will argue that Genscherism should be seen as a combination of Genscher's generally 'liberal' convictions with certain aspects of his personal style. More specifically, Genscherism can be defined as the combination of strict *continuity* in Genscher's foreign policy approach with his sense for the '*Zeitgeist*' which led him to choose the 'right' policy priority at the 'right' point of time. As shown above, the central element in Genscher's foreign policy approach was his belief that Germany must and could combine a firm commitment to the West with detente efforts towards Eastern Europe. When he feared that Germany would move away from the appropriate support for NATO's deterrence measures in 1982, the Foreign Minister changed over to a Christian-Liberal coalition to restore the 'right' balance between detente and defence.

Likewise, when Genscher sensed that Gorbachev was seriously ready for reform in the mid-1980s, he did not hesitate to request Western support for this great chance. Thus, while most Liberals concurred with the Foreign Minister's general values, the special 'Genscherist' element lay in the varying priority Genscher attached to the aspects of detente and defence respectively, according to his vision. Genscherism can thus be defined as the combination of Genscher's adherence to his foreign political convictions with his capacity of sensing both the risks and chances inherent in change more quickly than others.⁶⁴

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has shown that a look at liberal history and ideology is essential for explaining why certain issues in the FDP's Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik between 1974 and 1990 became more highlighted

⁶⁴For a further discussion of Genscherism, see Chapter Eight, pp.280-281

than others. While the Liberals' historical experience helps to account for the FDP's focus on national issues, the Berlin question and international law, we have also seen the importance of great liberal thinkers of the past, most notably Immanuel Kant, as role models for the Free Democrats. Furthermore, although Genscher's approach to foreign policy reflected general liberal values and ideology, it has been shown that the special characteristics of 'Genscherism' also played a significant role in determining the FDP's foreign policy during the 1970s and 1980s.

In several ways, the FDP's special 'liberal' identity in foreign policy helped to increase the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik. Firstly, the FDP's foreign policy principles had the additional functional effect of reinforcing the party's strong strategic position in the German party system. On the one hand, the Free Democrats' 'natural' concentration on certain issues allowed them to develop an independent profile, which in return helped the FDP to legitimize its existence in the German party system. On the other hand, the FDP's ideological stance on certain foreign policy issues, particularly the balance between detente and defence, consolidated the party's functional position as 'third force' between the Social Democrats and the Union.

Secondly, the FDP profited from its foreign policy convictions because to a certain extent, the various liberal values fit together rather well to form an ideology. The Free Democrats' belief that a state's internal and external freedom were inseparably linked led them to strive for German reunification, which was in return directly related to their focus on Berlin issues. Similarly, the fact that the FDP equated progress with more individual rights, while simultaneously seeking to contain individual or state abuse of power with the help of law, rendered the Free Democrats' striving for more human rights and improved international law rather congruous. Furthermore, the FDP's blend of 'idealism' and 'realism' complemented well with the other liberal convictions. It should also be stressed that the Free Democrats successfully continued Gustav Stresemann's concept of linking Germany's national interest with their international foreign policy objectives: by striving for a pan-European peace order, the FDP hoped to overcome Germany's and Berlin's division, and the Free Democrats' request for more human rights worldwide and a UN Human Rights Court was clearly partly motivated

by their desire to improve the situation for the Germans in Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, we have also seen that in various ways, the FDP's principles were not very compatible with each other, thus causing contradictions and ideological dilemmas. Generally speaking, there is little trace of a critical FDP examination of the compatibility of certain liberal objectives, i.e. the striving for worldwide democracy and a universal application of the principle of self-determination, with other international principles, such as territorial integrity and world peace. Nor is it wholly clear whether the Free Democrats perceived their foreign policy convictions as an ideology, and whether they had any reservations about their attempt to transfer liberal values to other parts of the world.

Despite such inconsistencies in liberal ideology, there has been a third way in which the Free Democrats have benefited from their foreign policy principles: unlike Germany's international framework and the domestic parameter, which were rather susceptible to change, ideology was the only resource on which the Liberals could rely relatively *continuously* between 1974 and 1990. Given the much higher volatility of the other two parameters, this study will next examine how the changes in the international system and in German domestic politics affected the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy after 1982.

Chapter VI. The Christian-Liberal coalition 1982-90: the international framework

This chapter will investigate the impact of international relations on German Ostpolitik after the Liberals' change of coalition partner in 1982. More specifically, it will examine the questions posed by Eastern, Western and German politicians respectively after the Christian Democrats' assumption of power in Bonn. Although Chancellor Kohl pledged to continue Ostpolitik in his first government declaration before the Bundestag, the Conservatives' long and fierce opposition to Social-Liberal Ostpolitik for most of the 1970s left Germany's international partners wondering whether the Free Democrats would be able to ensure the continuity of German Ostpolitik, even in a coalition with the Christian Democrats. It will also be examined whether the Liberals made any special contributions to German Ostpolitik after the 'Wende' in Bonn.

We shall furthermore investigate how the respective superpower climate affected the Federal Republic's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy between 1982 and 1990. How far was Bonn's pledge to continue Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik compatible with a US administration aiming at containing the Soviet Union and with the hardliner policy conducted by Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko in the Kremlin? Similarly, this chapter is concerned with the effects on the FDP's foreign policy of the marked change in the superpowers' foreign policy from the mid-1980s onwards. How did President Reagan's milder course towards Moscow and Mikhail Gorbachev's reform programme influence Bonn's Ostpolitik and inner-German relations? Lastly, the breakdown of Eastern Europe, the process of German unification and the question whether there were any specific FDP contributions to unification will be investigated.

The impact of US and Soviet leadership on the FDP's Ostpolitik

Despite Chancellor Kohl's pledge in the Bundestag, the Free Democrats faced three strong potential obstacles to a smooth continuation of their Ostpolitik when the Christian-Liberal coalition took over the government in October 1982: (1), a US government that deliberately pursued a very tough course towards Moscow, (2), the Kremlin's firm opposition to the upcoming deployment of Western intermediate-range nuclear missiles, and (3), a new coalition partner, whose relations with

Eastern Europe were traditionally more complicated than those of the Social Democrats. This section will consequently examine how far the FDP's commitment to continue Social-Liberal Ostpolitik was compatible with the above factors and how the Free Democrats reacted to Germany's external environment after 1982.

The incompatibility of Washington's foreign policy and the FDP's objectives

However disunited the Reagan administration may have been, all members of the government agreed on the need to depart from the 'one-way street' of detente which in their view had come only to serve Soviet interests. By putting rearmament before politics and reducing dialogue with Moscow to the arms race, the Reagan administration decisively differed from Carter's and Nixon's since both these Presidents had tried to deter the Soviet Union largely with economic and political means. Although Reagan's actual military policy towards the Soviet Union was much more cautious than his strong rhetoric, his approach harmed the prospects for East-West rapprochement in at least three ways and therefore clashed with the FDP's commitment to ensuring the continuity of Ostpolitik.¹ To begin with, Reagan's introduction of the SDI (Strategic Defence Initiative) concept on 23 March 1983 was to harm any progress on arms control for a long time. The Western Europeans were struck not only by the President's blunt disinterest in any East-West cooperation, but also by the fact that Reagan had introduced the initiative without consulting his Western allies.

In 1983 and 1984, East-West relations furthermore suffered from Washington's serious doubts about several existing arms control measures and lack of enthusiasm for new ones. In fact, no arms control agreements were concluded during Reagan's first term in office, and the President clearly stated that he would not meet Andropov before the complete removal of all Soviet intermediate-range nuclear missiles worldwide. In addition, Washington's approach to economic relations with Moscow also

¹In terms of the clash between Reagan's strong rhetoric and his actual military politics, Coral Bell has pointed out that compared to earlier US administrations, the rate of military expenditure during the early Reagan years was indeed initially very high. However, when Reagan's budgets are assessed as a whole against the general trends for the postwar period, the average for the Reagan years is somewhat below the average for the previous two decades (6.1%). Bell, p.63

impeded the FDP's desire for a continuation of detente. By 1983, Reagan had imposed numerous trade restrictions on the Soviet Union, and by the end of the year, only seven US-Soviet agreements on scientific cooperation were still in force (a fifth of the volume of 1979).² By the summer of 1983, there was thus a practical standstill in US-Soviet relations.

Even though the Christian-Liberal coalition could thus count on little US support for its desire to continue a policy of rapprochement with Eastern Europe, the Reagan administration for its part clearly favoured Kohl's assumption of power in Bonn. Except for Chancellor Schmidt's pro-Atlanticist stance, Reagan had never been in favour of the SPD's foreign policy and was pleased that with Kohl and Genscher, Bonn's commitment to the NATO dual-track decision would be assured. The President stated these views in a national press conference in January 1983, and despite his subsequent efforts to express a more balanced view, this did not detract from what amounted to the most serious US intervention in a West German election since 1957, when J.F.Dulles had suggested that a Socialist government would be a catastrophe.³

For a number of reasons, the Kremlin's reaction to the Christian Democrats' assumption of power was much more cautious than Washington's. The Russians not only disapproved of the Union's support for the deployment of US Pershing missiles but also of the Kohl administration's closer ties with the expellee groups and stronger tendency to question the legitimacy of Poland's Western border. In the Kremlin's eyes, the attitudes of Chancellor Kohl and the Christian Democrats now raised for the first time since the 1960s the question whether revanchist sentiments were actively supported by the government's highest ranking officials.⁴

Before the Bundestag elections of March 1983, the Soviet Union signalled its interest in a Social Democratic government through TASS and Novosti. During the final days of the election campaign, the Soviets launched an even more intensive media effort to influence West German voters, albeit with little effect: for one thing, the Christian-Liberal

²Czempiel, p.149 Reagan had not renewed the agreements that had expired since his assumption of the Presidency.

³Hanhardt, p.226

⁴Sodaro, p.288; The Times, 16.10.82

coalition won the elections, and for another thing, Foreign Minister Genscher characterized as illusory any Soviet expectations that the election results would weaken the Western resolve to deploy US Pershing missiles if the Geneva talks failed. However, Moscow adjusted surprisingly quickly to the reality of West Germany's new government. Immediately after the elections, the Soviet Union extended an invitation to Kohl to come to Moscow, and *Pravda* concluded that Genscher's remaining in office was a smaller evil than a pure Union coalition with Franz-Josef Strauß as Foreign Minister.⁵

The FDP's efforts to ensure the continuation of detente

The question remains how the Christian-Liberal coalition reacted to its international environment which was not very favourable for the promotion of its declared foreign policy priorities. Given Moscow's opposition to the deployment of US Pershing missiles and Reagan's opposition to cooperation with the Kremlin, the Free Democrats tried to make the most use of their limited room for manoeuvre by attaching great importance to continued good relations with the Eastern bloc. The Christian-Liberal coalition tried to influence overall East-West relations via good contacts with Moscow's satellites, which for instance manifested itself in Genscher's visits to Prague and Bucharest in 1983.

Most importantly, however, the Free Democrats insisted that Bonn continue the Social-Liberal coalition's attempts to act as mediator in the face of superpower tensions. When the superpower talks were resumed in Geneva on 17 May 1983, Genscher expressed his hope that Moscow would now drop its demand for the inclusion of French and British nuclear forces in the Western total, thus providing the Geneva talks with a new impetus. However, the Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Kornienko quickly dismissed Genscher's suggestions as "what we call in Russian wishful thinking."⁶ During Kohl and Genscher's visit to Moscow from 4-7 July 1983, there was no rapprochement either. Although the meeting between Kohl and Andropov marked the latter's first encounter

⁵FAZ, 14.3.83; IHT, 4.2.83

⁶Genscher cited in IHT, 15.9.83 The Geneva negotiations were further burdened by the Soviet downing of a Korean airplane, especially since Moscow insisted that there was no connection between the missile talks and the airliner incident.

with a Western leader and hence indicated West Germany's importance for Soviet policy at that time, neither government was prepared for any substantial concessions.

In addition to its - rather futile - attempts to mediate between the superpowers, the Christian-Liberal coalition (especially the Free Democrats) also strongly promoted European efforts to cooperate more closely on the issues of detente and demilitarization. During the second CSCE Follow-up conference in Madrid, the Federal Republic was the first country to suggest how the West could approach the upcoming European demilitarization conference in Stockholm, and the FDP strongly praised the CSCE's efforts to create additional fora for European discussion, apart from the superpower summits in Geneva.⁷ Bonn's support for the revival of the Western European Union also corresponded to the Free Democrats' call for greater European security cooperation. On 12 June 1984, the Foreign Ministers of the Union met for the first time since 1973 and agreed on the need to revitalize the European section of NATO. Genscher tried to soothe potential American worries that Europe might go it alone by pointing out: "It is not a question of the US being too strong but of Europe being too weak."⁸

The FDP's call for joint European efforts to save detente also manifested itself in a series of theoretical articles about the future of East-West relations that Genscher launched through the Foreign Office after 1983. Apart from the Liberals' usual concern with image-building, Genscher's initiative should be viewed as a further attempt to contribute to improving the East-West climate in a difficult situation. All four articles which Genscher published between 1983 and 1984 essentially argued that the world was now on the threshold of a second phase of East-West relations, after the Ostpolitik treaties had been concluded and implemented during the first phase. According to Genscher, East-West relations now needed to undergo two major changes: firstly, the East-West dialogue must not be reduced to the military aspects but must aim at political, economic and social cooperation. Secondly, the Europeans must no longer leave the striving for a European peace order to the superpowers. Genscher also expressed these views in an interview with the Bayerischer Rundfunk:

⁷Bull. 79, 21.7.83, Möllemann's speech on the CSCE process in Madrid

⁸Genscher cited in *The Guardian*, 13.6.84

"It is our responsibility to make sure that East-West relations will not be reduced to demilitarization negotiations and to the relationship Washington/Moscow. We must also shape East-West relations from Europe to demonstrate that the Europeans accept their responsibility..."⁹

With the deadline for Bonn's decision about the stationing of US missiles in the Federal Republic coming dangerously close, the West German government made one last attempt to rescue the Geneva negotiations from failure when Genscher and Gromyko met in Vienna on 15 October 1983. However, after eleven hours of talk, Genscher had to acknowledge that "there was nothing forthcoming on either side."¹⁰ In this situation, it was little surprise that the Kremlin broke off the arms control negotiations in Geneva on 23 November 1983 after the Bundestag had finally voted for the deployment of US Pershing missiles on German territory one day before. In addition, Moscow now interrupted the START negotiations about the reduction of strategic weapons. By 1984, all East-West military negotiations had been suspended, except for those conducted in Stockholm under the auspices of the CSCE. Foreign Minister Genscher was among the first and most vocal in pressing the Reagan administration to resume the dialogue with the Russians after the breakdown of the talks.

The impact of Chernenko's assumption of power on German Ostpolitik

It has been shown that until Yuri Andropov's death in February 1984, the Christian-Liberal coalition had managed to shelter German-Soviet relations somewhat from the Second Cold War between the superpowers. Although Bonn's room for manoeuvre had been limited both by the Reagan administration's anti-Soviet course and by Moscow's objections to the deployment of US Pershing missiles, the Germans had at least maintained their role as the Kremlin's special partner in Western Europe. When Konstantin Chernenko became leader of the Soviet Union in 1984, this situation changed, and while the superpower relations now

⁹BR, 9.2.85, Interview with H.D.Genscher For Genscher's articles, see Bull.133, 6.12.83, fdk 282, 28.12.83, Bull.44, 14.4.84, Bull.92, 9.8.84

¹⁰Genscher cited in IHT, 17.10.83

began to improve, German-Soviet relations deteriorated. It is to these adverse developments and the causes behind them that we shall turn next.

When Chernenko became the Soviet General Secretary on 13 February, observers noted his espousal of detente and his reluctance to reiterate Andropov's conditions for resuming the Geneva arms talks. The Soviet Union by then had to acknowledge that its attempt to pursue a limited detente simultaneously with a strenuous arms build-up in the end had only resulted in driving the Western allies, particularly the Americans and the West Germans, closer together. Similarly, by 1984, President Reagan had begun to change his foreign policy course towards Moscow, and although Reagan held on to his long-term goal of defeating the Soviet Union, in 1984, the US administration dropped its former aversion to dialogue with Moscow. New Foreign Minister George Shultz embodied the conviction that if US-Soviet cooperation was in Washington's interest, there was no reason to sacrifice US interests solely to punish the Soviet Union.¹¹

Even though Moscow cancelled its participation in the Olympic games in Los Angeles in 1984, Chernenko generally responded positively to Washington's greater openness. Reagan now for the first time in four years received Gromyko, and on 22 November 1984, Reagan and Chernenko announced that they were ready to resume arms control talks about nuclear missiles. This announcement was based on a compromise on both sides, as Washington had agreed to treat SDI as negotiable, and the Kremlin had renounced its requests that the United States completely withdraw its intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe and cancel the SDI project. As Genscher pointed out, the Western Europeans strongly approved of these signs of superpower rapprochement.¹²

Yet while Chernenko's assumption of power thus coincided with a renewed readiness for dialogue on the two superpowers' behalf, German-Soviet relations took off in the opposite direction. Five days before Genscher's visit to Moscow from 20-22 May 1984, Moscow started a massive campaign against the Federal Republic, accusing West Germany of "revanchist" tendencies, in other words of attempting to regain former German territories which had become Polish after the Second World War. This sudden reversal of the Kremlin's German policy can be

¹¹Czempiel, p.245; Sodaro, p.315; The Times, 25.5.84

¹²DFS, 25.9.84, Interview with H.D.Genscher

explained by four reasons. Firstly, Moscow probably hoped that the revival of old German enemy images would help to justify Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe and inhibit any attempts at an independent East-West dialogue in Central Europe.¹³ Secondly, Moscow's campaign also reflected an attempt to cope with a disintegrating leadership situation, as the aged Chernenko conveyed a fairly weak image to the outside world.

Thirdly, Soviet officials cited Bonn's security policies as the main factor preventing closer relations. The Kremlin still strongly disapproved of the Christian-Liberal coalition's 1983 decision to allow the deployment of US Pershing missiles on German territory. Fourthly, and most annoying from the FDP's point of view, the Soviet Union's campaign should be seen as a delayed reaction to the somewhat different emphasis placed on German policy and Ostpolitik by the Kohl government. Moscow was annoyed that the Christian Democrats asserted much more frequently than the Social-Liberal coalition their view that the German question and the issue of the Oder-Neisse border were still open. The Soviet media now harshly criticized the "militaristic and jingoistic tendencies" of the new West German government, and Genscher's attempt to convince the Soviets during his visit that Bonn nurtured no revanchist tendencies was not very successful.¹⁴

Although the substance of German-Soviet relations was not affected by Moscow's revanchism campaign, as for instance was evident in Genscher's frequent encounters with Gromyko and the continued development of economic and cultural relations, West Germany still lost its role as special partner of the Soviet Union which it had had since the Moscow Treaty in 1970. Despite Bonn's clear interest in further improving relations with Moscow, the Kremlin now made a point of keeping the Federal Republic at arms length and gave preference to relations with Britain and France.

Until the mid-1980s, the Free Democrats' objective of continuing German Ostpolitik despite their change of coalition partner was thus greatly constrained by (1) the incompatibility of this goal with the

¹³Pittman, p.157; Sodaro, p.309 Moscow's desire for a reassertion of its hegemony over the Communist bloc was linked to the fact that several Warsaw Pact states had revolted against the Soviet Union's confrontational course after its walk-out of the INF talks in Geneva.

¹⁴Frankfurter Neue Presse, 21.5.84; The Times, 22.5.84

respective leadership's priorities in the White House and the Kremlin and (2) by the fact that the Eastern European countries still harboured much greater suspicion towards the Christian Democrats than towards the SPD, which was reinforced by the Union's greater tendency to question the finality of certain issues, i.e. the Oder-Neisse border. While in some cases, such as Moscow's revanchism campaign, the above two factors indeed rendered it difficult for the Free Democrats to guarantee the continuity of Ostpolitik, the FDP nevertheless attempted to save detente by continuing Bonn's mediating efforts between the superpowers, by promoting European efforts to cooperate more closely on the issue of detente, and by launching a series of articles about the future of East-West relations through the Foreign Office.

The FDP's room for manoeuvre in German policy

Just as the Free Democrats tried to shelter the Federal Republic's relations with the Soviet Union from the effects of the Second Cold War, the Christian-Liberal coalition also aimed at sustaining inner-German rapprochement after the 'Wende' in Bonn. This section will examine to what degree the new West German government was able to keep up a constructive dialogue with the GDR after 1982 despite the bad superpower climate. It will be shown that a number of factors favourably influenced the FDP's efforts for continued inner-German rapprochement until well into the mid-1980s.

To begin with, the Free Democrats benefited from both Moscow's and East Berlin's approval of keeping inner-German cooperation going after Kohl's election in 1983. Not only had the new Soviet leader Andropov signalled his support for a policy of dialogue between the two German states, but East Berlin also strongly welcomed Kohl's assurances that Deutschlandpolitik would be continued, although the GDR remained somewhat suspicious of the Conservatives' greater emphasis on the reunification imperative.¹⁵ By 1983, it had also become clear that Honecker was tilting towards peace politics and constructive inner-German relations, largely because East Germany did not want to lose the

¹⁵Zimmer, p.144

greater room for manoeuvre in foreign policy it had gained with the help of detente in the 1970s.

This shared West- and East German desire to shelter their relations from the superpower conflict soothed the potentially harmful effects of the stationing of US Pershing missiles in West Germany after 1983. Although East Berlin had employed massive propaganda to prevent such deployment before the Bundestag's final vote (i.e. by warning of a "new ice age" in inner-German relations), once the actual decision had been taken, East Germany's criticism focused much more on the United States than on Bonn. Even as the Soviets moved their short- and medium-range missiles into East Germany and Czechoslovakia to counter NATO deployment, Honecker called for limiting the damage as much as possible. Instead of causing an inner-German crisis, the Federal Republic's firm stance on deployment had driven a wedge between East Berlin and Moscow for the first time in thirty-five years.¹⁶ Similarly to its reluctance to let West Germany's 1983 deployment decision affect inner-German cooperation, East Berlin's reaction to Bonn's 1985 decision to support the research on SDI was also reticent, and the GDR above all emphasized its continued interest in detente.

Apart from Honecker's interest in maintaining inner-German dialogue, the Free Democrats also profited from the Union's readiness to continue the Social-Liberal coalition's practice of using positive economic leverage in return for East German political concessions. West Germany's DM 1 billion loan to the GDR of July 1983, for instance, underlined the new government's determination to continue its predecessor's German policy by the facts that (1) the credit been negotiated by Franz-Josef Strauß, traditionally one of the fiercest opponents to economic support for the GDR, and (2) the deal was announced without the specific concessions that the CSU had customarily demanded from East Germany. Although the GDR's counterconcessions on the whole stayed behind Bonn's expectations, East Germany did eventually ease conditions along the border by dismantling some obsolete security devices and by exempting youngsters under the age of fourteen from the minimum exchange rate.

When in July 1984, a group of West German banks concluded a second major credit agreement with the GDR, East Berlin reciprocated

¹⁶Pond, Beyond The Wall, p.30

with more significant concessions to Bonn. The German Democratic Republic now announced several measures designed to ease travel to East Germany and drastically increased the number of East German citizens permitted to emigrate to the Federal Republic. By the end of 1984, nearly 35.000 East Germans had moved to West Germany legally, a substantial rise over the previous year's figure of little more than 7.700.¹⁷ Early in the year, East Germany had also granted the right to emigrate to a group of East German citizens who had camped at the Federal Republic's mission in East Berlin and the US embassy in Prague.

Although the second West German loan to East Berlin promoted inner-German relations, it was by no means perceived positively by the superpowers. The US administration criticized that Bonn's credits to the GDR equalled strategic support for the Soviet Union and might harm West Germany's commitment to the trans-Atlantic alliance.¹⁸ Similarly, Moscow now made East Germany into a side target in its revanchism campaign, for fear that East Berlin was growing too independent with West German help. Thus, by mid-1984, neither Genscher's remark that "constructive relations" between the two German states were "beneficial to all and burden(ed) no one," nor the GDR's insistence that all members of the Socialist community had the right to maintain "normal economic relations" with the OECD countries could hide the fact that the inner-German room for manoeuvre ultimately continued to be significantly restricted by the two superpowers.¹⁹ This was further highlighted when Honecker cancelled his proposed visit to Bonn in the autumn of 1984. Even though Honecker may have had reasons of his own for delaying the trip (i.e. some controversial Union rhetoric), in the last analysis it was the Kremlin leadership which blocked Honecker's trip to Bonn at this time.²⁰

After Mikhail Gorbachev's assumption of power in the Kremlin in 1985, however, the FDP's chances for progress in Deutschlandpolitik increased greatly. Inner-German cooperation was now again favourably

¹⁷Sodaro, p.308

¹⁸Moreton, p.13

¹⁹Genscher cited in The Guardian, 7.8.84; Plock, East-German-West-German Relations, p.47

²⁰Pond, Beyond the Wall, p.32

influenced by the superpower climate, as Washington and Moscow had meanwhile returned to a course of global detente policy. This was most apparent in the realization of Erich Honecker's long-outstanding visit to the Federal Republic in September 1987. After the General Secretary's planned visits to Bonn had already failed twice in this decade, 1987 seemed to be a good time, with both the inner-German and the superpower climate evolving in a positive direction. An Emnid opinion poll even showed that 54% of the German population explicitly welcomed Honecker's visit.²¹ Honecker's trip to West Germany was remarkable, since the playing of East Berlin's national anthem and the flying of the East German flag seemed to constitute the final step in Bonn's recognition of the smaller German state.

Such service made the customary West German protocol, i.e. the fact that the East German Foreign Minister was not received by Genscher but by the Inner-German Minister Dorothee Wilms seem like a diplomatic façade.²² Many observers interpreted the fact that Honecker was received like any other internationally respected statesman as the GDR's true 'coming of age' concerning its international recognition. In terms of concrete results, the Kohl-Honecker encounter brought the signing of a new science and technology agreement, an agreement on environmental cooperation and a commitment to accelerate collaboration in energy transfers and tourism.

The renewed stimulus in inner-German relations also manifested itself in Bonn's raise of the swing credit to East Germany from DM 600 million to DM 850 million for the time period 1986-90, thereby reversing the lowering of the swing which had been effected by the Social-Liberal coalition in response to the GDR's increase of the minimum exchange rate in 1980. The German Democratic Republic reciprocated by relaxing its attitude on city partnerships between West and East German cities, abolishing the death penalty and greatly facilitating inner-German travel.²³

²¹Der Spiegel, 31.8.87

²²Plock, East-German-West-German Relations, p.84

²³Zimmer, p.213 Between 1985 and 1987, the number of pensionaries visiting West Germany increased from 1.6 million to 3.8 million, and the number of people travelling for "family affairs" rose from 66.000 in 1985 to 1.2 million in 1987.

In assessing the success of the FDP's efforts for continued inner-German cooperation after the change of power in Bonn, it should thus be stressed that, on the one hand, the two German states' room for manoeuvre ultimately continued to be determined by the superpower climate. On the other hand, for much of the 1980s, the Free Democrats benefited from the GDR's continued readiness for constructive inner-German relations and from the Union's willingness to continue the Social-Liberal coalition's practice of utilizing positive economic leverage in inner-German relations.

Gorbachev's assumption of power and progress in arms control

After Chernenko died on 10 March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in the Soviet Union the next day. Although at age fifty-four, Gorbachev was the youngest head of the Kremlin in Soviet history, for approximately the first two years after his assumption of power, Soviet foreign policy was characterized primarily by its caution. While Gorbachev moved quickly to assume dialogue with the leaders of the Western community and had met Reagan, Thatcher and Mitterrand by 1986, he refused to invite Kohl to Moscow. This section will examine (1) the effects on the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy both of Gorbachev's cautious foreign policy during his first two years in office and of the stunning progress in arms control from the mid-1980s onwards and (2) the FDP's reaction to the new Soviet leader.

The impact of the new Soviet leadership on the FDP's Ostpolitik

Gorbachev's decision to continue Chernenko's policy of ignoring the Kohl/Genscher government can be attributed to essentially three reasons: firstly, the Soviet Union was then still trying to punish West Germany for its role in the INF crisis, and Gorbachev explicitly linked Moscow's future relations with Bonn to the Federal Republic's "good conduct" in matters of security policy. Secondly, the Kremlin's predominant concern with stopping SDI during Gorbachev's first two years in office further complicated its relations with Bonn, and thirdly, the Western debate over the sincerity of Gorbachev's reform efforts,

which extended to the West German government, also strained German-Soviet relations.

Apart from Moscow's continued desire to punish the Federal Republic for its role in the INF controversy, German-Soviet relations after 1985 were burdened by the fact that Gorbachev's main security-political priority in 1985 and 1986 was stopping SDI, and that the Kremlin showed no readiness to compromise on the issue of intermediate-range missiles before Washington had renounced its SDI plans.²⁴ Moscow's concern with stopping SDI also complicated its relations with Bonn, as the new Soviet administration spent much of 1985 and 1986 trying to pressurize the West German government into rejecting any West German participation in the US project. Gorbachev mentioned the issue in his first letter to Kohl, and during Genscher's trip to Moscow in March 1985, Gromyko told him that, in the Kremlin's eyes, any West German support for US space weapons would make Bonn "an accomplice in torpedoing the whole process of limiting and reducing nuclear weapons..."²⁵ The Soviets also actively promoted resistance to SDI within Germany by inviting leading Social Democrats (e.g. Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr and Oskar Lafontaine) to Moscow, while equally discouraging visits by Conservative members of the West German government.

Moscow's attempts to influence the Federal Republic's decision turned out to be rather ineffective, however. Bonn's final decision on SDI in December 1985 provided for a West German agreement with Washington that would permit German firms to take part in the SDI research. The main restriction to West German participation in SDI, namely the prevention of a *governmental* agreement between Washington and Bonn - which would have been much more binding - had been effected by the Free Democrats. The Foreign Ministry under Genscher had argued against governmental support for the research on SDI because it considered the potential damage to Ostpolitik to be higher than the possible risk of falling behind in technological innovation. Furthermore, in line with his earlier call for a revival of European efforts at foreign-political cooperation, Genscher had eagerly taken up France's suggestion to react to SDI by founding 'Eureka,' a programme geared towards

²⁴Sodaro, p.323

²⁵The Times, 5.4.85; Sodaro, pp.345-346

promoting pan-European high technological activity, in an attempt to ensure that Europe would not leave the lead in high technology to the United States.²⁶

The FDP's (Genscher's) reaction to the new Soviet leader

In addition to the SDI debate, German-Soviet relations in 1985 and 1986 were affected by the Western debate about the sincerity of Gorbachev's proposals for substantial domestic and foreign-political reform. Gorbachev had already demonstrated during the SDI debate that under his leadership, the Kremlin's former striving for military superiority would be replaced by the objectives of economic, social and political reform at home. The Western reactions to the Soviet Union's new foreign policy differed widely. While many members of the Western community found it difficult to believe in Moscow's new foreign policy, others, most notably Hans-Dietrich Genscher, pleaded for taking Gorbachev seriously as early as 1986.

Those Western statesmen who found it difficult to believe in Moscow's peaceful intentions argued that Gorbachev's call for reform, arms control and cooperation with the West was mere propaganda. In their view, Gorbachev was only taking a break to let the Soviet economy recover and then wanted to return to the Soviet Union's old hegemonial efforts. The best way to counter the Communist threat remained a policy of strength. In contrast with such Western views of Gorbachev's politics as bluff, held by a majority of the US and British administrations and many German Christian Democrats, Genscher signalled early on that he believed in the sincerity of Gorbachev's proposals. According to the Foreign Minister, Gorbachev had truly recognized that the Soviet Union could only survive by undertaking substantial reforms:

"Gorbachev has recognized: modernization of the economy is not possible without modernizing and opening up society as well, both internally and externally."²⁷

²⁶IHT, 13.12.85; Der Spiegel, 4.11.85 "Eureka" was founded on 17 July 1985 at a conference in Paris.

²⁷Bull.13, 4.2.87, Genscher's speech before the World Economic Forum in Davos on 1.2.87

Just as the two views differed in their trust of Gorbachev's intentions, their suggestions for dealing with the new Soviet leader also diverged. Those Western statesmen who were suspicious of Gorbachev maintained that Western economic aid to the Soviet Union would only make sense *after* the Kremlin had undertaken the necessary domestic restructuring. Genscher and his supporters, in contrast, argued, that the West should support Moscow's reform efforts *now* since it could only benefit from Soviet aspirations at reform and cooperation. The West German Foreign Minister pleaded: "Let us not sit back idly and wait for Mr. Gorbachev to deliver...Let us rather try to influence, expedite and shape developments from our end."²⁸ Similarly, the Free Democrats tried to refute Western complaints that Germany's efforts to form a bridge between East and West were incompatible with a full commitment to NATO, by pointing out that it was the Soviet Union, and not Germany, which had started the process of substantial rapprochement.²⁹

The fact that the Western debate about Gorbachev's sincerity extended to the West German government did not aid Soviet-German relations. As a reaction to some Christian Democrats' open doubts about Moscow's intentions, the Kremlin started to distinguish between its behaviour towards Genscher and that towards Kohl. Chancellor Kohl's interview with *Newsweek* in October 1986, in which he compared Gorbachev's public relations abilities to those of Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels, further strained the Union's relations with Moscow. As a result, the Kremlin cancelled any German-Soviet encounters before the West German elections of 1987, and Kohl was not invited to Moscow before October 1988, two years after the interview. In contrast, *Pravda* reacted favourably to Genscher's speech in Davos and praised the German Foreign Minister as a "pioneer of detente" the next day.³⁰

²⁸Bull.13, 4.2.87, Genscher's speech before the World Economic Forum in Davos on 1.2.87; IHT, 13.6.88

²⁹Adam-Schwaetzer cited in *Die Welt*, 31.3.89

³⁰*Newsweek*, 27.10.86; Pittman, p.158; FAZ, 2.2.87

The positive interaction between the progress in arms control and the FDP's foreign policy

Given Western doubts about Moscow's leadership and the Kremlin's chilled relations with parts of the West German government, on the surface, the chances for rapprochement between the superpowers did not seem great when they resumed their arms control negotiations on 12 March 1985 in Geneva. Nevertheless, both superpowers had meanwhile begun a major process of rethinking, which was to show its full effect by December 1987 when the INF treaty, the biggest disarmament agreement in post-World War II history, was signed. As previously mentioned, the Reagan administration had demonstrated a much greater readiness for constructive dialogue with the 'evil empire' from 1984 onwards and continued this approach after the Geneva summit.³¹

Concerning the Kremlin's readiness for superpower cooperation, Gorbachev's new approach manifested itself in a series of concrete Soviet arms control proposals, which was for instance apparent during the US-Soviet summit in Reykjavik from 11-12 October 1986. Although no political facts were created in Reykjavik, the superpowers factually agreed on the deconstruction of medium-range missiles in Europe as well as on the division of strategic offensive missiles in Europe by half. Gorbachev described the encounter as a "breakthrough," although he did not hide his disappointment about Reagan's obduracy on SDI.³² Despite the pressure most West Europeans had put on Washington to move ahead with arms control, the reports from Reykjavik left the NATO establishment quite ruffled in the end. If taken seriously, the agreements in Reykjavik would require remaking NATO's strategy of flexible response, on which the alliance had operated for forty years.³³ In agreement with its West European partners, the Federal Republic now argued against the decoupling of nuclear and conventional arms control.

Those Western observers who had been surprised by Gorbachev's concessions in Reykjavik, were to be even more astounded when the

³¹The UK government had also taken a pro-active approach towards Eastern Europe from 1983 onwards, to some extent preparing the ground for the United States.

³²Sodaro, p.327

³³Bell, p.68

Soviet leader gradually dropped any remaining preconditions in the way of an INF agreement. In February 1987, Moscow announced that Washington's renunciation of SDI was no longer a prerequisite for the INF accord, and a few months later, the Kremlin also dropped its initial opposition to the inclusion of the shorter-range missiles in the negotiations.³⁴ Since the Kremlin's concessions had removed the last obstacles in the way of an INF agreement, Reagan and Gorbachev actually signed the treaty on 8 December 1987.

Although the East-West climate generally benefited from the INF accord, the effect of Gorbachev's 1987 suggestions on the West German government was much more ambiguous. Both for domestic and alliance-political reasons, Chancellor Kohl now faced a substantial dilemma. While many Christian Democrats feared that the complete scrapping of INF missiles would leave Germany too vulnerable to a potential conventional Soviet attack, the Free Democrats and public opinion strongly favoured a zero solution. Genscher argued that it would be "downright absurd" if the West did not use this "historical" chance for progress.³⁵ In addition to such domestic opposition, Kohl also faced pressure from his Western allies who urged the Federal Republic to support the INF treaty.

After the signing of the INF accord in December 1987, the Free Democrats continued to benefit from the positive development of East-West relations, which now turned to the issue of conventional disarmament at the CSCE conference in Vienna. In 1988, it was agreed that the futile MBFR talks would henceforth be replaced by negotiations between representatives of the two alliances in Vienna. By the summer of 1988, the West German government, and Foreign Minister Genscher in particular, had also embarked on a diplomatic initiative, seeking to ensure that East-West negotiations on conventional forces in Europe would be launched as soon as possible.³⁶ Consequently, the FDP was very pleased when the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) talks not only started in

³⁴Sodaro, pp.328-329 Note that there was some substantial opposition in the Soviet Union to INF on the grounds that the treaty would require the Soviets to destroy twice as many missiles as the United States.

³⁵ZDF, 8.3.87, Interview with H.D.Genscher; Bull.94, 26.9.87, Genscher's speech before the 42nd General Assembly of the United Nations in New York on 24.9.87

³⁶The Guardian, 29.7.88

March 1989 in Vienna but also made rapid progress, largely due to Moscow's continued readiness for cooperation and due to the pressure on Washington to reciprocate the Soviet concessions.³⁷

In addition to Genscher's initiative regarding conventional disarmament, the Free Democrats attempted to contribute to further arms control by assuming a firm position on the issue of NATO's modernization of short-range nuclear forces. In contrast to most Christian Democrats and the US and British governments, which firmly backed the modernizing of NATO's short-range nuclear forces, the Free Democrats actively supported Gorbachev's offer to dismantle *all* nuclear missiles and openly doubted the wisdom of supporting US plans to introduce a new generation of short-range nuclear missiles in the mid-1990s.³⁸ Under considerable domestic pressure from his coalition partner and public opinion, Chancellor Kohl announced in February 1989 that his government would postpone a decision about modernization until 1991 or 1992. Kohl's statement caused substantial apprehension in the United States and Britain, as the Bush and Thatcher governments feared Bonn's abandonment of a common NATO position on nuclear modernization. The United States was annoyed that the same West German government which had called for close cooperation with Washington in 1982, now refused to cooperate on the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles.

Finally, during the NATO summit in Brussels from 29-30 May 1989, American and West German negotiators resolved their differences. By then, Bush was under strong pressure to counter perceptions that Gorbachev was more interested in arms control than the US President, a view which was even reflected in West German public opinion polls. In Brussels, President Bush agreed to postpone the decision about the modernization of NATO's Lance missiles until 1992, when the issue should be reexamined "in the light of the overall security-political developments."³⁹ Meanwhile, Washington skilfully linked the talks about

³⁷Mastny, The Helsinki process and reintegration of Europe, p.20

³⁸Sodaro, p.358 Note (1) that the Social Democrats largely agreed with the FDP's view and (2) that even some conservative elements in the CDU/CSU were backing away from modernizing nuclear weapons, in part because their limited range would confine a nuclear engagement to areas populated by Germans.

³⁹Staack, p.281; Der Spiegel, 5.6.89

reducing short-range nuclear missiles to the success of the Vienna talks. While Bonn would have preferred immediate negotiations, the Federal Republic agreed to wait until after an accord on conventional arms reduction had been worked out in the CFE framework.

Overall, this section has demonstrated that despite Gorbachev's cautious approach towards Bonn during his first two years in office, the Free Democrats, and Foreign Minister Genscher in particular, quickly signalled their support for the new Soviet leader. It has also been shown (1) that the FDP greatly profited from the major reversal in the superpowers' foreign policy from about 1986 onwards and from the resulting revolutionary arms control agreements, and (2) that the Free Democrats somewhat contributed to the progress in arms control themselves, for instance with their firm opposition to the modernization of NATO's short-range nuclear missiles in 1989. While this section has focused on the security-political aspects of East-West relations, the next will examine the impact of Gorbachev's arrival in power on German-Soviet economic cooperation, Berlin's status, progress in humanitarian issues and on inner-German relations.

The implications of glasnost and perestroika for the FDP's Ostpolitik

Economic and technological cooperation

In line with the generally reticent character of German-Soviet relations during 1985 and 1986, economic ties between the two countries initially also languished. While West German imports from the USSR had reached a peak of DM 14.4 billion in 1984, they had fallen to 9.3 billion in 1986. German exports to the Soviet Union also dropped by about DM 1.4 billion during these two years.⁴⁰ Significantly, however, the Kremlin never contemplated a more serious rupture of its economic relations with West Germany, most likely because Moscow was aware of Bonn's central role for good Soviet relations with Western Europe. Given this awareness and the growing likelihood of the Christian-Liberal coalition's re-election

⁴⁰Sodaro, p.344

in the 1987 Bundestag elections, Moscow started to readjust its politics towards the Federal Republic from 1986 onwards.

As a first step of German-Soviet rapprochement, the Kremlin invited Foreign Minister Genscher to Moscow from 20-22 July 1986. Concerning this visit, Bonn attached much greater importance to Moscow's readiness to receive Genscher than to the actual substance of the talks conducted. Although Genscher and Gorbachev signed an agreement of scientific and technological cooperation during Genscher's stay, in Bonn's view, the most important outcome of the visit was the two statesmen's agreement that they had opened "a new page of East-West relations."⁴¹ This optimistic spirit was confirmed when during Shevardnadze's visit to Bonn in January 1988, the two Foreign Ministers extended the German-Soviet agreement on economic and industrial cooperation of May 1978 by another five years.

According to Gorbachev, the ice between the Federal Republic and Moscow was finally broken during Kohl's long-expected visit to the Soviet Union in October 1988. Apart from a number of intergovernmental agreements on issues such as agricultural and cultural cooperation, German-Soviet economic relations now again got a major boost, as more than seventy German businessmen accompanied Kohl to Moscow. Even on the first day, sixteen agreements were signed, and a consortium of West German banks also agreed to extend a DM 3 billion credit to the Soviet Union.⁴² The improved climate between Moscow and Bonn was again apparent about a year later, when, in June 1989, Gorbachev visited West Germany - the first Soviet leader to do so since Brezhnev's visit in 1981. During Gorbachev's stay, the two sides issued a six-page joint declaration which covered a wide range of areas such as economic and environmental cooperation, human rights and disarmament.

Apart from such concrete progress in German-Soviet cooperation, Foreign Minister Genscher now also started to appeal for generally greater economic cooperation between East and West. In line with his conviction that Gorbachev's reform efforts ought to be supported by the West, Genscher called for Western economic aid to the Communist bloc during the World Economic summit in Paris in July 1989. Two months

⁴¹Staack, p.277; Pittman, p.158

⁴²Sodaro, p.356

later, the German Foreign Minister introduced the so-called 'Europa-plan,' based on the idea of providing planned international aid for the emerging democracies in the Soviet bloc.⁴³ Since Gorbachev was also aware that without greater Eastern European integration into the world economy, there could be no economic reform at home, Moscow formally established relations with the European Economic Community in June 1988 and even urged its Communist partners to open their own economies to greater cooperation with the Common Market.

While both Bonn and Moscow were generally pleased about the degree of economic and technological cooperation they had achieved in the middle- to late 1980s, many members of the US administration were by far less enthusiastic about such close Soviet-German cooperation. During Genscher's visit to Washington in January 1988, much of the debate centered on the question of whether concluding economic and technological deals with Moscow gave Western Europe greater security or whether it enabled the Russians to move closer to their long-term aim of dominating the continent. In contrast to Bonn, which called for a conference on East-West economic and technological cooperation, the Reagan administration was conducting a major campaign against what it perceived as the uncontrolled transfer of Western technological secrets to the armed forces of the Soviet Union.⁴⁴

Similarly, the United States also called for generally stricter control over exports to Moscow, whereas Genscher argued for a liberalization of the Cocom regulations. Acting as spokesman for the West German government, the Foreign Minister argued that the export controls were a product of the Cold War and needed to be adapted to the new spirit of cooperation:

"These restrictions need to be rethought and reduced to what is really necessary...It is, after all, in the European and the Western interest to overcome the economic and technological division in Europe as a whole..."⁴⁵

⁴³DLF, 17.7.89, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁴⁴The Times, 25.1.88; Wirtschaftswoche, 29.1.88

⁴⁵Genscher cited in The Guardian, 21.1.88

Eventually, Bonn and Washington achieved a solution that allowed both sides to save face. Along Bonn's lines, the export restrictions would henceforth only apply to technology used for arms production, and along Washington's lines, those remaining export restrictions would be very strictly enforced.

Berlin

Despite the international and bilateral problems in German-Soviet relations after 1982, one area that remained relatively unaffected by these problems was the Berlin question. However, there was also no progress either until July 1986 when, during Genscher's visit to Moscow, the German-Soviet agreement on scientific and technological cooperation was finally signed. As mentioned in Chapter Three, this agreement had existed since 1978, but had not been signed previously because of the Soviet Union's refusal to guarantee West-Berlin's inclusion. Given the FDP's traditional efforts to improve West Berlin's status, the Free Democrats highly approved of such progress. In the autumn of 1987, expert talks were held with the aim of enabling West Berlin to be included in further agreements. One month before Chancellor Kohl's visit to Moscow in 1988, Genscher and Shevardnadze signed an agreement on environmental protection and cultural cooperation, which fully included West Berlin.⁴⁶

Humanitarian issues

East-West communication on humanitarian issues after Gorbachev's assumption of power greatly resembled the East-West dialogue on all other questions. Initially, there was little progress, either at the CSCE expert meeting about human rights in May 1985 in Ottawa, or concerning the figures of ethnic Germans allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union, whose number dropped by about half between 1983 and 1986. However, from about 1986 onwards, Gorbachev's concessions in the humanitarian field, which directly related to his overall programme for political and economic reform, led to significant progress in

⁴⁶Pittman, p.154; SR, 28.7.88, Interview with H.D.Genscher Note, however, that the Berlin agreement was accompanied by a Soviet rebuff to a US request to expand airline traffic to Berlin.

humanitarian issues. Even if the Western debate about Gorbachev's sincerity also extended to 'glasnost,' the Soviet concessions put pressure on the Western doubters, if not to reciprocate, at least to acknowledge the Soviet efforts. The Free Democrats, for their part, greatly appreciated Moscow's humanitarian concessions, not only for reasons of principle, but also because Gorbachev's actions favourably reinforced Foreign Minister Genscher's early support for the Soviet leader.

Gorbachev's sincerity concerning greater East-West cooperation was for instance apparent during the Communist party congress in 1986, when the General Secretary declared his wish to break down the military blocs and to create a Common European Home. Two years later, in his December 1988 speech before the UN General assembly, Gorbachev announced Moscow's departure from the Brezhnev doctrine, which had postulated the Kremlin's right to interfere in the other Eastern European countries for the sake of "restoring" their domestic stability. From now on, the Soviet Union would respect the principle of free elections "...to which there shall be no exceptions."⁴⁷ By the end of the CSCE conference in Vienna from November 1986 until January 1989, the Soviet Union had also terminated all jamming of Western broadcasts in Eastern Europe. This was the largest opening of the closed Eastern European societies to date, and the chances for a convergence between East and West improved even further when Washington in return agreed to the Kremlin's earlier controversial suggestion of holding a human rights conference in Moscow in 1991.⁴⁸

German-Soviet cooperation on humanitarian issues was also in line with the general East-West dialogue. While the number of ethnic emigrants from the Soviet Union had continuously declined until 1986, in 1987, the situation improved greatly. For one thing, from January 1987 onwards, applications by ethnic Germans were subject to a new regulation, and for another thing, President von Weizsäcker's visit to Moscow in July 1987 (as the first Bundespräsident to go for thirteen years) also resulted in improving the emigration numbers. During von Weizsäcker's visit, Gorbachev also addressed the touchy issue of the

⁴⁷Hacker, p.22

⁴⁸Mastny, The Helsinki process and reintegration of Europe, pp.16-22 Moscow continued to stick to its course of neutrality during the 1989 CSCE human rights conferences in London and Paris, during which the clashes among the Eastern European states came to the fore even more strongly.

Union's position on German reunification, telling the Bundespräsident that statements suggesting the German question was still open raised doubts about the Federal Republic's adherence to the Soviet-West German treaty of 1970. Despite his request for proceeding from the existing realities, Gorbachev also made the much more encouraging statement: "...Today two German states are a reality...May history decide what will happen in a hundred years."⁴⁹ This leads to the question which will be addressed next, namely how the improved superpower climate and Gorbachev's reforms affected the FDP's desire for continued progress in inner-German relations in the later half of the 1980s.

Inner-German relations in the later half of the 1980s

As shown earlier, Honecker's 1987 visit to Bonn had been the highlight of the two German states' close cooperation since the early 1980s. However, for the time being, Honecker's visit marked the end of the two Germanies' joint striving for rapprochement since afterwards, the SED's resistance to continued reform no longer permitted such inner-German cooperation. Much to Bonn's dismay, Honecker rejected the idea of following Gorbachev's policy of perestroika, denying any need for reform and reconstruction in East Germany and attributing Soviet attempts at perestroika to the Soviet Union's less advanced state of development. Due to its bordering on West Germany and its identity problem, East Germany also resisted the implementation of glasnost, as the German Democratic Republic feared that any questioning of the past and more openness would pose a vital threat to its existence.⁵⁰ Bonn's policy towards East Germany after 1987, in contrast, remained characterized by the attempt gradually to improve inner-German relations with small steps. From the Free Democrats' point of view, both the fact that a solution to the German question presently seemed out of reach and the hope that Honecker's successor would allow for greater

⁴⁹Gorbachev cited in Die Zeit, 11.9.87; Pittman, p.153 German-Soviet relations further benefited from the Kremlin's release of Matthias Rust after Genscher's trip to Moscow in the autumn of 1988 and from Moscow's suggestion to establish a special German-Soviet trade zone in Kaliningrad, which was, however, prevented by the opposition of the Russian population in the Volga area.

⁵⁰Pittman, p.155

inner-German progress, called for the continuation of a policy of small steps.⁵¹

From 1987 onwards, the futility of West Germany's hopes for further progress became apparent through East Berlin's rigorous procedure against dissidents. On occasion of the 69th anniversary of Rosa Luxemburg's assassination on 15 January 1989, more than a hundred people who demonstrated for peace and human rights were either imprisoned or expelled. Furthermore, inner-German relations were now strained by the limitations on Western journalistic access to East Germany. In December 1987, East Berlin officially protested against the 'interference' by Western politicians with its internal affairs, because these politicians had criticized the GDR's refusal to let certain SPD and Green politicians enter into East Germany. East Berlin's more restricted approach also manifested itself with regard to a much more dogmatic approach to the past. In 1988, the German Democratic Republic forbade the import of the Soviet magazine *Sputnik* because the East German leadership feared that *Sputnik's* critical evaluation of the Stalinist past would undermine its legitimacy.⁵²

A look at German-Soviet cooperation after Gorbachev's assumption of power has shown (1) that, after an initial adjustment period, Gorbachev's readiness for reform favourably corresponded with the FDP's efforts for progress in East-West relations in general and German-Soviet relations in particular, (2) that the Free Democrats sought to support the changes in the Soviet Union themselves, especially through their calls for Western economic aid to Eastern Europe, and (3) that from about 1987 onwards, the superpower rapprochement had the opposite effect on inner-German cooperation, namely stopping it completely. Fearing its survival, East Germany blocked any economic or social reform of the type that was being implemented in the other Communist states and widely supported by the West. The result of these adverse developments in East Germany and the rest of Eastern Europe will be examined next.

⁵¹See Lambsdorff's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hanover, 11.-12.8.1990; Zimmer, p.223

⁵²Glaeßner, p.264

The opening of Eastern Europe and the origins of the 2+4 process

From mid-1989 onwards, it became increasingly difficult for East Germany to block the reform process, as events in Eastern Europe developed their own momentum. Gorbachev's departure from the Brezhnev doctrine, his concessions in the final CSCE document in Vienna, and the Kremlin's neutralist reaction to the growing gap between the reform-minded and reform-hostile regimes in Eastern Europe, seemed to signal that Moscow was increasingly reluctant to interfere with its satellites' politics in a "stabilizing manner."

By June 1989, this impression was confirmed (and the potential threat to East German stability increased), when Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl signed a joint German-Soviet declaration during the General Secretary's visit to Bonn. The declaration stressed the concept of a 'common European house,' based on the principles of self-determination, international law and human rights, and thereby pointed the path for the reforming states on how to maintain their own power by turning away from Stalinism. This section will firstly investigate the Free Democrats' reaction to the actual process of liberalization in Eastern Europe in 1989 and secondly look at the FDP's role in the preparations for German unification.

The FDP's reaction to the unravelling of Eastern Europe

Arguably, Hungary's decision to open its border with Austria in May 1989 triggered off the unravelling of Eastern Europe, since vast numbers of East Germans now began to cross illegally into the West via Hungary. Even after the German Democratic Republic had restricted this possibility by September 1989, growing numbers of East German refugees sheltered in Bonn's Prague and Warsaw embassies. With its forty-year anniversary approaching on 7 October 1989, the German Democratic Republic was under growing pressure to do something about this situation because it did not want to be confronted with pictures of escaping citizens on that day. Furthermore, as ever more East Germans arrived in the West German embassy in Prague, Czechoslovakia put increasing pressure on Honecker to stop the influx.

During their September 1989 encounter at the United Nations, the Foreign Ministers concerned consequently discussed the matter. East Berlin's request that the refugees must first return to East Germany where they would be given exit visas in due course was causing a deadlock, as most refugees did not trust this procedure and preferred to stay in Prague. The negotiations only progressed when Hans-Dietrich Genscher came up with the compromise formula that the refugees *would* return to the GDR by passing through East Germany in a special train on their way to the Federal Republic. This procedure would allow East Berlin to save its face, as SED officials could take away the refugees' passports en route and then claim that the East German government itself had decided to expel the dissidents. Eventually, Honecker gave in, and on 30 September, Genscher flew to Prague, where he told the refugees in what he later termed "the most moving hour of my political work" that they would be allowed to emigrate.⁵³

However, neither Genscher's compromise formula which had allowed East Berlin to avoid a refugee crisis, nor Gorbachev's assurances of Soviet support during the GDR's fortieth anniversary celebrations could hide East Germany's growing problems.⁵⁴ During the summer months, reform groups had sprung up in almost all small East German cities, and after the anniversary celebrations, mass protests broke out in the German Democratic Republic, leading to Honecker's resignation on 18 October. The new East German government, headed by Egon Krenz, lasted for less than a month, on 9 November 1989, Krenz's successor Hans Modrow declared that all East Germans could leave the GDR for visiting purposes. Although in retrospect, this measure most likely was an SED gamble taken to stem the mass exodus and restore stability, de facto, it meant the opening of the Wall, since East Berlin allowed the East Germans to leave the country through all crossing points with West Germany.⁵⁵

⁵³DFS, 2.10.89, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁵⁴Kaiser, p.184; Neckermann, p.12 During the celebrations, Gorbachev had also reminded Honecker that "He who is too late will be punished by life," but it is very unlikely that at this point of time, Gorbachev wanted to take initiatives that would result in German unity.

⁵⁵Pittman, p.160 While hard-line elements in the Soviet Union had urged Gorbachev to use force to save East Germany, Gorbachev in the end listened to those advisers, including Shevardnadze, who advised against such interference in the GDR. Note that on 4 November 1989, Czechoslovakia had also opened its borders.

The FDP's role in preparing the process of German unification

From Bonn's and the FDP's perspective, the fall of the wall had transformed the long-term option of unity into a strategic opportunity to be grasped. The West German government seized the initiative quickly when on 28 November 1989, Kohl announced his 10-Point Plan, suggesting that the two German states should now increase their cooperation at all levels, form a 'contractual community,' move towards confederated structures and ultimately reunify. Due to the federal government's awareness of Western and Soviet reservations about the prospect of increased German power, the 10-Point-Plan also stressed the need to place the process of German reunification in the context of multilateral cooperation, i.e. the CSCE, East-West disarmament and the European Community. Only one day after the fall of the wall, Foreign Minister Genscher had expressed a similar view:

"No people in the world, no people in Europe must be afraid if the doors between East and West are now opening up...Germans living in freedom, in a democracy have never posed a threat for other peoples...We will stick to our commitment to the Western democracies..."⁵⁶

However, to the Federal Republic's disappointment, although the 10-Point Plan satisfied the impatient East Germans, it most certainly did not satisfy the other Europeans. Given twentieth century German history, the Western reaction to the prospect of German reunification was cautious, and the Chancellor's suggestions were widely seen abroad as a deliberate attempt to accelerate events.⁵⁷ The Free Democrats, slightly concerned about the Chancellor's sudden assumption of control over Deutschlandpolitik, quickly pointed out that the Western criticism of the 10-Point Plan was identical with their own: (1) that the Western allies had not been consulted prior to the plan's publication and (2) that there was no concrete reference to the controversial issue of Germany's post-war borders.⁵⁸

⁵⁶DFS, 10.11.89, Genscher's speech at the Schöneberger Townhall after the fall of the wall

⁵⁷Pond, *Beyond the Wall*, p.138

⁵⁸SR, 30.11.89, Interview with O. Lambsdorff; Handelsblatt, 30.11.89

Nevertheless, on the whole, the FDP backed the 10-Point Plan and was dissatisfied when at the superpower summit in Malta in December 1989, the Four Powers unanimously argued that for the time being, the existence of two German states was the best option. In Malta, the Western powers expressively warned of precipitating the unification process, and on 20 December, Francois Mitterrand even went to East Berlin, where he publicly assured the new East German president of French support for the future existence of East Germany. Similarly to the Western powers, Moscow's immediate reaction was to insist that German reunification was not up for discussion and that the German Democratic Republic must remain in the Warsaw Pact.⁵⁹

Given the strong reservations about the prospect of German reunification both in East and West, we shall now turn to the question which factors enabled the unification process to take off eventually, and whether there were any specific contributions on the Free Democratic Party's behalf. The first and most pressing factor for reunification was the German Democratic Republic's complete collapse by the end of 1989. From Bonn's and the FDP's perspective, this was followed by a second favourable development, namely East Berlin's, Moscow's and Washington's realization that it was counterproductive to oppose what had already begun to look like an inevitable process towards unification.⁶⁰

Realizing that the Soviets would not act to save the GDR from any credible political alternative, by January 1990, Modrow had not only brought forward the first free East German elections from 6 May to 18 March 1990 but had also travelled to Moscow to discuss his country's future with Gorbachev. Significantly, during this visit, the Soviet leadership in principle agreed to the option of German unity. The "Declaration on the Way to German Unity," elaborated by Modrow and Gorbachev during the visit, proposed several steps towards a German federation, although it was based on the prerequisite that a united Germany be neutral. Bonn rejected any neutral status for a unified Germany, but Kohl and Genscher greatly welcomed Modrow's and

⁵⁹Pittman, p.160

⁶⁰Kaiser, p.191

Gorbachev's acceptance of a single German state and the fact that the option for reunification was now really there for the first time.⁶¹

By the end of January 1990, the Bush administration had also concluded that East Germany was collapsing and that German unity was now a certainty and should be accelerated. The main aim in this situation was to fit Germany into the "new European security structure" in a manner acceptable to all key participants in the process. London, Paris and Moscow were tempted to organize the negotiations on German unification as "4+0" procedure, in which the Four Powers would agree on an approach without Germany. However, the negative German and European public response to the 11 December 1989 meeting of the Allied Control Council in Berlin, convened at the Soviet request, had demonstrated that any impression of excluding the Germans from the process of unification, in reminiscence of the anti-Hitler coalition of half a century earlier, would endanger a new European system at its very outset.⁶²

Consequently, two members of the White House administration, Robert Zoellick and Dennis Ross, now came up with a plan widely referred to as "2+4," which postulated that the Four Powers and the two Germanies should jointly negotiate the process of unification. The advantages of the 2+4 plan were (1) that the Germans would not feel excluded, as under the 4+0 option, (2) that the negotiations would not need to be held within either the NATO or the CSCE framework, both of which were too big and therefore unwieldy. In order to avoid German opposition to 2+4 on the grounds that it would be an intervention in German affairs, Ross and Zoellick made it a precondition for the 2+4 negotiations that their explicit objective must be a unified Germany - everyone involved had to sign up to this. In order to shelter internal unification from the external process, the plan would not go into

⁶¹DFS, 11.2.90, Interview with H.D.Genscher; The Guardian, 1.2.90 After Modrow's "Declaration on the Way to German unity," the actual inner-German negotiations about unification took off very quickly, and in the first week of February 1990, the discussion about an Economic and Currency Union began on the basis of introducing the Deutsche Mark into East Germany. Genscher pointed out to Moscow that the chances for East Germany to fulfil its delivery obligations to the Soviet Union would increase dramatically if the GDR formed an economic union with the Federal Republic.

⁶²Kaiser, p.189; Szabo, p.59

operation until after the 18 March election in the GDR and after the start of inner-German negotiations for unity.⁶³

Just as Baker's assistants were designing the 2+4 formula, Foreign Minister Genscher came up with a potential solution to another difficult question, namely the alliance-political future of a united Germany. The problem was that although departure from NATO was no option for the Federal Republic, by January 1990, Bonn's chances of achieving reunification without paying the price of leaving NATO seemed rather slim. Considering the reunification euphoria in both Germanies and the fragile public support for NATO, most analysts believed that a Soviet veto on NATO membership for a united Germany might well succeed.⁶⁴ Furthermore, it would clearly be difficult to ensure continued German membership in NATO without making the Soviets appear as the losers of the Cold War.

In this situation, Genscher developed his NATO plan as a means of both selling unification to the Soviets and ensuring Germany's remaining in NATO. The Foreign Minister first proposed his plan on 31 January 1990 at the Tutzing Protestant Academy near Munich. The core idea of Genscher's concept, namely that a united Germany should belong to NATO, but that no allied forces would advance into the territory of what would be the former GDR, had been circulating among diverse sources in Germany, but Genscher had now seized upon these ideas.⁶⁵ According to this scenario, Soviet troops would remain in the Eastern parts of an emerging new German state during a transition period. Genscher's plan also suggested much greater cooperation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact - the two alliances should form the nucleus of a world peace force, perhaps under the United Nations which would guarantee global, and therefore European, security.

Thus, by the time the West German Foreign Minister travelled to Washington on 2 February 1990, two plausible suggestions for the kind of international framework that might accompany the domestic process of German unification - the "2+4" concept and Genscher's NATO plan -, had already been proposed. During Genscher's stay in Washington, the

⁶³Szabo, pp.59-60

⁶⁴Pond, Beyond The Wall, p.173

⁶⁵Genscher's speech at the Tutzing Protestant Academy on 31.1.90, in Auswärtiges Amt - Pressemitteilung, 31.1.90; Szabo, pp.56-57; The Times, 1.2.90

US and German delegation agreed on the 2+4 formula, and Genscher even got an assurance from Baker that the "formula" would be "two-plus-four" and not "four-plus-two," as the British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd had requested. At the conclusion of their conversation, Baker and Genscher had furthermore agreed on Genscher's NATO plan as outlined in Tutzinger. Even though Washington expressed some reluctance about making East Germany into a completely demilitarized zone, overall, the Bush administration concurred with Genscher's plan on the grounds that Moscow ultimately had a strong interest in seeing a new Germany as part of the Western alliance and not as a neutral state that might ignite nationalist conflicts with its neighbours.⁶⁶

The remaining task of convincing France, Great Britain, and above all the Soviet Union of this international framework for unification was completed in three steps throughout the month of February. Firstly, James Baker succeeded in selling the 2+4 idea to Shevardnadze and achieved a least a neutral Soviet reaction to Genscher's NATO plan during his visit to Moscow on 8 February. The US Foreign Minister now also for the first time presented what came to be known as the Nine Assurances: a package of cooperative measures concerned with what the West would offer to the Soviet Union in return for acceptance of German unification.

Secondly, during their trip to Moscow on 10 February, Kohl and Genscher obtained, as the Chancellor put it, "the key to German unity."⁶⁷ While Gorbachev insisted that the external aspects of German unification were by no means an exclusively German affair and could only occur with Four-Power approval, the Soviet General Secretary now also agreed that the Germans themselves must determine the process of internal unification without outside interference. Thirdly, full international acceptance of German unification was eventually achieved during the Open Skies' conference in Ottawa on 12 February 1990. All Four Powers and the two Germanies now concurred that a two-plus-four conference would be set up to regulate the external aspects of German unification. According to Foreign Minister Genscher, the decisive outcome of the

⁶⁶IHT, 7.2.90; Neckermann, p.36

⁶⁷Kohl cited in Szabo, p.63

Ottawa conference was all participants' agreement that they *wanted* to achieve German unification.⁶⁸

Despite the FDP's dependence on Moscow's and the Western Powers' approval of Bonn's push for reunification, it has also been shown that Genscher's NATO Plan and the Foreign Minister's quick embrace of the 2+4 concept contributed to getting the process of German unification started. The next and last section of this chapter will examine the FDP's role during the actual negotiations about unification.

The negotiations on German unification in 1990

Once the external framework for German unification had been successfully established, the remaining precondition for the 2+4 talks to begin was the formation of a government in East Germany. This duly happened after the first free elections in the GDR on 18 March 1990, when the Christian Democrats, the SPD and the Liberals formed a grand coalition with Lothar de Maiziere as Prime Minister. However, compared to its crucial role in paving the way for the start of the 2+4 talks and to the central role played by its West German counterpart, East Germany's contribution to the actual negotiations about German unification was much more marginal, largely due to the novelty of its arrival in the Western diplomatic scene. From Bonn's and its Western allies' perspective, the three main tasks of the 2+4 talks were (1) to elicit from the Germans a binding agreement on the permanence of their borders, (2) to ensure united Germany's full integration into Europe in combination with Soviet economic stability and (3) to convince the Soviets to accept a sovereign Germany within NATO.

The first main 2+4 talks, held in Bonn on 5 May 1990, tackled the controversial issue of Germany's post-war border with Poland, as Chancellor Kohl's hesitance to make a firm final commitment on the Polish border had meanwhile caused substantial irritation, not only at home (with the FDP) but also abroad.⁶⁹ Since Kohl's encounter with

⁶⁸DLF, 15.2.90, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁶⁹On 14 March 1990, a first 2+4 encounter at the ambassadorial level had already taken place in Bonn, during which the multilateral and bilateral fora for discussion had been defined.

President Bush in Camp David in February 1990, Washington had urged for a final solution to the Oder-Neisse issue, and Margaret Thatcher had also declared in an interview with *Der Spiegel* that the signing of a German-Polish border treaty was a necessary precondition for German unity.⁷⁰ During the meeting in Bonn, it was decided that the Polish delegation should participate in the July session of the 2+4 negotiations, an idea which Washington and Moscow advocated in particular. Approximately two months later, during the 2+4 talks in Paris on 17 July, final agreement on the Polish border was reached.

Apart from the Oder-Neisse issue, the Free Democrats and their fellow architects of German unification faced the tasks (1) of ensuring united Germany's full integration into the EC and (2) of handling the Soviet Union's economic and domestic-political difficulties. The Straßbourg summit of December 1989 had already provided a European context for German unification when Chancellor Kohl, well aware of the Europeans' concern about Germany's growing power, had established a link between German and European unification by increasing Bonn's support for Economic and Monetary Union and by calling for greater political cooperation within the EC. The Dublin summit held at the end of April 1990 developed a concrete framework for East Germany's inclusion into the EC, and at the second Dublin summit, held at the end of June, a deadline of 1 January 1993 was set for the ratification of an agreement of European economic, monetary and political union.⁷¹

Furthermore, as the negotiations on German unification evolved, it became clear that a final settlement would require economic support for an increasingly unstable Soviet Union. During Horst Teltschik's confidential talks with Moscow about the Soviet economic crisis on 14 May 1990, the Soviet leaders had already expressed their interest in a long-term agreement for Soviet-German economic and political cooperation, indicating that such an agreement might be more important than a 2+4 treaty. During the EC summit meeting in Dublin and the G-7 summit in Houston in July 1990, Chancellor Kohl also advocated a European aid programme for the Soviet economy.

On the whole, however, the Germans were careful to avoid the impression that they were buying East Germany and the Soviet Union,

⁷⁰Der Spiegel, 26.3.90, Interview with M. Thatcher

⁷¹Handelsblatt, 18.7.90

since their Western partners disagreed with the notion of German economic help in exchange for unification. Nevertheless, the Germans' readiness to assist the Soviet Union economically and to cover East Germany's debts with Moscow entailed the use of 'positive economic leverage', since it laid the groundwork for solving the last remaining problem in the way of unification by July 1990, namely the issue of united Germany's membership in NATO.⁷²

Agreement on the restoration of full German sovereignty and a united Germany's membership in NATO proved difficult to reach, both in terms of finding an international compromise with the Soviet Union, and on the national level, since Foreign Minister Genscher proved consistently more lenient towards Moscow's position than Chancellor Kohl and most of the US administration. Disagreement over Germany's future status first erupted during the May 2+4 encounter in Bonn, when the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze suggested separating the internal and the external aspects of German unification from each other. While the Federal Republic was attracted to Shevardnadze's proposal because it would allow Germany to unite without the delays that waiting for the solution of the international questions might cause, opinions in Bonn were divided about the second aspect of Shevardnadze's suggestion: the prolongation of Four Power competence and, as a result, the continuation of limitations of Germany's sovereignty.⁷³ Initially, Genscher and Lambsdorff seemed open to Shevardnadze's suggestion, but when Chancellor Kohl argued that unification and the restoration of Germany's full sovereignty had to occur together, Genscher quickly retreated to Kohl's view.⁷⁴

Before final agreement on Germany's future alliance commitments and on full German sovereignty could be reached, a number of steps had to be completed, each of which increased Moscow's readiness to compromise on the matter. Firstly, during Gorbachev's visit to Washington from 31 May until 3 June 1990, Bush and Gorbachev

⁷²Szabo, p.84, p.93; Plock, East-German-West-German Relations, p.191 On 13 September, one day after the final 2+4 agreement on German unification in Moscow, the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Partnership and Cooperation, according to which Germany would provide generous support for the reconstruction of the Soviet economy.

⁷³FAZ, 8.5.90

⁷⁴Der Spiegel, 14.5.90, Interview with H.D.Genscher

reached agreement on the issue of conventional forces and the institutionalization of the CSCE. Secondly, during its London summit on 6 July, the Atlantic alliance changed its message, and the London Declaration stressed that NATO henceforth aimed at building a European peace order based on freedom, law and democracy, and offered to extend "the hand of friendship and cooperation" to the Soviet Union and all other European countries.⁷⁵ The third and last obstacle to agreement on Germany's future was removed during the Communist Party congress on 3 July 1990, when the unexpectedly mild reaction to Shevardnadze's speech, stressing pan-European cooperation over military confrontation, paved the way towards final agreement on the controversial issues of Germany's future military and political status.

The first indication of a final German-Soviet deal came when the Chancellor received an invitation from Gorbachev to visit him in the Caucasus from 13-15 July 1990. The visit marked a sensational breakthrough on all outstanding issues and also brought to the fore once again Genscher's greater tendency to accommodate the Soviet Union. Gorbachev now agreed that reunified Germany would remain in NATO and overall accepted the Genscher plan, if in a slightly modified version. Genscher's original NATO plan had stipulated that *no* units of the Western alliance be stationed on GDR territory, including "armed forces of the Bundeswehr, whether assigned to NATO or not."⁷⁶

The treaty concluded in the Caucasus corresponded with this provision insofar as until the completion of the Soviet withdrawal from East Germany, only German territorial defence units not integrated under NATO command could be stationed on the territory of the former GDR. However, in contrast to the more conciliatory Genscher plan, after this transitional period, the special status of East Germany would end with regard to the German forces, which could then be deployed under NATO command, while the stationing of foreign troops or nuclear weapons would remain permanently prohibited.

Gorbachev offered yet another concession in the Caucasus: that he would not demand a transitional period during which the Four-Power rights would remain. With the signing of the 2+4 agreement, Germany would be granted full sovereignty, and there would be no more Four

⁷⁵Kaiser, p.197

⁷⁶Bull.28, 28.2.90; Kaiser, p.196

Power authorities and no peace treaty. Last but not least, the encounter in the Caucasus brought German-Soviet agreement on the future ceilings of the German armed forces. In return for Gorbachev's concessions, Chancellor Kohl pledged to limit the German armed forces to 370.000 (Genscher and the FDP had pleaded for a ceiling of 350.000), pay DM 13 billion to facilitate the withdrawal of the Red Army within four years, provide wide-ranging economic and technical assistance to the Soviet Union and sign a friendship treaty.⁷⁷

After the breakthrough in the Caucasus, German unification was completed on 12 September 1990 in Moscow when all 2+4 participants signed the "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany." On 1 October 1990, the treaty was presented to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in New York. Even though the treaty could not be ratified by all Four-Power governments in time for Germany's unification on 3 October 1990, in a well-received gesture, the four victorious allies signed a document clearly stating that they would no longer exercise their occupation rights. This idea of suspending the Four Power rights had been invented by the British embassy in Bonn and cleared the way for Germany to unite in full sovereignty, which actually happened on 3 October 1990.

Conclusion

Two main and related conclusions emerge from this chapter. First, that from the mid-1980s onwards, the impact of the respective superpower leadership on the FDP's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik was much more favourable than during most of the 1970s and early 1980s. Second, that the positive interaction between the various changes in the international system during the Christian-Liberal coalition and the FDP's foreign policy priorities allowed the Free Democrats, and most notably Foreign Minister Genscher, to exert a much stronger influence

⁷⁷On the evening before the treaty was to be signed, one last obstacle arose when the British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd informed Genscher that he could not sign the treaty because his government insisted on the right of NATO troops to manoeuvre on former East German territory after the Soviet withdrawal. These last-minute British demands were not well received by either Genscher or Baker, but a compromise was eventually reached when the British agreed to an appendix to the treaty drafted during the night by the Political Director of the Foreign Office, Dieter Kastrup. Szabo, p.111

on international developments than ever before. It should also be stressed, however, that the international developments in the mid-1980s highlighted the constraints on the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy, as the Free Democrats who had pushed for the continuation of detente all throughout the early 1980s (i.e. Genscher's series of articles in 1983 and 1984), had not been very successful until the US President and the Soviet General Secretary embarked on a similar course.

Nevertheless, concerning US foreign policy between 1982 and 1990, the Free Democrats greatly benefited firstly from the Reagan administration's switch from a highly confrontational policy towards Moscow to a much more lenient approach by the mid-1980s, culminating in the biggest arms control agreements since World War II. Secondly, the FDP profited from President Reagan's particular style of leadership. In many cases, Reagan's rhetoric was much louder than his actual politics, which not only precluded much need for crisis management, but also complemented well with the Free Democrats' desire for continued good relations with Eastern Europe.⁷⁸ Examples of Reagan's rhetoric being shriller than his actual performance are (1) the fact that the almost universally held picture of an unprecedentedly large transfer of US national sources to military purposes was never entirely accurate in the first place, (2) that as of 1988, SDI could hardly be regarded as anything more than an ambitious research programme and that (3) despite Reagan's fierce rhetoric, US land forces during his Administration were only used against Grenada.

This positive effect of the United States' return to detente on the FDP's Ostpolitik coincided favourably with the changes in the Kremlin after Gorbachev's assumption of power. The Free Democrats gained both from Gorbachev's determination to reform the Soviet Union's economic and political system, and from the new Soviet leader's personal convictions. Gorbachev's attempt to reconcile socialism in some way with the Western concepts of democracy and his push for greater international cooperation corresponded with many Western statesmen's values, but importantly, it was Hans-Dietrich Genscher who first voiced his belief in Gorbachev's sincerity, thereby providing the Kremlin's efforts with some of the necessary Western support.

⁷⁸Bell, p.22

The superpower rapprochement and the stunning progress in arms control from 1986 onwards also increased the Federal Republic's room for manoeuvre in the Atlantic alliance and reduced Washington's chances for utilizing 'linkage', in other words, for putting pressure on Bonn to demonstrate its loyalty towards NATO in return for the American security guarantee. From the mid-1980s, West Germany increasingly united with its European allies in their push for more arms control, and the FDP's controversial (yet successful) refusal to accede to the modernization of US Lance missiles in early 1989 also signalled a new German self-confidence.

Apart from the favourable interaction between the progress in arms control and the FDP's capacities for action in foreign policy, the Free Democrats benefited from the renewed EC impetus towards integration in the mid-1980s. The revival of the Western European Union, the founding of "Eureka" and the progress towards European economic, monetary and political union all not only closely corresponded to the FDP's foreign political aims, but were also actively promoted by the Free Democratic Party.

Furthermore, this chapter has demonstrated that in at least two ways, the Free Democrats profited from their coalition with the Union between 1982 and 1990: on the one hand, the Conservatives' greater tendency to question the finality of Germany's division and of Poland's Western border allowed the Liberals to portray themselves as the true guarantors of Ostpolitik towards both West and East. On the other hand, the Free Democrats approved of the fact that by the early 1980s, the Union had dropped its opposition to Bonn's use of positive economic leverage for improving its relations with Eastern Europe. West Germany's credits to the GDR in 1983 and 1984, for instance, helped to shield inner-German relations from the Second Cold War at least temporarily, and the Federal Republic's grants to Moscow in 1990 provided a strong incentive for the Soviet Union to remove its troops from East Germany and to approve of reunification.

Given the favourable military and economic developments in international relations throughout the 1980s, combined with the unusually positive constellation of leading personalities, with the benefit of hindsight, the breakdown of Eastern Europe and the negotiations on German unification may appear as a very smooth process. However, it should be stressed that there were many moments when things could

easily have gone wrong. There is Gorbachev's decision not to use force to stop the East German revolution in 1989 even though strong voices in the Soviet Union urged him to do so, there is the continuity of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze as leaders of the Soviet Union in 1990, and the fact that Washington quickly and constructively supported the process of German unification, in contrast to France's and Great Britain's initial reaction.⁷⁹

Most important in the context of this chapter, however, is the fact that Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher cooperated much better throughout the process of unification than ever before. Kohl, for his part, not only seized the initiative with his 10-Point-Plan, but also corrected Genscher's occasional tendency to concede more to the Soviets than necessary. Genscher seemed more ready than Kohl to accept Shevardnadze's proposal at the May 2+4 meeting in Bonn to decouple the internal and external aspects of unification, and he was also willing to settle for a somewhat smaller Bundeswehr than required by the Soviets. Furthermore, it has been shown that Genscher's initial postulation that no Bundeswehr forces would be deployed on the territory of the former GDR was in the end modified.

We have also seen, however, that the FDP (and most notably Foreign Minister Genscher) was to a degree able to contribute to the process of German unification. In part, Genscher's contribution to unification went back further than the years 1989 and 1990, and his merit in recognizing Gorbachev's sincerity early on has already been mentioned. The Foreign Minister also indirectly contributed to creating the option of reunification with his compromise formula concerning the East German refugees at the Prague embassy in 1989. Once the process of German unification was on the agenda, Genscher helped to keep the Polish border issue from harming international support for unification and did much to gain Soviet trust and eventual acceptance of a united Germany, for instance with his NATO plan.

⁷⁹Szabo, p.114ff.

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Chapter VII. The Christian-Liberal coalition 1982-90: the domestic context

After examining the impact of liberal ideology and international developments on the FDP's Ostpolitik during the Christian-Liberal coalition, a comprehensive analysis of the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in foreign policy between 1982 and 1990 lastly requires a look at domestic politics. This chapter will investigate how the Free Democrats coped with their volatile electoral situation after leaving the Social-Liberal coalition and how the reversal of power among the two big parties affected the FDP's foreign policy. More specifically, how did the Social Democrats adjust to their new role as parliamentary opposition, and what was the impact of the CDU's control over the Chancellor's Office on the FDP? We shall also examine the Free Democrats' reaction to the arrival of a second junior coalition partner (the CSU), and whether the Union stuck to its pledge that Social-Liberal Ostpolitik would be continued even under a Conservative government.

This chapter will also look at the impact of public opinion on the Federal Republic's foreign policy-making after 1982. In particular, the question will be how the German public's strong anti-nuclear sentiments in the 1980s affected the Free Democrats' approach to the issues of detente and defence. Lastly, we shall attempt to trace the FDP's role in the process of German unification. What was the Liberals' reaction to Chancellor Kohl's sudden assumption of control over German policy, and how did they try to maintain their special profile in Ostpolitik and German policy throughout the unification process? Since the first pan-German elections in December 1990 are a good indicator of the FDP's impact on the process of German unification, the last section of this chapter will be devoted to their examination.

The FDP's struggle for survival - the Bundestag elections of 1983

The first question to be addressed is how the Liberals coped with the substantial pressure they faced during the months after their change of coalition partner. As already pointed out in Chapter Four, the Free Democrats had an unusually bad press in the latter half of 1982, being charged with betrayal and opportunism. As in the months before, Genscher defended himself and his party by insisting that it had been the SPD and not the Free Democrats who had deserted from previous Social-

Liberal positions: "...The SPD has deserted Schmidt - not we the former Federal Chancellor. That's the truth, and it will assert itself..."¹

With the membership losses being far greater than the party would publicly admit, the Free Democrats faced the additional problem of a very bleak electoral situation. Critics converted the party's name from Free Democratic Party to 'Fast Drei Prozent' ('almost three percent'), thereby not only hinting at the 5% hurdle but also reducing the FDP's function to an electoral one - the new name paid no tribute the FDP's role as representative of political Liberalism in Germany. Genscher was painfully aware of this attempt to reduce his party's impact to a functional position. In addition, although Genscher was re-elected as Party Chairman at the FDP's party congress in November 1982, the left-wing parliamentary deputies and most of the youth wing still strongly opposed the change of government on the grounds that the Liberals had deserted their principles: "Better a party of one percent that is true to its principles than a party of three percent that has lost its credibility."² At this party congress, the FDP decided that if there were to be another coalition change at the federal level, next time, the party would have to ask the party congress for permission - a decision which clearly reflected the grassroot's suspicion towards the party leadership.

However, as critics either left the party or adjusted to the political change, the controversy within the FDP over the realignment generally ebbed. By the beginning of the new year, the polls began to indicate an improvement of the FDP's position in the electorate, and the Liberals' pre-election convention in January 1983 was a harmonious event, with most delegates eager to display party unity. By this point of time, even though two thirds of the Liberals were still uneasy about the manner in which the coalition change had taken place, more than ninety-nine percent approved of a resolution to continue the coalition with the CDU/CSU after the March 1983 elections.³

The Free Democrats' only opportunity for re-election seemed to lie in running the campaign on the FDP's importance as guarantor of continuity in West German foreign policy. Not surprisingly, the Liberals

¹Genscher's speech at the FDP's 33rd Party Congress in Berlin, 5.-7.11.1982

²The Times, 8.11.82

³Soe, The Free Democratic Party: Two Victories and a Political Realignment, pp.130-133

readily seized this chance. The FDP's motto was 'Germany needs the Liberals,' and Genscher even spoke of 1983 as the "most important elections in West Germany's history."⁴ The Free Democrats elaborated greatly on the fact that they had switched coalition partners because Germany's current problems called for a reconfirmation of two principles of German post-war politics that had both been introduced during the first Christian-Liberal coalition under Adenauer: Germany's commitment to a market economy and the Federal Republic's strong ties with the West. As Genscher put it: "The purpose of the Wende was to change the approach to economics and to make sure that nothing would be changed in foreign policy..."⁵ According to the Free Democrats, the new Christian-Liberal coalition would act as necessary buffer against the SPD's neutralist tendencies and as the only reliable guarantor for Germany's remaining in NATO.

While the FDP emphasized the need to create a Christian-Liberal counterweight against the Social Democrats, the Liberals of course also stressed their importance for ensuring that Bonn's detente policy towards Eastern Europe would be continued. Even though the FDP this time did not campaign directly against Franz-Josef Strauß, the CSU leader still played an important role in the FDP's self-promotion, as when the party stressed that Genscher would guarantee continuity in foreign policy. Based on their experience in the 1980 election campaign, the Free Democrats faced their competition with Strauß quite confidently, being well aware that they could benefit from contrasting their foreign policy with the CSU's conservative approach:

"The CSU has made an interesting contribution to foreign policy with its remark that they have not fought Ostpolitik for thirteen years now to ignore it. That's certainly an additional motive for many voters to support the FDP."⁶

With 6.9%, the FDP's election result on 6 March 1983 was fairly satisfactory, considering the party's problems since their change of coalition partner in 1982. After the elections, Genscher's popularity

⁴Bildzeitung, 11.2.83, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁵ZDF, 19.6.86, Interview with H.D.Genscher

⁶WAZ, 17.2.83, Interview with H.D.Genscher

increased again, and on a scale from plus 5 to minus 5, Genscher reached the first positive result (0.1) since the events in October 1982.⁷ The coalition negotiations presented quite a change from Social-Liberal times, however, as the Free Democrats now had to defend their ministerial claims against two parties instead of just one. Naturally, competition with the CSU was especially tough, with both the Liberals and Strauß aiming at the second most influential posts in government, those of Foreign Minister and Minister of Economics. The coalition haggle soon escalated so much that Otto Lambsdorff, Minister of Economic Affairs, felt called upon to make the following clarifying statement:

"We want to continue the coalition with the Union. But we will not allow it to suppress us... The Free Democrats are not the CDU's or CSU's sister party. We contribute our own concepts to the coalition negotiations... In coalitions, there is no such thing as the right of the stronger partner. Who treats the junior coalition party as majority enabler instead of as equal partner, destroys the basis for future cooperation. I am sure that the Federal Chancellor understands this. Some politicians from Bavaria... still need to learn it."⁸

In an attempt to improve the tense relations between the CSU and the FDP, Genscher and Strauß met in Munich on 11 March 1983. As a result, Strauß agreed to stay in Bavaria but requested more influence for his party in Bonn. In the end, the Free Democrats secured three ministries (including the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Economics) for themselves but lost their previously fourth occupied Ministry of Agriculture to the CSU (which in total occupied four Ministries).

Consensus and dissensus in Parliament

Apart from the need to adjust to a second junior coalition partner, the Free Democrats now also faced their former governing partner's departure into opposition. The main question at stake was whether the

⁷Bonner Rundschau, 4.5.83

⁸fdk 87, 9.3.83

Social Democrats would use their function as parliamentary opposition in the same manner as the Union had done previously. After all, the CDU/CSU had vehemently opposed any Social-Liberal attempts to advance Ostpolitik for most of the 1970s, although Chapter Four has also shown that the Union's growing acceptance of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik from about 1978 onwards had finally put an end to the inner-German dissensus over Ostpolitik.

Since this section is concerned with the impact of the interaction between government and opposition on West German foreign policy during the Christian-Liberal coalition, it will first concentrate on the last phase of cycle two - pan-German support for Ostpolitik - which still determined Bonn's politics after 1982. In an attempt officially to demonstrate that Social-Liberal Ostpolitik would be continued even after the government's shift towards the right, all three German parties (FDP, Union and SPD) approved of a joint resolution on German policy on 9 February 1984 in the Bundestag.⁹ Apart from all three parties' declaration on a joint Berlin policy in June 1978, there had not been such publicly demonstrated unity between government and opposition since the early 1970s. Most importantly, the Bundestag resolution of 1984 demonstrated that the Social Democrats would continue to support the Kohl/Genscher government's foreign policy instead of contesting it in their new function as parliamentary opposition.

At a later stage of the Christian-Liberal coalition, in March 1989, the Bundestag once more approved of a joint resolution on foreign policy. This time, the statement had been formulated in face of the clash between Gorbachev's reform process and the lack of humanitarian improvements in East Germany. The 1989 Bundestag Resolution was meant to be a political signal to East Berlin that all parties in the German Bundestag agreed on the importance of more human rights in the German Democratic Republic.¹⁰

Although government and opposition had thus achieved far-reaching agreement on Deutschland- and Ostpolitik, such parliamentary consensus could not be maintained all throughout the Christian-Liberal coalition. As indicated above, the Christian Social Union's return to

⁹Note that the Greens had not participated in the work towards this resolution and had voted against it.

¹⁰Zimmer, p.129

government and the party's feeling that it was not given appropriate influence in foreign policy-making tempted the CSU on a number of occasions to block the government's foreign policy efforts. Matthias Zimmer has consequently argued that the main resistance to Christian-Liberal Ostpolitik after 1982 did not come from the Social Democrats in opposition but from the right wingers within the Union. For instance, when the Bundestag considered another joint foreign policy resolution in the mid-1980s, the Union's conservative wing refused to support it on the grounds that they could not tolerate the intended acknowledgement of the Polish Western border in the event of German reunification.¹¹ The CSU's opposition blocked any further progress on the proposed resolution.

In addition to the shift in the debate about Ostpolitik, foreign policy during the Christian-Liberal coalition was also greatly affected by the impact of cycle three, relating to the evolution of inner-German consensus and dissensus about security policy. As shown in Chapter Four, until the late 1970s, all German parties had agreed on the Federal Republic's need strictly to follow NATO's security policy, based on the joint effort to combine a credible defence with arms control offers. It has also been demonstrated that from the late 1970s onwards, cycle three had entered into its second phase of strong polarization over security policy in face of the emergence of the peace movement and the SPD's growing opposition against the stationing of NATO's Pershing missiles on German soil.

After the March 1983 elections, the battle lines on the issue of deployment of US intermediate-range nuclear missiles were sharply drawn between the coalition government and the parliamentary opposition. Before the decision about the stationing of Pershing II missiles in the Federal Republic was finally taken, the Social Democrats requested a renewed vote in the Bundestag. While Genscher and the Union refused this request on the grounds that the Bundestag had already approved of the stationing of INF forces in May 1981, the government did agree to another security-political *debate* about the issue.

Not surprisingly, many Social Democrats argued during this Bundestag debate that the existing level of nuclear arms should be frozen without requesting prior agreement on demilitarization. Equally predictably, the governing coalition rejected this idea as dangerous.

¹¹Zimmer, pp.111, 134

Genscher accused the Social Democrats of "...answering tomorrow's problems with yesterday's answers" and reluctantly acknowledged the widening gap between government and opposition on the matter.¹² While in the end, the decision to deploy the missiles in the autumn of 1983 proved to be far less disruptive to society at large than had originally been feared, it nevertheless did result in the final breakdown of the consensus that had emerged between the major parties on major security issues since the early 1960s.¹³

Despite such strong polarization over security policy in the early- and mid-1980s, the Christian-Liberal coalition was to live and see the emergence of phase three of cycle three, that is inner-German realignment over security policy. For a discussion of this process of realignment, the reader is referred to section five of this chapter which covers the Christian-Liberal coalition's security policy in more detail. For the moment, we shall turn to another factor which influenced the Free Democrats' foreign policy after 1982 apart from the Social Democrats' departure into opposition - the CDU's take-over of the Chancellor's Office.

Cooperation between the Chancellor's Office and the Foreign Office

For a number of reasons, Genscher's relationship with Chancellor Schmidt differed from that with Helmut Kohl which in return greatly affected the process of foreign policy-making during the Christian-Liberal coalition. To begin with, Genscher had not known Helmut Schmidt very well before entering the Social-Liberal coalition in 1974 and had never intensively collaborated with him. Kohl and Genscher, in contrast, had been both neighbours and friends for years when they formed a coalition in 1982 and had frequently discussed foreign policy issues during the Social-Liberal coalition. In fact, Kohl and Genscher were close enough friends to use the familiar way of addressing each

¹²SDR, 3.7.84, Interview with H.D.Genscher At the FDP's party congress from 18-19 November 1983 in Karlsruhe, a majority of the Free Democrats had approved of the deployment of US Pershing missiles on German soil from 1983 onwards (286 "yes" votes; 226 "no" votes; 1 abstention).

¹³Cerny, p.211

other, if only in private. Genscher himself once characterized the different nature of his relationship with the two Chancellors as follows: "Schmidt and I respected each other. Kohl and I have been good friends for years... That makes it easier to solve problems..."¹⁴

The relationship between Kohl and Genscher further benefited from the fact that, in contrast to Schmidt, Kohl was neither an expert in foreign policy nor an Economist. During the Social-Liberal coalition, Schmidt had devoted much time to thinking about new foreign-political strategies, and Genscher had in return taken on a lot of the daily work, developing his profile in areas where he would not disturb the Chancellor. As shown in Chapter Four, the Foreign Minister's room for distinguishing himself had further been limited by the high level of foreign-political agreement between Schmidt and himself. The situation in the Christian-Liberal coalition was very different, for one thing because Kohl was not as interested in foreign policy as Schmidt, and for another thing because Genscher had by now gained enough foreign policy expertise to be highly respected. After the change of government, the Union initially even somewhat depended on Genscher's experience for continuity of German foreign policy. On the whole, Kohl's abstinence from foreign policy gave Genscher a chance to shine, and he seized it with both hands.

Cooperation between the Chancellor's Office and the Foreign Office was also favourably influenced by two other factors. Firstly, although Kohl did not have a major impact on foreign policy, German Ostpolitik during the Christian-Liberal coalition profited from the Chancellor's skilful reconciliation of controversies both within his own party and within the coalition. As Smith has pointed out, the fact that Kohl was so "adept both in party management and in the coordination of the government and the coalition" significantly contributed to his holding on to power. Secondly, Kohl signalled his readiness to continue Social-Liberal Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik after 1982 by charging the Union's most reform-oriented politicians with German policy.¹⁵ This policy

¹⁴Bildzeitung, 17.3.84, Interview with H.D.Genscher; Bunte, 22.3.84 Note that even though Kohl and Genscher used the familiar way of addressing each other in private, in the Cabinet, they stuck to the formal 'Sie.'

¹⁵Smith, Developments in German Politics, p.50; Zimmer, pp.110-111 For instance, Rainer Barzel and Alois Mertes, who had both tried to soften the Union's positions on detente already during the 1970s, became the first Minister of Inner-German Affairs and Junior Minister in the Foreign Office respectively.

greatly facilitated cooperation between the Chancellor's Office and the Auswärtiges Amt.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher in particular gained from the fact that Ostpolitik, East-West issues and demilitarization had by now been acknowledged as his 'special field' in the Foreign Office. Not even the junior ministers in the Foreign Office, Irmgard Schwaetzer and Helmut Schäfer, dared touch these issue areas. Here, Genscher formulated the foreign policy and had it executed by the state secretaries. Genscher's impact on foreign policy was further aided by Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker's new approach to his office. Unlike previous Presidents, von Weizsäcker spoke out on many domestic and foreign policy issues and acted simultaneously as a pace-setter and integrator in public opinion formation.¹⁶ Genscher benefited from von Weizsäcker's approach to the Presidency since the two leaders shared a far-reaching agreement on foreign policy. Both emphasized detente as the main element of German foreign policy, and Genscher sometimes used the strategy of commending von Weizsäcker's foreign policy approach in order to reinforce the FDP's position against Union hardliners.

Despite the good personal relations between Chancellor, Federal President and Foreign Minister, and notwithstanding the Union's initial reliance on Genscher's expertise in foreign policy, it would be wrong to assume that the Chancellor's Office completely left the field of foreign policy to the Free Democrats after 1983. Soon after his assumption of power, Kohl went ahead and appointed Horst Teltschik, a Christian Democrat, as foreign policy adviser in the Chancellor's office. By choosing a personal aide of his, Kohl set a precedent since this position had traditionally been occupied by somebody from the Foreign Office to ensure maximum exchange of information between the two offices. Kohl's choice introduced a good deal of suspicion and rivalry between the Chancellor's and the Foreign Office, as is often found between the State Department in Washington and the National Security Adviser in the White House.¹⁷

Teltschik prepared all trips for Kohl and exerted more influence over the practical formulation of German foreign policy than any official

¹⁶Kirchner, Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism, p.167; FAZ, 12.8.89; Die Welt, 12.6.85

¹⁷Dönhoff in Schulze/Kiessler, p.8

in the German Chancellor's office ever had. Jealousies between the Foreign Office and Teltschik could consequently not be avoided, and the Foreign Office retaliated against what it perceived as Teltschik's exaggerated influence by complaining to Kohl or by releasing more or less subtle criticism of the Chancellor's aide. Concerning Genscher's attitude towards Teltschik, their rivalry was probably more personal than political since Teltschik largely agreed with the Foreign Minister's ideas, except for his slightly stronger emphasis on Bonn's loyalty towards Washington.¹⁸

The FDP's stronghold in foreign policy after 1982 was furthermore challenged by the arrival of the Christian Social Union in government. The CSU's traditional aspirations to the Foreign Office were intensified by the fact that Strauß considered foreign policy to be his field of special expertise and by the CSU leader's well-known aversion to the FDP generally and to Genscher in particular. From the beginning of the Christian-Liberal coalition, the CSU and several members of the CDU thus signalled clearly that they considered themselves underrepresented in foreign policy and were not willing to put up with an eternal Free Democratic monopoly in this important field. The *Bayernkurier*, the CSU's official press organ, for instance wrote that German foreign policy was not Genscher's private affair, and Volker Rühle, vice-president of the CDU's parliamentary fraction, stated along similar lines:

"...It is not written down anywhere that the FDP always has to provide the Foreign Minister. The Union has been very successful in foreign policy after the war. Nobody has decided that this post must be occupied by our coalition partner forever..."¹⁹

Rühle's statement reflected the view held by many Conservatives in the Christian-Liberal coalition who, beneath the surface of German-political continuity, felt that their views had been ignored. The effects of such intra-governmental rivalry on Christian-Liberal foreign policy will be addressed in the next section.

¹⁸FAZ, 9.11.85

¹⁹SZ, 26.9.85; Der Spiegel, 5.8.85, Interview with V. Rühle

Continuity or discontinuity of Ostpolitik? - The FDP's use of intra-coalition disagreement over Ostpolitik for self-promotion

This section is concerned with the question to what degree the government actually adhered to its pledge that the Union's assumption of power would not bring any changes in German foreign policy, especially in Ostpolitik and German policy. It will attempt to show that several hardliners in the CDU/CSU had by no means accepted the principles of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik and still sometimes tried to interfere with the coalition's policy towards Eastern Europe. Most importantly, the impact on the Free Democrats of such continued Conservative reservations against Ostpolitik will be examined.

Strauß' attempts to run German Ostpolitik in 1983

With Strauß, the Free Democrats faced a competitor who in several ways actually attempted to conduct foreign policy on his own. Besides his desire to make an impact in this field that clearly mattered so much to him, Strauß probably also wanted to demonstrate that he was fitter to run West Germany's foreign policy than the present incumbent of the Foreign Office. Although the Bavarian Minister President had always been one of the staunchest opponents of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik, during the early years of the Christian-Liberal coalition, he suddenly tried to portray himself as a capable 'Ostpolitiker' by assuming a more lenient position towards Eastern Europe than the Free Democrats and most of the Union on a number of occasions.

Strauß first attempted to prove his foreign-political expertise in 1983 when Rumania wanted to restrict the emigration of its citizens to those who returned their education fees of about DM 10.000. While Foreign Minister Genscher immediately stated that such Rumanian requests offended against the principles of Helsinki and that he would only travel to Bucharest to discuss the situation *after* Rumania had reversed its decision, Strauß embarked on a much milder course and agreed to travel to Bucharest without attaching any preconditions.²⁰

²⁰FAZ, 21.5.83; WAZ, 1.6.83. Note that in 1983, Strauß also travelled to Poland and Czechoslovakia where he confirmed his support for continued good West German relations with Eastern Europe.

Strauß's trip had no immediate impact on the Federal Republic's relations with Rumania, but since the CSU Chairman had consciously ignored Genscher's position on the matter, the Foreign Office viewed it as interference with its politics towards Eastern Europe.

Even though the Foreign Office did not officially react to Strauß' trip, it now attached even greater importance to Genscher's role as the actual negotiator with Rumania. On 31 May 1983, the Foreign Minister travelled to Bucharest himself. As a result of this trip, the previous conditions for emigration from Rumania were restored, and the ethnic Germans who wanted to emigrate no longer needed to pay back the expenses for their education.²¹ The Auswärtiges Amt had thus successfully demonstrated to Strauß who was really running German Ostpolitik.

When it became known in July 1983 that Strauß had been involved in the successful negotiations about a DM 1 billion credit to East Germany by a consortium of West German private banks, much of the Foreign Office was again both surprised and annoyed. For one thing, Strauß had always fiercely opposed an Ostpolitik based on trading West German economic concessions for humanitarian improvements in Eastern Europe. For another thing, the negotiated credit was not without economic risk for the Federal Republic since the government had assumed formal guarantee for it. Although the negotiators claimed that if East Berlin did not meet the interest payments, the West Germans would be able to put pressure on the defaulters by cutting payments to East Germany, such claims were fairly unconvincing. Strauß' conciliatory approach towards the GDR could not even be explained by substantial East German counter-concessions, since the latter stayed far below the federal government's expectations. The Foreign Office thus found it hard to see the credit as anything other than a demonstration by Strauß that he was not necessarily the ultimate hardliner he was usually held to be and that he was really more suitable to run West Germany's foreign policy than was the Free Democratic Party.²²

²¹FAZ, 1.6.83 As a counterconcession, Bonn would continue to pay a lump-sum for ethnic Germans who were allowed to emigrate from Rumania.

²²The Times, 25.10.83; fdk 53, 8.3.84

Public relations

Controversies within the new government were not limited to disagreement and competition between the two smaller coalition partners, however. The Union and the Free Democrats also had frequent run-ins over the issue of public relations conduct. Even though the Union had largely accepted Ostpolitik by 1982, in terms of their official statements, some of its members continued to pursue a tougher course towards Eastern Europe than the Liberals. Shortly before Honecker's planned visit to Germany in 1984, Alfred Dregger, CDU Bundestag deputy, for example said in an interview with *Die Welt*: "Our future does not depend on whether Honecker pays us the honour of a visit."²³ The federal government, and especially the FDP, carefully distanced itself from Dregger's statements by confirming its invitation to Honecker. When Honecker postponed his visit to West Germany, Genscher clearly expressed that he did not approve of the spectacular manner in which the intended visit had been discussed:

"Certainly, there has been and is too much staggering. Especially our politics towards the GDR calls for utmost restraint. Brazen comments are not a sign of strength, nor are they particularly helpful..."²⁴

Similarly, when a West German citizen had died during a trial in the East German city of Drewitz in April 1983, Strauß and Edmund Stoiber, the CSU's General Secretary, immediately spoke of murder and requested a reorientation of German policy. Again, the FDP called for more moderation in the CSU's treatment of the German Democratic Republic. Genscher claimed that although the incident was utterly regrettable, the government must continue to promote good relations with East Germany, precisely to work on a policy enabling to prevent such instances in the future.²⁵

By far the worst impact on East-West relations had Kohl's 1986 *Newsweek* interview in which the Chancellor compared Gorbachev's

²³Dregger cited in *Die Welt*, 25.8.84

²⁴*Bildzeitung*, 7.9.84, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²⁵fdk 109, 22.4.83; HR, 24.4.83, Interview with H.D.Genscher

public relations abilities with those of Josef Goebbels, who had been Hitler's propaganda official during the Third Reich. Disapprovingly, Genscher cited the Soviet newspaper Pravda's accusations of the West German "nationalist and revanchist" tendencies in his speech at the FDP's 1986 party congress in Mainz. The Foreign Minister also appealed to the Union to "...keep in mind the twenty million casualties that Hitler's attack caused in this country..."²⁶

Disputes over the Oder-Neisse border

Even though it had been agreed in the coalition negotiations that relations with the Communist states would be conducted on the basis of the Ostpolitik treaties, concerning the issue of Poland's Western border, controversies between the CDU/CSU and the Free Democrats continued to persist after 1982. The main difference between the FDP's and the Union's approach was one of emphasis: while the FDP tended to emphasize the inviolability of the Polish border, the CDU/CSU focused on the Constitutional Court's verdict of 1973 that a final decision about the border could only be taken in a peace treaty for a reunified Germany. All throughout the Christian-Liberal coalition, right-wing Union members were straining the coalition by their insistence that the former German areas on the other side of Oder and Neisse still had to be treated as part of the government's operative German policy and needed to be returned to Germany in the long run. When the CSU again claimed in 1987 that the Ostpolitik treaties were not politically binding for the federal government, Genscher replied firmly: "There can be no withdrawal ...from detente, as Herr Strauß wants it... Ostpolitik is not an adventure playground..."²⁷

More generally, Genscher would react to such Union statements by citing Helmut Kohl to prove that the FDP could fully rely on the Chancellor's support for their position. In an interview with the Hessian broadcast, the Foreign Minister said, for instance:

"I agree with the Federal Chancellor on foreign policy, which is very important, otherwise there could not be any progress. I

²⁶Genscher's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Mainz, 21.-22.11.1986

²⁷Genscher cited in The Times, 21.1.87; FAZ, 22.1.87

regret, however, that there are certain voices which try to water down the clear course that the Chancellor and I are embarking on... But they will not succeed, I guarantee it..."²⁸

The Free Democrats agreed with Kohl's frequent declarations that the Federal Republic did not have any claims to Polish territory. In fact, the group around Kohl did not even believe that the Polish border would be disputed in any future negotiations over a final peace treaty. The Chancellor differed from the Free Democrats, however, since for legal and strategic reasons, he would not commit himself *publicly* to the finality of the Polish border in case of reunification. In addition to Kohl's support, the Liberals could rely on substantial public approval of the FDP's position on the Polish border. In 1985, 76% of the West German population thought that recognition of the Oder-Neisse border was acceptable, and even 66% of the Union's voters thought so.²⁹

Intra-coalition controversies about the Polish border reemerged with new intensity in 1989, the year that marked the 50th anniversary of Hitler's invasion in Poland. For one thing, Chancellor Kohl now made it quite clear that he was not willing to leave the field of German-Polish relations to the FDP alone. Early in 1989, Kohl had appointed his foreign policy adviser Teltschik as the top negotiator in Bonn's new drive to improve ties with Poland. The Teltschik delegation was meant to prepare Kohl's trip to Warsaw in the summer of 1989 and to negotiate possible German credits to Poland. While most of the Union members agreed that Bonn should once again link credits to Poland to Warsaw's permission for the emigration of ethnic Germans, Genscher warned of reducing Polish-German relations to the economic aspect and pointed to the historical importance of the year 1989. Naturally, Genscher was not enthusiastic about Kohl's nomination of Teltschik as his personal representative to Poland in 1989. Since the Foreign Office was not consulted about Teltschik's preparations, it feared that his appointment was meant to give the Chancellor more control in a field where Genscher had so far made the running.³⁰

²⁸HR, 14.7.85, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²⁹Die Welt, 30.1.85 (Emnid poll)

³⁰DFS, 7.4.89, Interview with H.D.Genscher; The Economist, 11.2.89; IHT, 21.7.90. Later on, Genscher blocked the Chancellor from giving Teltschik the same assignment to Czechoslovakia.

The intra-coalition discussions in 1989 also demonstrated, however, how strongly Chancellor Kohl tried to appease both his Liberal coalition partner *and* the Union's right-wing. In the end, Kohl postponed his trip to Poland which had been planned for 1 September 1989, officially because the issue of West German credits to Poland had not yet been solved. It was no secret, however, that Kohl's decision was also linked to Christian Democratic fears about the recent rise of the extreme right-wing Republican party. The CSU and parts of the CDU wanted to avoid losing the support of their right-wing voters to the Republikaner and hence opposed any spectacular visits to Poland in 1989.³¹

Soon after the postponement was announced, the leader of the CSU, Theo Waigel, further soured relations by repeating the controversial view that the German Reich had not ended in 1945 and that it continued to exist "within the borders of 1937."³² Foreign Minister Genscher warned that responsible treatment of the question of the German-Polish border was the basis for any government in which the FDP participated and that uninhibited right-wing remarks about Germany's pre-war borders could jeopardize the future of the Christian-Liberal coalition. Chancellor Kohl here once again clearly sided with the Free Democrats by stating that concerning the Polish border, mere insistence on legal points was not of much use for practical politics.

Genscher's early call for cooperation with Gorbachev

Concerning Christian-Liberal reactions to Gorbachev's aspirations at perestroika and glasnost, the Union also proved less ready than the Free Democrats to give up their traditional suspicion towards the Communist states. Genscher explained his early support for Gorbachev with his firm conviction that the new Soviet leadership was seriously interested in reforming the country and in conducting a politics of opening up both at home and abroad. In his famous speech in Davos, Genscher had already pleaded for taking Gorbachev seriously, and in the 1987 Bundestag elections, the FDP greatly benefited from such early Liberal support for the new Soviet leader. The German voters apparently

³¹In contrast to 1985, by the summer of 1989, only 65% of the German population thought the Oder-Neisse border was acceptable. *Der Spiegel*, 28.8.89

³²The Guardian, 11.7.89

trusted the Foreign Minister's belief in Gorbachev and voted for the FDP accordingly.

With 9.1% of the vote, the FDP was quite content with the outcome of the elections, in contrast to the Union, which at 44.3%, had scored its worst result since the first Bundestag elections of 1949. In addition to the positive public reaction to the FDP's approach towards Gorbachev, the Free Democrats had also benefited from public support by leading German scientists and authors throughout the 1987 election campaign for Genscher's remaining in office as Foreign Minister. Turning against the CSU's requests for departure from detente policy, these promoters had asked the Germans to give their second vote to Genscher in order to "save detente policy."³³

Genscher again demonstrated his trust in Gorbachev's intentions when he requested in September 1989 that Western Europe develop a 'Marshall Plan' for Eastern Europe. According to the Foreign Minister, the aim of such a plan was to help stabilize the reform countries both internally and externally. Apart from financial aid and food deliveries, Genscher suggested that the West should be ready to offer training and expertise, particularly in management. To some degree, Genscher's initiative was supported by German public opinion since even in 1988, Gorbachev had enjoyed a positive ranking of more than 70% among the West Germans.³⁴

Generally speaking, the Union parties were much more reluctant to believe in Gorbachev's sincerity and initially viewed Genscher's enthusiasm with suspicion. In 1986, Horst Teltschik typically criticized the fact that Gorbachev's public commitment to demilitarization and a new phase of detente had not yet concretely manifested itself in the demilitarization negotiations in Geneva, Stockholm and Vienna. Furthermore, in 1988, Chancellor Kohl took the surprise decision of transferring his close colleague Rupert Scholz to the Ministry of Defence. By giving the post of Defence Minister to a man whose attitude towards the Russians was notoriously tough, Kohl clearly hoped to provide a counterweight to Genscher's keen support for Gorbachev. In face of the

³³fdk, 13.1.87 Among Genscher's supporters were Marion Countess Dönhoff, Arnulf Baring, peace researcher Wolf Count Baudissin, political scientist Theodor Eschenburg, publicist Wolfgang Leonhard and author Rolf Hochhuth. Bark/Gress, p.475; Cerny, p.190

³⁴Time, 15.8.88; The Times, 20.9.89

open intra-coalition disagreement over the appropriate response to Gorbachev, German newspaper articles about the alleged lost mutual trust between Chancellor and Foreign Minister abounded.³⁵

Similarly, in 1989, Gerhard Stoltenberg, the new Minister of Defence, was very sceptical when Genscher announced his idea of a Marshall plan for Eastern Europe. While signalling the CDU/CSU's readiness in principle to help Eastern Europe, Stoltenberg put the accent on the risks inherent in such aid and on the Federal Republic's negative credit experiences in the 1970s. Stoltenberg thus warned of confusing hope with reality in dealing with the Soviet bloc and requested that the Eastern European states must create reliable economic framework conditions before they could expect any aid from West Germany.³⁶

In line with his overall strategy of dealing with reluctant Unionists throughout the Christian-Liberal coalition, Genscher lost no time over harping on the differences between the FDP and the CDU/CSU but rather devoted his energy to citing Chancellor Kohl whenever the latter's statements seemed to support the Free Democrats' positive attitude towards Gorbachev. For instance, when Genscher's 1985 argument for a "new phase of detente policy" met with harsh criticism from Strauß, the Foreign Minister duly pointed to Kohl's call for a "new phase of East-West relations" after the Chancellor's encounter with Honecker in March 1985. Similarly, after his trip to Moscow in July 1988, Genscher emphasized that Kohl had fully approved of the journey, calling it "unusually successful."³⁷ Towards the end of the decade, such references to the Chancellor's support for the FDP's position no longer proved necessary since by then, most German politicians had joined the Gorbachev fan club. By the end of 1988, even Strauß had converted to Genscher's belief that West Germany stood to gain a lot from Gorbachev's revolution, if it worked.

³⁵See, for instance, *Die Welt*, 17.2.89; *The Economist*, 11.2.89. Scholz only held the post of Minister of Defence until April 1989 when he passed it over to Gerhard Stoltenberg.

³⁶*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20.7.86; *SZ*, 19.9.89

³⁷*FAZ*, 3.8.88; *Der Spiegel*, 17.11.86, Interview with H.D.Genscher; *Die Welt*, 13.7.85

The compatibility of detente and defence 1985-89 - the interaction between public opinion and Liberal foreign policy

The previous section has demonstrated that, in terms of foreign policy impact and self-promotion, the Free Democrats generally profited from their coalition with the Christian Democrats although the Union did not always unanimously support the continuation of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik. This section will attempt to show how the FDP could come to gain disproportionately large influence over yet another area of Bonn's foreign policy between 1982 and 1989, namely security matters. In order to answer this question for the later half of the 1980s, it will be necessary to look at the interaction between German public opinion and the Federal Republic's security policy. During the first major security-political debate after 1983, however, it was not so much public opinion but the FDP's readiness to cooperate with its coalition partner that allowed the Liberals a major say in the final decision, as will be shown next.

1985 SDI debate

By 1985, the Free Democrats were facing two substantial problems related to security policy, both of which strongly coloured their response to Reagan's SDI project. To begin with, by the mid-eighties, there was a growing gap between Genscher's emphasis on the need to safeguard European and German interests and the Chancellery's increasingly pro-American stance, reflected most clearly in its almost total takeover of German-American relations. By 1985, nobody doubted any longer that Teltschik had succeeded in creating a direct connection with the Reagan administration bypassing the Foreign Office. The Americans had, for instance, promised to provide Teltschik with special information about the talks in Geneva that no other ally would get.³⁸ Kohl closely followed Teltschik's advice of absolute loyalty towards the United States.

Second, in line with its strongly pro-American stance, the Union had quickly signalled its approval when President Reagan had proposed his plan for a Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) in 1983. In June 1985, Kohl's national security adviser Teltschik travelled to the USA to check

³⁸SZ, 7.2.85

whether West German support for SDI would be useful. As a result of the trip, Teltschik called for a governmental agreement with the United States to coordinate the participation of West German industry in the SDI project. According to Teltschik, it was of "vital interest" for West Germany to take part in the US research effort since sooner or later the superpowers would agree to stationing a certain level of space missiles anyway, maybe without consulting the Western allies.³⁹ Teltschik furthermore praised the US programme for having prompted the latest Soviet proposals for a reduction in offensive missile systems. The Chancellor's Office even suggested that if the other Europeans did not want to follow suit in joining SDI, the Germans might possibly support the project in a solo attempt.

This endorsement of West German participation in SDI was the Kohl government's first public statement on the issue after Teltschik's fact-finding mission and caused substantial problems for the Free Democrats whose support for Reagan's initiative was much less unconditional, for both functional and factual reasons. The FDP was worried that Teltschik's influence on the Chancellor would increase even more after his trip to Washington, depriving the Foreign Office of a major say in the decision-making process on SDI. With many prominent members of the FDP's parliamentary fraction, including Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, Olaf Feldmann, Gerhart Baum and Helmut Schäfer, vehemently voicing their opposition against SDI as catalyst for a new arms race, Genscher also faced the immediate threat of a polarization on the issue within his own party. Furthermore, in contrast to the Union who saw one of the main advantages of the project in pressurizing the Soviet Union into arms control concessions, the Liberals feared SDI would have exactly the opposite effect. The Free Democrats were worried that overt West German participation in SDI might burden Soviet-US arms talks in Geneva and hamper Bonn's attempts to broaden discussion with Eastern Europe.⁴⁰

In face of the Union's decidedly strong support of the US project, Genscher feared, however, that the FDP would risk a major coalition conflict on the matter if it insisted on its security-political reservations. After all, Chancellor Kohl had already so openly advocated some kind of

³⁹Teltschik cited in *Die Welt*, 6.11.85

⁴⁰IHT, 2.10.85; SZ, 4.4.85

German support for SDI that the Union was under pressure from Washington to make a positive decision. The Liberals thus decided to aim at a compromise on Germany's participation in SDI by raising substantial preconditions for their assent to the project.

This decision to cooperate instead of to block had four advantages: firstly, the FDP could avoid a serious coalition conflict over the issue. Secondly, by attaching substantial prerequisites to the FDP's consent to SDI, Genscher succeeded in uniting most members of his party behind him. The majority of the FDP's thirty-five parliamentary deputies supported the Foreign Minister's efforts to act as a brake on the government's commitment to SDI. Thirdly, by actively participating in the decision-making process, the Free Democrats could make better use of the SPD's arguments against SDI than if they embarked on a course of mere opposition. Fourthly, as will be shown, the Liberals' readiness to compromise provided them with disproportionate influence over the government's final decision since the Union was extremely interested in some kind of SDI agreement, yet could not act without its coalition partner.

What was the FDP's position on Germany's participation in the American project, then? While the Free Democrats were more suspicious than other members of the coalition about SDI's military-strategic aspects, they much more strongly favoured the project's technological aspects. The Liberals' overall strategy thus was to aim at *limiting* Germany's support for the SDI programme to participation in the research and at *extending* the SDI debate to the European level. In line with their aim of reducing strategic cooperation on SDI, the Liberals opposed the Union's call for a governmental agreement with Washington, arguing that "...the state's participation, even in relatively harmless treaties, of course has a political dimension..."⁴¹ Similarly, the Free Democrats strongly warned against unilateral German support of SDI, as considered by some Union members, and instead requested the Europeans to embark on a joint research project called 'Eureka' in face of this challenge. Genscher pointed out that, after all, the Europeans had not left

⁴¹SR, 12.10.85, Interview with G.Baum The FDP gave its consent to negotiations about the involvement of private West German companies in the project, however.

the development of the steam engine, the railway and the car to the Americans.⁴²

Facing both his own party's strong advocacy of SDI and his coalition partner's opposition to it, Kohl found himself between two stools by the autumn of 1985. The Chancellor had agreed to the FDP's argument to delay Bonn's decision about SDI until after the US-Russian summit in Geneva in November 1985. However, when Washington remained determined to embark on the project after the Geneva encounter, the West German government finally had to make a decision about its desired level of involvement in the US initiative.

Much to the Union's dismay, most FDP criteria for supporting West German participation in SDI were included in the cabinet decision of 18 December 1985. The FDP's one concession to the Union was the fact that the government's resolution assured Washington of Bonn's political support for SDI. However, the resolution also included the FDP's requests that there would be *no* governmental participation in SDI and that Bonn would place priority on the arms-control political and technological consequences of the SDI research.⁴³ The Free Democrats also benefited from the fact that their Party Chairman and Minister of Economics, Martin Bangemann, had been nominated as German negotiator in Washington. The FDP hoped that Bangemann would assert himself against the CDU/CSU in the negotiations with the USA.

The INF Treaty of 1987

The next major intra-coalition controversy over defence policy arose when Gorbachev offered the so-called 'double zero option' in 1986, providing for the complete removal of all long- and short range intermediate nuclear missiles from Europe. In 1982, the CDU/CSU and FDP had still advocated precisely this zero option as the 'ideal' solution to arms control, as it would have rendered the deployment of US Pershing missiles on German territory from 1983 onwards superfluous. As shown earlier in this chapter, the two governing parties had also unequivocally

⁴²FDP's decrees at its Bundeshauptausschuss in Neuss, 1.6.1986; The Free Democrats also profited from the SPD's support for Germany's participation in Eureka and from the Social Democrats' objections to SDI's military-strategic aspects. Benien, p.159

⁴³Bull.146, 20.12.85

supported NATO's policy of actually deploying such US intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe after 1983, when the INF negotiations in Geneva had failed to result in the desired reduction of Moscow's intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

By 1986, such intra-coalition consensus on defence-political questions could no longer be taken for granted. As the INF treaty evolved on the basis of the 'double zero option,' leading West German Conservatives began to voice their criticism at the emerging treaty and suggested a dual strategy, neither element of which the Free Democrats agreed with. On the one hand, the Union requested that Germany at least hold on to its shorter-range intermediate nuclear forces, fearing that a fully denuclearized Europe would weaken the West in general and West Germany in particular. Volker Rühe came up with the famous phrase: "The shorter the range, the deader the Germans."⁴⁴

In contrast to the Christian Democrats, Foreign Minister Genscher made it clear, well before his cabinet colleagues fell into line, that he regarded West Germany's Pershing missiles as dispensable and that they should not stand in the way of a treaty between the superpowers. Genscher and most of the FDP also reckoned that even after the double-zero option, the Western alliance would still have enough nuclear punch to deter a Russian attack. The Foreign Minister kept emphasizing that, given Gorbachev's serious readiness for demilitarization, any removal of INF forces could only be of advantage for the Federal Republic and criticized the Union for setting the wrong tone in foreign policy:

"We can very well imagine a world with fewer nuclear missiles...We Liberals must not permit the attempt suddenly to portray demilitarization and not the arms race as the real danger..."⁴⁵

The Free Democrats approved just as little of the Union's second precondition for agreeing to the INF treaty: that the double zero option be linked to far-reaching reductions of Moscow's short-range nuclear

⁴⁴Rühe cited in US News, 1.6.87 The CDU/CSU also insisted that Germany keep open the possibility for modernization of its Pershing 1A missiles in case the agreement with Moscow failed.

⁴⁵Genscher cited in Die Welt, 24.11.86; Genscher's speech at the FDP's 38th Party Congress in Kiel, 5.-6.9.1987

weapons and conventional arms to avoid Soviet military superiority. In May 1987, Chancellor Kohl even requested not only the reduction but the complete *removal* of all short-range nuclear weapons ('third zero option'). This declaration, announced without prior consultation of Foreign Minister Genscher, further increased the confusion regarding Bonn's position. While the FDP agreed that the intention to discuss the reduction of short-range nuclear missiles should be included in the INF treaty, it warned against drawing up artificial borders between the individual areas of demilitarization.

Overall, the INF debate had led to a complete reversal of political fronts in West Germany which aided the FDP's position and made it much more difficult for the Union to assert its views. For one thing, the Free Democrats could now count on support from the parliamentary opposition - the peace movements, the Greens and the Social Democrats - for their stance on the double zero option. The function of the opposition had been assumed by those parts of the CDU/CSU's parliamentary fraction who were opposed to Moscow's proposals. In addition, the FDP's position was strengthened domestically as public support for the INF treaty grew. Surveys revealed that 90% of the population - including the overwhelming majority of CDU/CSU voters - were in favour of the zero option. Two-thirds of the West Germans did not believe that the loss of the Pershing missiles would lead to a less credible American nuclear guarantee for Europe.⁴⁶

Gorbachev's suggestions had thus resulted in the sharpest split between the two coalition partners on a major national issue since Kohl's assumption of office. Even Genscher called the INF controversy the "most difficult situation for the government" since its formation in 1982.⁴⁷ Overall, Kohl's vague approach to the double-zero option had led to an outpouring of public support for Genscher. When asked in 1987 which German politician truly wanted peace, 76% of the German population expressed their highest trust in Foreign Minister Genscher, whereas only 62% believed the same of the Federal Chancellor. All throughout 1987, the CDU/CSU suffered heavy losses to the Free

⁴⁶Meiers/Tanner, p.9

⁴⁷Genscher cited in FAZ, 28.4.87

Democrats in the state elections, a fact which the Christian Democrats blamed exclusively on the missiles debate.⁴⁸

In face of its isolation both at home and abroad, the Union began to retreat from its opposition against the double zero option. After intense intra-coalition debates, the Free Democrats' position was almost unconditionally accepted in the government's June 1987 resolution on the double zero option. The coalition decided that *both* the longer- and the shorter range intermediate nuclear missiles would be removed, with the exception of seventy-two shorter-range Pershing 1A missiles under joint US-West German command. The remaining of these Pershing missiles in Germany was the only FDP concession to the Union. The government's resolution also followed the Liberals' suggestion that there was no need to commit Moscow to further reduction of its short-range nuclear missiles at this point of time - the resolution merely provided for negotiations about such additional demilitarization efforts.⁴⁹

Overall, the INF debate had shown that the international and domestic changes in the late 1980s helped to reinforce the FDP's foreign political position. All throughout the negotiations about the double zero option, the Free Democrats had benefited from Gorbachev's serious readiness for disarmament, from the German public's strong anti-nuclear sentiments and from the new alliance between the parliamentary opposition and the Liberals.

The 1989 decision to postpone the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles

In face of the vacuum that the withdrawal of all intermediate-range nuclear missiles left in Europe, the inner-German debate about the modernization of short-range nuclear forces started with renewed intensity in 1989. For similar reasons as in the 1987 debate about the INF treaty, the FDP under Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was once more going to play a decisive role in the outcome of the 1989 decision.

⁴⁸Stern, 27.5.87, 'Infratest' opinion poll; Risse-Kappen, p.138

⁴⁹In the end, the Union even dropped its request for modernizing the Pershing 1A missiles. To the CSU's utter dismay, Chancellor made this decision without prior consultation of the Christian Socialist Union. Risse-Kappen, p.142

Firstly, Genscher again benefited from strong public support against modernization which had arisen from a number of interconnected factors, most of which have already been addressed in this chapter. Both the debates about the NATO dual-track decision and about the INF treaty had set in motion a growing anti-nuclear sentiment among the German public. The actual removal of all intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe after 1987 had left the two Germanies even more concerned that their countries would be the future nuclear battleground. Such anti-nuclear feelings accounted for the result of an Allensbach poll of June 1988 which showed that 68% of the West Germans were against the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles. Significantly, more than half of the German population (57%) did not think a West Germany without nuclear weapons would be more vulnerable to Soviet threats.⁵⁰

Secondly, it has also been shown that the German public strongly sympathized with Gorbachev's reform efforts and firmly believed in the Soviet leader's true readiness for peace. This trust in Moscow's peace efforts was counterbalanced by a growing suspicion of the United States, both because of Washington's lack of reaction to Gorbachev's reforms and because of Reagan's SDI initiative earlier in the decade. At the end of 1988, 83% of West Germans trusted Gorbachev more than Reagan, and more people trusted Russian rather than American peace and disarmament policy. The concrete achievements of the 1980s, such as Honecker's visit to Germany in 1987, visits by leading German statesmen to Moscow in 1988, the INF agreement, Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and Soviet permission to let ethnic Germans emigrate from the Soviet Union all acted as further catalyst for a new broad consensus among West German policymakers on the necessity of detente.⁵¹

With his opposition against the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles, Genscher thus personified the 'new' security policy consensus which had emerged in Germany in the wake of the INF treaty. While many Union members advocated the replacement of the ageing Lance missiles in the mid-1990s, pointing to the continued threat from the Soviet Union, Genscher believed this would send the wrong signal to

⁵⁰FAZ, 22.7.88

⁵¹Kirchner, Genscher and what lies behind Genscherism, p.166; The Independent, 27.4.89

Gorbachev just as talks on cutting non-nuclear forces had begun in Vienna:

“The momentum which now has been achieved in the disarmament process in Europe, in particular by the unilateral steps taken by Gorbachev, should not be stopped by a false signal that could be interpreted as rearmament instead of disarmament.”⁵²

Genscher also referred to NATO's 1987 agreement that the Lance missiles did not need to be modernized before 1995 and that the Alliance was ready to negotiate about their reduction. According to the Foreign Minister, Germany was consequently in no hurry to make a modernization decision. While Genscher could not expect the Union's backing for his party's resistance to modernization, he could be sure of support from the Social Democrats and the Greens.

Given the German public's opposition to modernization and the near consensus among all West German parties on the need to reduce short-range nuclear missiles, the Free Democrats enjoyed strong backing for their views. At their party congress preceding the government's decision, the Free Democrats linked the coalition's survival to the controversy about modernization, and Genscher even threatened indirectly that he might resign if the CDU/CSU did not fully back his position on short-range nuclear missiles.⁵³ Not surprisingly, the federal government's decision of May 1989 was very much along the Free Democrats' lines.

The coalition decided that modernization of the Lance missiles be delayed until 1992 and would be made contingent on the progress of conventional arms reduction talks in Vienna. Furthermore, the government called for early talks on the reduction of short-range nuclear missiles with the aim of reducing them to the lowest level possible. Genscher strongly favoured the coalition's position because it was "a concept for arms control and disarmament and not for armament."⁵⁴

⁵²Genscher cited in IHT, 15.2.89; Welt am Sonntag, 5.3.89

⁵³Die Welt, 29.5.89; Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, 2.6.89

⁵⁴DB, Genscher, 140th sess., 27.4.89, debate about the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles

After the NATO summit in Brussels in May 1989, Kohl and Genscher were very content since the summit had confirmed the West German approach.

Overall, by the late 1980s, Genscher's enthusiasm for Gorbachev and his distaste for NATO's plans to modernize its short-range nuclear missiles in Europe had helped to make him the country's most popular politician, while Kohl's fortunes had started to sag more and more in the opinion polls. It was little wonder then that the Chancellor readily took up his chance to improve his image significantly when the option arose in late 1989.

The process of German unification - Internal issues

Kohl and Teltschik seize initiative with the Ten Point Plan

All Germans in East and West, inclusive of their respective governments, were shocked by the pace at which Eastern Europe had been unravelling from the autumn of 1989 onwards. Hence, Chancellor Kohl was not the only German whose initial reaction to the opening of the wall on 9 November 1989 was characterized both by surprise and a certain passivity. Nevertheless, only two weeks after the fall of the wall, Kohl decided to seize the initiative regarding German unification, partly in order to improve his own and his party's image. As shown in the previous section, the CDU/CSU's general situation in the late 1980s was quite unfavourable, since the Union had a low standing in the polls and in addition faced a strong and unexpected challenge from the new Republikaner party. Furthermore, as Federal Chancellor, Kohl faced the growing problem of massive emigration from the GDR which had accelerated after the wall's breach, and the need to stabilize the situation.⁵⁵

Kohl and his aides thus seized the initiative in the Chancellor's office, beginning with the announcement of the Ten Point Plan for reunification on 28 November, 1989. The Ten Point Plan was in part a reaction to the new GDR leader Hans Modrow's statement eleven days earlier in which he had introduced the idea of a contractual union

⁵⁵Szabo, p.21

(Vertragsgemeinschaft) between the two Germanies. While Kohl signalled readiness in principle to take up Modrow's suggestion, the central element of the Ten Point Plan was Point 5 where he suggested the setting up of "confederative structures between the two states with the goal of creating a federation, a federal state order in Germany."⁵⁶

According to the Chancellor, the Federal Republic was ready to form a joint governing committee for permanent consultation and a joint parliamentary committee with the GDR. Kohl also offered continued economic, humanitarian and cultural cooperation to East Berlin. Bonn's prerequisite, both for any West German support and for the formation of a confederate structure between the two Germanies, was that the reform process in the GDR should continue. In political terms, the SED's monopoly of power would have to be replaced by democratic laws and there would need to be free elections. In economic terms, East Germany should open up for Western investment and move towards a market economy.⁵⁷

In being the first person in Germany who suggested a way in which reunification could be achieved, Kohl gained an impetus that set him apart from other politicians and parties in Germany. The central question consequently is how the Free Democrats reacted to this new activism on the Chancellor's behalf, given the fact that they were traditionally strong promoters of national unity and had become used to Kohl's style of largely leaving the field of German- and Ostpolitik to Foreign Minister Genscher. With the Ten Point Plan, the Christian Democrats had clearly used the rights of the Chancellor's Office to deal with German policy, as opposed to the Foreign Office. Before Kohl's Ten Point Declaration in the Bundestag, the Kanzleramt had not even consulted the Foreign Office, and the leading Free Democratic politicians were only informed about the Ten Point Plan very shortly before it was announced in the Bundestag. Kohl's independent initiative, along with the generally competitive relationship between the Christian Democrats and the Liberals, set the tone for a strained relationship between the two main German actors and

⁵⁶DB, Kohl, 177th sess., 28.11.89, debate about domestic issues; Smith, *Developments in German Politics*, p.24

⁵⁷DB, Kohl, 177th sess., 28.11.89, debate about domestic issues. Kohl's Ten Point Plan also reassured the outside world that Germany would retain its alliance commitments after unification and strive for an extension of the EC and the CSCE process.

their respective bureaucracies that was going to last throughout the whole unification process.⁵⁸

For the time being, the Free Democrats had little choice but to approve of the Ten Point Plan, however. For one thing, the FDP was well aware that it might manoeuvre itself into political isolation if it did not approve of its coalition partner's efforts to achieve German unification. For another thing, as Genscher and Lambsdorff pointed out, the FDP agreed so much with the content of the plan that it would have been ridiculous to block it solely for reasons of formality, that is the Union's failure to inform the Free Democrats beforehand. Even though the FDP signalled general approval of the Ten Point Plan, it also reminded the Union of its presence by criticizing some aspects of the Chancellor's initiative. The Free Democrats did not approve of the fact that, just as the Union had barely informed its coalition partner, it had not consulted with the Western powers and the Soviet Union before announcing the Ten Point Plan. According to Lambsdorff, Genscher now had to soothe the effects of the Union's failure to inform its Allies by travelling to all Four Power states.⁵⁹

The FDP furthermore disapproved of the fact that the Ten Point Plan failed to address the issue of Poland's Western border. The Liberals feared that the chances for German unification would be severely limited if the Union now started a new debate about the Oder-Neisse border. As Lambsdorff expressed it:

"Who represents the view - and it is legally possible to represent such a view - that we can only make a decision about the Polish Western border after Germany has been reunified, makes sure that Germany will never be reunified."⁶⁰

In addition to their substantive criticism of the Ten Point Plan, the Free Democrats also signalled to the Union that they were not willing to let a party that had opposed the Ostpolitik treaties for so long claim all the credit for Germany's foreign policy achievements since 1969. The Liberals clearly threatened that if the Union did not split the "harvest" of

⁵⁸Szabo, p.26

⁵⁹Handelsblatt, 30.11.89; SR, 30.11.89, Interview with O.Lambsdorff

⁶⁰SR, 30.11.89, Interview with O. Lambsdorff

German policy with the FDP in a fair manner, the Free Democrats would publicly remind the Germans of the Union's earlier reluctance in supporting Social-Liberal Ostpolitik and the Final Act of Helsinki. As Foreign Minister Genscher put it in unusually blunt language: "We will not allow the CDU/CSU to scratch the butter off our bread."⁶¹

Intra-coalition debate about the procedure of unification - via Article 23 or 146?

One of the major intra-coalition controversies about the right path towards reunification broke out before the first free elections were held in East Germany on 18 March 1990. Originally planned for the month of May 1990, the East German elections had been advanced to March in face of the worsening economic and political situation and the continued flight to West Germany. As the election date moved closer, so did the prospect of German unity, which fuelled the discussion about the legal and constitutional means to bring it about.

Opinions in West Germany about the constitutional problem of joining the FRG and the GDR were divided, however. The Basic Law provided two mechanisms for reunification: the first possibility, via Article 23, left the door open for "other parts of Germany" to accede to the Federal Republic. In this case, the GDR states would simply declare at some point of time that they were henceforth part of the Federal Republic, and the Basic Law would fully remain in force. The best historical example for the working of Article 23 was the association of the Saarland in 1956. However, the Basic Law provided a second mechanism for reunification, via Article 146. In this case, the GDR would not simply accede to the FRG and accept the Basic Law as it was, but the two German states would *jointly* decide which constitution the new unified German state should follow: "The Basic Law shall cease to be in force on the day on which a constitution adopted by a free decision of the German people comes into force."⁶²

Initially, it seemed that Article 146 would provide the obvious option of joining the two Germanies. For one thing, it had been included in the Basic Law precisely for the possibility of German reunification

⁶¹Genscher cited in SZ, 8.1.90; Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 9.1.90

⁶²Karpen, p.306

becoming possible one day. What was more, East Germany favoured Article 146 because it might provide the possibility to secure some social rights in the form of a "social charter." For the same reason, the West German SPD and some members of the FDP's left wing also argued for the route of a new, all-German constitution. Most Free Democrats and the Union, in contrast, were not in favour of reunification via Article 146. In the Liberals' view, most East Germans clearly wanted reunification rather sooner than later, and in face of such strong support for rapid reunification, the creation of a new constitution would be too lengthy and too complicated.⁶³ What was more, the Basic Law was after all the most democratic constitution Germany had ever had, so there seemed little reason to replace it.

While the Free Democrats concurred with the Union in their support of proceeding according to Article 23, they differed from their coalition partner in their stronger emphasis on the aspect of self-determination. The Liberals stressed that East Germany was entirely free to choose whether it wanted to join or not and that the West Germans had no right simply to swallow the GDR and impose their legal system. Generally, the reunification debate revealed that the Christian Democrats, and above all the CSU, were somewhat less inclined than the Free Democrats to treat the GDR as equal partner. The Union had a stronger tendency to, as *The International Herald Tribune* put it, "gobble up East Germany without even saying grace," which manifested itself throughout the whole unification process.⁶⁴

Overall, by the time of the East German elections, the mechanisms for creating political and economic unity were already operating. The outcome of the elections was a decisive victory for the pro-unification parties and provided the unification process with yet a new stimulus. The Christian Democrats had won 48.2% of the vote, and Lothar de Maiziere, the new Prime Minister, now formed a grand coalition of CDU, Liberals (5.3%) and SPD (21.8%).⁶⁵ This gave the new government the necessary two-thirds majority to push through the constitutional and legal changes needed quickly to accede to the Federal Republic. In April 1990, the East

⁶³fdk 130, 16.5.90; fdk 132, 17.5.90

⁶⁴IHT, 12.3.90; NDR, 6.3.90, Interview with O.Lambsdorff In May 1990, Georg Tandler of the CSU, for instance, accused the GDR of a "lack of thankfulness."

⁶⁵Bark/Gress, p.730

German government agreed to pursue political unification under Article 23 of the Basic Law and immediately turned to negotiating the terms of unity with the Christian-Liberal coalition in Bonn.

The State Treaty - Economic and Monetary Union

The two German states' increased sense of urgency concerning reunification after the East German elections on 18 March not only manifested itself with regard to the constitutional questions but also concerning the introduction of a market economy in East Germany. As Otto Lambsdorff expressed it: "The process of German unification will only become more complicated, both at home and abroad, if we lose time."⁶⁶ Exactly two months after the East German elections, the two Germanies thus signed a State Treaty, which provided for economic, monetary and social union to take effect on 1 July 1990. In February, Kohl had already urged Modrow to take steps leading towards such a currency union. The State Treaty provided for the East German mark to be converted at a 1:1 exchange rate, which was more a political than an economic decision, however, taken by Kohl despite the Bundesbank's opposition.⁶⁷

After the two Germanies had formed an economic and monetary union, the main concern was to settle the form and timing of complete reunification. Once again, the CSU and FDP disagreed, this time about the procedure of the first pan-German elections. The Christian Social Union suggested that the GDR deputies for a pan-German Parliament should be determined in separate elections *after* the West German elections had taken place. This suggestion reflected the CSU's fears of losing influence in a Germany that consisted of sixteen instead of eleven states. The Free Democrats vehemently opposed this idea on the grounds that there must not be deputies of a different quality in the first pan-German Parliament. In order to avoid simply "replacing Eastern patronizing by Western patronizing," free general secret elections should be held in both Germanies on the same day.⁶⁸

⁶⁶fdk 97, 13.4.90, Interview with O. Lambsdorff (SR)

⁶⁷Bark/Gress, p.724; Smith, Developments in German Politics, p.26

⁶⁸Lambsdorff's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hanover, 11.-12.8.1990; SZ, 30.3.90, Interview with H.D.Genscher Note that the coalition in the GDR was

Finally, an agreement was reached that pan-German elections would be held in December 1990. Once this procedure was agreed, and after the two-plus-four talks had been successfully concluded, a second State Treaty, concerned with the aspects of political unification, could be ratified by the three German Parliaments (Volkskammer, Bundestag, Bundesrat). This Unification Treaty regulated the ways in which the laws and the administration of the Federal Republic should be applied to the five newly constituted East German Länder. With its accession on 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist, and Germany had become economically and politically reunified.

The process of German unification - External aspects

The 2+4 process

While the previous section has examined the Free Democrats' reaction to Kohl's sudden advances into the field of Deutschlandpolitik and their attempt to maintain some influence over the internal process of German unification, this section is concerned with the Liberals' impact on the external aspects of German unification. Since German policy was assigned to the Chancellor's Office, Genscher and the Foreign Office could only hope to influence the unification process by bringing in the foreign policy aspects, especially the relationship with the Soviet Union and the Polish border issue. It is to these issues that this chapter will turn next.

Just as with regard to the domestic issues, the external process of unification was characterized by competition between the Chancellor's Office and the Auswärtiges Amt. On a number of occasions, this resulted in a failure of communication between Kohl, Genscher and their respective bureaucracies, which in return created substantial problems for their international partners. For instance, during the first two-plus-four talks in Ottawa in February 1990, Teltschik called the White House, leaving the impression that Kohl did not support Genscher's concept of such international negotiations over German unity. Most likely, Teltschik's motive was his fear that the two-plus-four process would

also divided over the timing of unification and the first pan-German elections. Here, the dispute even led to the break-up of the coalition.

allow the Foreign Office to gain bureaucratic control over the question of German unity.⁶⁹ Genscher reacted by calling Kohl and asking him to clarify his position with President Bush, which the Chancellor did.

Similarly, when Teltschik travelled to Moscow in May 1990 with the purpose of conducting negotiations about the GDR's economic obligations towards the Soviet Union, the Foreign Office was not informed about this trip. It only found out when *Lufthansa* had a question about Teltschik's flight and turned to the Auswärtiges Amt. Competition between the two offices was further increased by the fact that Teltschik acted as Kohl's main interlocuteur with Gorbachev during the crucial year of 1990, meeting with the Soviet President six times during the year and laying the groundwork for the July agreement in the Caucasus.⁷⁰

While on the one hand, the competition between the Chancellor's and the Foreign Office resulted in a certain degree of miscommunication between the two offices, on the other hand, it sparked the FDP's efforts to influence the external process of German unification. The Free Democrats for instance benefited from the fact that Kohl and Genscher diverged on the question of the size of the future Bundeswehr and its structure in Eastern Germany. Even though NATO-related issues tended to be assigned to the Ministry of Defence, occupied by the CDU, Genscher was able to make an impact by introducing his NATO plan in February 1990. Taking Soviet sensitivities into account, Genscher's plan suggested that Germany should be politically integrated into NATO, but that its military structures should be confined to the territory of the former Federal Republic. Lambsdorff explained the rationale behind the Foreign Minister's plan:

"We cannot achieve full membership of a reunified Germany in NATO if we want to achieve reunification in agreement with our European neighbours, including the Soviet Union."⁷¹

⁶⁹Szabo, p.64

⁷⁰Abendzeitung (München), 21.5.90; Szabo, p. 84

⁷¹DLF, 31.1.90, Interview with O. Lambsdorff

During the July 1990 negotiations in the Caucasus, Genscher's plan (if in a slightly modified version), formed the basis of the German-Soviet agreement that reunified Germany would remain in NATO.⁷²

Recognition of the Oder-Neisse border

On the eve of German unification, the conflict within the German government over the finality of the Polish Western border also arose with renewed intensity. The debate centered on the question whether the Parliament of a unified Germany should finally and legally renounce any claims to revise the Oder-Neisse border or whether this should be done by West Germany prior to reunification. While the FDP wanted to settle the issue immediately, Kohl hesitated, and in contrast to other issues, demonstrated no readiness for compromise.

The question arises, of course, why the Federal Chancellor was so hesitant about a final commitment to the Western border, considering both the FDP's and the Western Powers' vehement call for a speedy solution. To begin with, as shown earlier in the chapter, while the Free Democrats as well as all the governments involved in the two-plus-four process believed that the Oder-Neisse border should be finally acknowledged, the Union argued that only an all-German government could formally renounce any change in the postwar German border. The Chancellor also avoided a final statement on the Oder-Neisse border for fear of alienating a big faction in the Union, namely the expellees from the former German territories that were now Polish. Certainly, Kohl's hesitance was also related to the Union's fear of losing even more votes to the Republikaner who had gained in votes when the process of German unification started and who argued that the Western Polish territories must be returned to Germany. Lastly, as Stephen Szabo has suggested, Kohl probably wanted to keep the issue of the Polish border as a reserve for bargaining.⁷³

⁷²Note that after some controversies between the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defence over the Genscher plan (with Stoltenberg postulating the possibility to station Bundeswehr soldiers on East German territory after unification), on 19 February 1990, the Foreign Ministry had scored an initial victory over the Ministry of Defence when the federal government officially accepted Genscher's plan. In the end, however, the Foreign Minister's plan was somewhat modified, since Gorbachev did agree to the deployment of German forces under NATO command on the territory of the former GDR, after the Soviet Union had withdrawn from East Germany.

⁷³Szabo, pp.72-73; Die Welt, 28.2.90

However, Kohl was also aware of the issue of reparations when he dealt with the Polish border resolution. After returning from his talks with President Bush in Camp David in February 1990, Kohl proposed a guarantee of the Polish border if Poland once more renounced all reparation claims from the Second World War and guaranteed the rights of the German minority remaining in Poland. This linkage between the Polish Western border and the reparation issue reflected Kohl's desire to achieve a quick, comprehensive agreement rather than settling the question in prolonged negotiations that would result in ever expanding reparation claims from all kinds of countries.⁷⁴ By early 1990, both Yugoslavia and Rumania had approached the Federal Republic with requests to discuss reparations.

Typically, given the competition between the Chancellor's and the Foreign Office that characterized the whole unification process, Kohl did not discuss this controversial linkage between the border issue and reparations with Genscher who had not accompanied Kohl to Camp David. While the FDP agreed that national requests for reparation had to be rejected, it did not agree with the linkage between the reparation and border issues. After all, as both Genscher and Lambsdorff pointed out, the Polish government had already declared in August 1953 in a binding manner that it renounced any reparation claims towards the two Germanies. Why, argued the FDP, should Bonn doubt the sincerity of Poland's statement and risk a renewed discussion about the topic?⁷⁵

As the domestic debate about the Oder-Neisse border and the two-plus-four talks evolved, it became increasingly clear that the Chancellor would have to drop his position if unification were to be achieved. For one thing, the Free Democrats had already enjoyed Parliament's official backing for their position since November 1989 when the Bundestag had passed a resolution affirming that the West German government would not try to revise Poland's Western border. For another thing, by early 1990, Kohl was not only facing opposition from his coalition partner but also from the Four Powers. The British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher complained that Germany's commitments to the Oder-Neisse border were not binding enough, and after Kohl's encounter with President Bush in February 1990, the US President also insisted that the

⁷⁴Szabo, p.73

⁷⁵ZDF, 4.3.90, Interview with H.D.Genscher; SZ, 5.3.90

Germans commit themselves to the Polish border sooner rather than later. The Free Democrats expressed their disapproval of Kohl's ambiguity as follows:

"It is generally regretted that the federal government and especially the Federal Chancellor are not creating the clarity which is necessary in the Americans' view."⁷⁶

During the first week of March 1990, the Liberals raised the issue to the level of a crisis, suggesting that the coalition might break up over it. The crisis was resolved when the cabinet decided to accept the FDP's position and agreed that both German parliaments would declare the inviolability of the Polish border "as soon as possible" after the East German elections in March 1990. The cabinet also agreed to Poland's representation at the two-plus-four talks when Poland was affected. Indeed, three months after the East German elections, both German Parliaments passed with large majorities resolutions recognizing Poland's Western border as inviolable. It was also arranged that a final German-Polish treaty on the Oder-Neisse border should be signed after German unification, which duly happened on 17 July 1991.

Overall, Kohl's tactics on the Polish border had exaggerated the importance of the border issue within Germany itself, since neither any of the major parties nor much of the German public really wanted to revise the Oder-Neisse line. The main beneficiaries from the Chancellor's ambiguity were the Liberals who had used the domestic and international support for a swift recognition of the Polish Western border for advancing their own position and for distinguishing themselves as an indispensable corrective in the coalition with the Christian Democrats.

Despite the Free Democrats' impact on the Polish border issue, the fact remained that the Union under Kohl had played a very prominent role in the process of German unification and that the FDP's image as the party of national issues and detente had been challenged more strongly in the late 1980s than ever before during the Christian-Liberal coalition. The last section of this chapter will consequently address the question of how the Free Democrats coped with this new situation during the first pan-German election campaign, which was very strongly dominated by the theme of German unification.

⁷⁶DLF, 27.2.90, Interview with O. Lambsdorff; Die Welt, 28.2.90

The first pan-German elections of 1990 - Genscher's importance for the Liberal campaign

The election campaign

In many ways, the Liberals actually benefited from the linkage between the elections and the issue of unification, for instance because of the general positive public mood associated with unification. It is noteworthy, however, that throughout the year 1990, it had not always been so clear that a positive attitude towards unification would aid the governing coalition in the 1990 election campaign. Quite on the contrary, in the spring of 1990, many Germans had still thought that the government's unification politics was too hasty and identified with Lafontaine's warnings that unification would cost too much. At this stage, Lafontaine had been leading in the polls compared with Chancellor Kohl, and the race between the governing and the opposition parties was still wide open.

The introduction of the Economic and Currency Union on 1 July 1990 had marked a turning point in public opinion, however. Largely due to the government's ability to take action and put forward initiatives, there was a growing sense by the summer of 1990 that Genscher's and Kohl's reunification policy was the better course and that the coalition was more capable of managing reunification and economic reconstruction in the East.⁷⁷ This growing support for the governing parties and the declining support for Lafontaine and the SPD expressed itself in terms of public opinion figures as follows: while at the beginning of 1990, "only" around 70% of the West German and 80% of the East German population had been in favour of a unified German state, by September 1990, support for unification had risen to around 90% in both parts of the country. What was more, by August 1990, 90% of the Germans expected a victory for the present government which meant that the election race was nearly over.⁷⁸

The governing coalition furthermore benefited from the SPD's failure to take up the issue of unification in its actual election campaign. The Social Democrats' promise to modernize Germany by leading it onto

⁷⁷Veen, p.68

⁷⁸Veen, p.50

a socially and ecologically responsible road ("The New Road") might have worked under different national circumstances, but in face of unification simply failed to address the issue that most moved the electorate. The Union and the Free Democrats in contrast nearly exclusively concentrated on unification in their election campaign. The Christian Democrats, for instance, portrayed Kohl as the undisputed architect of German unity. Similarly, Genscher contrasted the Liberals' positive approach to unification with Lafontaine's continued warnings about its likely negative consequences by stressing: "Germany unification does not create a problem - it solves it."⁷⁹

The Free Democrats' manifesto for the 1990 elections also illustrated the priority the Liberals gave to the issues of German unification and peace. The manifesto's first section, called "Peace," dealt with foreign policy issues and occupied fourteen pages out of a total of ninety. The party finally agreed to the manifesto at its party congress from 29-30 September 1990 in Nürnberg, at which a majority of the Free Democrats also approved of the decision to continue the existing coalition with the Christian Democrats, provided (much to the CSU's dismay) that Genscher would remain Foreign Minister. Overall, the Union's and the Free Democrats' election campaigns were in harmony with the climate of public opinion and simultaneously reinforced it.⁸⁰

In addition to support from the German public, the Free Democrats also benefited from unusual internal harmony during the run-up to the 1990 elections, partly stemming from the unification of the East and West German Liberal parties earlier in the year. Just as the proximity of the first Bundestag elections in 1949 had put pressure on the Western-zone Liberal parties to form the FDP in 1948, so the increased likelihood of unification and pan-German elections had given renewed impetus to the idea of creating a single all-German Liberal party in 1990. The East- and West German Liberal parties actually unified at a pre-election party convention from 11-12 August in Hanover, expanding the party executive to give the East German Liberals an adequate representation. As

⁷⁹fdk 113, 29.4.90

⁸⁰Radunski, p.45

Lambsdorff pointed out proudly, both in 1861 and in 1990, the Liberals had been the first to found a pan-German party.⁸¹

The Free Democrats were well aware, however, that in addition to the advantages of unusual party unity and strong public support for unification, they also needed to develop an independent profile. As it became obvious that the opposition had no real chance of winning the election, the FDP increasingly employed its traditional strategy of pointing out that anybody who wanted to avoid an absolute Union majority and who cared about Hans-Dietrich Genscher's remaining in office needed to vote for the Liberals. Furthermore, much to the Union's dismay, the Free Democrats ran the election campaign on the promise that there would be no tax raises associated with unification because of the likely immense strain on the German economy from such a measure.⁸²

Most importantly, however, the Liberals decided to focus their campaign on their leading personalities rather than on the whole Free Democratic Party. Given Hans-Dietrich Genscher's close association with unification and his continued polling as Germany's most popular politician, and given Otto Lambsdorff's reputation as "the Pope of the market economy," the Liberal election campaign focused on Genscher and Lambsdorff, especially in terms of speeches at major rallies, television and radio broadcasts, and press advertising.⁸³ Concerning the Foreign Minister, the emphasis was on his achievements in global diplomacy, as Lambsdorff expressed it at the FDP's pre-election convention in August 1990:

"I do not know whether you, Hans-Dietrich, would win the first prize in a beauty contest, but you guarantee that the image of the ugly German will not reappear in the world."⁸⁴

⁸¹Roberts, The Free Democratic Party and the New Germany, p.156; Lambsdorff's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hanover, 11.-12.8.1990. Lambsdorff was elected chairman of the enlarged party.

⁸²fdk 363, 30.11.90, Interview with O. Lambsdorff (SAT 1); fdk 326, 8.11.90

⁸³Roberts, The Free Democratic Party and the New Germany, p.159; Die Zeit, 16.11.90

⁸⁴Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 30.11.90; Lambsdorff's speech at the FDP's Party Congress in Hanover, 11.-12.8.1990

Aware of the Union's substantial contributions to unification, the Liberals ran the campaign by attempting clearly to split the bonus between themselves and the CDU/CSU. In concrete terms, this meant that the FDP publicly acknowledged Kohl's contribution to unification by introducing the Ten Point Plan and by removing Moscow's objections to unified Germany's remaining in NATO during the German-Soviet encounter in the Caucasus in July 1990. For the most part, however, the Liberals focused on Hans-Dietrich Genscher's merits during the process of German unification.

To begin with, the FDP emphasized that Genscher had shown visionary traits by being the first Western statesman publicly to acknowledge the chances inherent in Gorbachev's reform process. The Free Democrats furthermore pointed to Genscher's key role in the release of the East German citizens from West Germany's embassy in Prague in September 1989. In terms of the external process of German unification, the three central Liberal triumphs were Genscher's quick embrace of the two-plus-four talks, the Foreign Minister's imaginative proposals concerning Germany's future commitment to NATO and his insistence on a rapid solution to the question of the Oder-Neisse border.⁸⁵

In addition, the Liberals benefited in this election campaign from a generally favourable evaluation of Genscher's role in the process of unification by much of the national and international press. While for some time, Kohl had been more popular with the Western powers than Genscher, by the time of unification, this was no longer the case. The Chancellor's reluctance to acknowledge Poland's Oder-Neisse border for so long had raised doubts among his allies about Kohl's qualifications as Statesman. The International Herald Tribune, for instance, commented:

"(Kohl) is a loyal ally and a good European, as he keeps repeating in honest surprise that anyone might doubt it. He just does not see very far...Mr. Genscher...has a broader sense of the need to work with his allies and neighbours in reorganizing Europe, with Germany at its heart instead of at the front line..."⁸⁶

⁸⁵Roberts, *The Free Democratic Party and the New Germany*, p.147

⁸⁶IHT, 12.3.90 See also IHT, 21.7.90; Die Weltwoche (Zürich), 26.7.90; Time, 30.7.90

Despite the Union's strong profile as 'Wiedervereinigungspartei,' the Free Democrats had thus managed quite well to stress their contribution to unification.

One last bonus the FDP was able to exploit in the election campaign, given the predominance of the issue of unification, were the East German roots of leading Liberal politicians, such as Genscher's origins in Halle and Wolfgang Mischick's roots in Dresden. In November 1990, Genscher and Lambsdorff travelled through the five new German states, campaigning for the East Germans to vote for the Liberals on 2 December 1990. Many East Germans celebrated Genscher as the "architect of German unity," and Genscher skilfully pursued the "we" approach: "we who have been born in the Eastern part of Germany must know that we are just as industrious, intelligent and creative as the West Germans."⁸⁷ Genscher furthermore exploited his East German heritage by inviting the French, English, US and Soviet Foreign Ministers to his hometown Halle. Roland Dumas was the first to take up Genscher's invitation, followed by Douglas Hurd in October 1990. When Eduard Shevardnadze came on 12 November 1990, he even assured his "great friend Hans-Dietrich Genscher that I will contribute to his election campaign from today onwards."⁸⁸

The outcome of the elections

The striking focus on unification during the 1990 election campaign was directly reflected in its outcome, since all those who had taken a positive approach towards German unification were rewarded and those who had not were punished. The Free Democrats' election result of 11% (10.6% in West Germany and 12.9% in East Germany) delighted even the most optimistic Liberal campaigners. Reaching nearly thirteen percent in the Eastern regions meant that the FDP had more than doubled its share of the vote in East Germany. In Halle Altstadt, the FDP had even won a seat outright with 34.5 % of the first ballot. Overall, the Liberals had taken votes from the Social Democrats and the Greens but had made

⁸⁷Genscher cited in Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 22.11.90

⁸⁸Shevardnadze cited in SZ, 12.11.90 Note that James Baker was the last Foreign Minister of the Four Powers to visit Halle on 19 June 1991.

their greatest gains from CDU voters.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the Christian Democrats were also pleased with their result of 43.8%, especially in contrast to the Social Democrats who had only gained 33.5% of the votes. The Greens and the Republikaner had not even won enough votes to make it into Parliament.

Generally, the coalition negotiations in 1990-91 were not particularly dramatic even though the FDP's result had increased the relative strength of the party within the coalition, both in relation to the CDU and the CSU. Genscher contentedly remarked that the results reflected the FDP's contribution to German politics since the last elections, which according to the Foreign Minister had been far greater than the party's arithmetical representation.⁹⁰ The policy negotiations were carried out partly by working groups, and there were few really serious issues of contention among the three parties involved. The main problem was the FDP's announcement that there would be no election of a Chancellor without previous agreement on providing a "low-tax area" status for former East Germany. Theodor Waigel, Minister of Finance, and the rest of the CSU were opposed to such concessions, but a face-saving formula was eventually found, and the Christian-Liberal coalition could start into the new decade.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, in contrast with the Social-Liberal coalition under Schmidt, the Free Democrats benefited much more strongly from the constellations of domestic politics between 1982 and 1990. This is not to say, however, that the Liberals did not face a number of new challenges in the Christian-Liberal coalition, such as Horst Teltschik's appointment as foreign policy adviser in the Chancellor's office, the CSU's claims as junior coalition partner, the Union's ongoing reticence towards Ostpolitik and Kohl's sudden advance into the field of German policy with his Ten-Point Plan. But it has also been attempted to show how and why the Free Democrats were nevertheless able to make

⁸⁹Veen, p.64

⁹⁰Der Spiegel, 3.12.90, Interview with H.D.Genscher

use of the domestic situation after 1982 for exerting disproportionate influence over Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik during this decade.

First, in contrast to its coalition with Schmidt, the FDP's grip on foreign policy was now much stronger, (1) because of the good personal relations between Kohl and Genscher, and (2) because Kohl's limited interest and experience in the field of foreign policy complemented perfectly with Foreign Minister Genscher's growing recognition and expertise.

Second, even though the CSU's participation in the government could easily have posed a threat to the FDP's influence, the Free Democrats were able to avoid any serious damage with the help of Kohl's style of leadership and their special function in the German party system. On the one hand, the fact that the Christian Social Union and the Free Democratic Party *shared* their relatively small size and their aspiration to the posts of Minister of Economics and Foreign Minister, could have had a harmful effect on the FDP's role. Given the Union's dependence on the Liberals for forming and continuing the Christian-Liberal coalition, and considering Genscher's growing reputation as guarantor of continuity in German foreign policy, the post of Foreign Minister was safely occupied by the Liberals, however.

On the other hand, the Free Democrats could have suffered from the many *differences* with the CSU - such as the parties' contrasting foreign policy rationale and the personality clash between their respective leaders Strauß and Genscher. However, in the many controversies with the Union's right wing and the CSU over the government's Ostpolitik, the FDP again benefited from Kohl's style of leadership since the Chancellor's strategy was to avoid any commitments towards either side for as long as possible before endorsing the Liberals' position in the end. Even though the group around Kohl largely agreed with Genscher's German- and Ostpolitik, this strategy made the Liberals appear as the victors in many coalition haggles. The FDP furthermore made clever use of the CSU's right-wing positions by portraying itself as necessary moderating influence on the coalition.

The fact that the parliamentary opposition was now made up of Social Democrats was also of advantage for the FDP. The traditional Social-Liberal agreement on Ostpolitik and German policy continued, and since the Union by now had also embarked on a course of detente with Eastern Europe, parliamentary consensus on German policy was

unusually high between 1982 and 1989. The Social Democrats clearly acknowledged the Free Democrats' role as guarantor for continuity of Ostpolitik in the new government. We have also seen that, concerning matters of defence, where for much of the 1980s parliamentary consensus could not be achieved, the Free Democrats were nevertheless able to exploit two bonuses: on the one hand, despite inner-German debates, the Liberals' views tended to be closer to the Social Democrats than the Union's which allowed them to act as mediator between government and opposition. On the other hand, the Free Democrats benefited from strong public support for their positions on SDI, the INF treaty and the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles in 1989.

Generally, the German public's anti-nuclear sentiments during the 1980s and the FDP's argument for avoiding a renewed arms race interacted favourably with each other, making it difficult to classify the Free Democrats as either 'followers' or 'leaders' of public opinion. However, public support for the FDP also manifested itself with regard to Genscher's early call to take Gorbachev seriously and to initiate a new phase of detente with Eastern Europe. Concerning their early trust in Gorbachev, the Liberals had proved to be 'leaders' of public opinion after 1986.

Lastly, the personal importance of Hans-Dietrich Genscher for the Free Democratic Party during the Christian-Liberal coalition should be addressed. Apart from Genscher's growing expertise and reputation, the Foreign Minister represented nearly all aspects that aided the Free Democrats' survival in the German party system: the FDP used his function as Foreign Minister as bargaining chip in all coalition negotiations and ran every election campaign between 1983 and 1990 at least partly on Genscher's personality. Genscher furthermore embodied the FDP's functions as moderating force, corrective and guarantor of continuity in German foreign policy. When the Liberals' profile as the party of Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik was strongly challenged by the Union at the end of the decade, it was once again the Foreign Minister's contribution that allowed the Free Democrats to retain an important role in the process of unification, which in return positively influenced the outcome of the first pan-German elections in December 1990.

Chapter VIII. Conclusion

This study has attempted first to answer the question how the FDP under Hans-Dietrich Genscher could come to have a disproportionately strong effect on German Ostpolitik and second to define the constraints on the FDP's freedom of manoeuvre in foreign policy between 1974 and 1990. The answer to these questions can best be found by examining the findings pertaining to the three parameters that were introduced at the beginning of the thesis - international relations, domestic politics and liberal ideology.

The following steps will be taken in the course of this chapter. First, an examination will be made of the interaction between international relations and the FDP's foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s. Given the intense external constraints on the Federal Republic's foreign policy for more than forty years, the investigation will also focus on how the Free Democrats have reacted to the new international system since the end of the Cold War. Second, we shall look at the impact of domestic politics on the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 and address the question of whether the relationship between the domestic context and Liberal foreign policy, as analysed in this dissertation, is a specific characteristic of German politics, or whether it exists in a similar version in other Western European countries. Third, the link between liberal values and foreign policy will be considered, both by attempting to determine the special characteristics of German liberal foreign policy through international comparison and by assessing the overall compatibility of the FDP's various principles and some of the dilemmas inherent in liberal ideology.

International relations and German foreign policy

Two main and related conclusions emerge from investigating the interaction between international relations and German foreign policy between 1974 and 1990. Firstly, that during the 1970s, the international constraints on the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre were much stronger than during the 1980s, as the goals of Liberal Ostpolitik were more 'incompatible' with the structures and opportunities of the international system. Secondly, that while Germany's external framework set a tight framework for the Free Democrats' foreign policy, it simultaneously allowed for a number of specific FDP (Genscher)

initiatives to have some impact on East-West relations. In line with the generally improved international climate during the Christian-Liberal coalition, the FDP's ability to contribute to international relations was much greater during the 1980s than during the 1970s.

Before turning to the findings of Chapters Three and Six in more detail, it should be stressed again that - concerning the impact of international constraints on the FDP's Ostpolitik, Germany's external environment usually affected West Germany as a whole and not only individual parties. Nevertheless, this study has found that occasionally, international factors did specifically affect the Free Democratic Party, and that an analysis of Germany's external constraints has been essential for defining and explaining the FDP's room for manoeuvre in foreign policy.

International constraints on the FDP's Ostpolitik, 1974-1990

This study has shown (1) that the FDP's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 was to a high degree determined by the compatibility of its foreign policy goals with the aspirations of the respective superpower leadership in the White House and the Kremlin, and (2) that the impact of superpower leadership on the Free Democrats was much more favourable during the Christian-Liberal than during the Social-Liberal coalition. For most of the 1970s and the early 1980s, the FDP's efforts for constructive relations with Eastern Europe were constrained by the Nixon/Ford administrations' lack of enthusiasm for the CSCE negotiations in Helsinki, by the Soviet Union's build-up of intermediate-range nuclear missiles and Jimmy Carter's human rights campaign after 1977, and by President Reagan's determination to contain the Soviet aggressor with the help of US military strength during the early years of his Administration.

After the Christian-Liberal coalition's assumption of power in 1982, however, several changes in the US and Soviet leadership greatly increased the FDP's capacities for action in Ostpolitik. Concerning Washington's foreign policy, the Free Democrats' policy of detente towards Eastern Europe was aided both by the Reagan administration's switch from a confrontational policy towards Moscow to a much more lenient approach and by the growing realization that President Reagan's rhetoric was much more fierce than his actual politics. In addition to the

changes in US foreign policy, the Free Democrats also benefited from Gorbachev's economic and social reforms after his assumption of power in the Kremlin, and from the fact that Hans-Dietrich Genscher was the first Western statesman to voice his belief in the new Soviet leader's sincerity.

This study has also shown that the FDP's desire for progress in inner-German relations between 1974 and 1989 greatly depended on the overall superpower climate, although inner-German relations tended to be affected by the international developments somewhat belatedly. After the onset of the Second Cold War in the late 1970s, for instance, Bonn and East Berlin succeeded in shielding inner-German cooperation from the superpower crisis for some time, but by 1984, Washington's and Moscow's objections to such close inner-German cooperation effectively blocked further progress. Similarly, in the mid- and late 1980s, inner-German relations were again out of tune with the (by then improving) superpower climate for a while, since for fear of survival, East Germany now prevented any further contact with the Federal Republic. However, the German Democratic Republic eventually caught up with the developments in the East-West climate, this time to Bonn's and the FDP's advantage, because precisely the lack of economic and social reform in the GDR made the changes more drastic when they happened in 1989.

In addition to the international constraints on inner-German relations, the FDP's freedom of manoeuvre in Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 was limited by the politics of 'linkage' in the Atlantic alliance. The concept of linkage greatly influenced the FDP because the Free Democrats directly depended on Western backing for securing West Berlin's status and for progress on the national question, which was apparent both during the negotiations in Helsinki and during the process of German unification. Equally, the Free Democrats were aware that NATO's military and political support for the Federal Republic was directly linked with Bonn's loyalty towards the alliance and the West. By switching coalition partners in 1982, the FDP played an important role in backing the 1983 deployment of US Pershing missiles in West Germany.

The issue of the 'linkage' between Bonn's support for NATO and its freedom of manoeuvre in foreign policy also leads to another conclusion of this thesis, namely that although Germany's international environment set a tight framework for the Free Democrats' foreign policy between 1974 and 1990, it nevertheless allowed for a number of

specific FDP contributions to have some impact on East-West relations, much more so during the 1980s than during the 1970s.

The FDP's contributions to international relations

Despite the Federal Republic's dependence on NATO, this study has also shown that membership in the Western alliances was an important *instrument* in Bonn's foreign policy-making. Precisely via its firm commitment to the Atlantic Alliance and to the EC, the Federal Republic successfully reduced international fears of a renewed strong German role in world affairs, and thereby increased its capacities for action in foreign policy. We have also seen that Germany's membership in NATO became of particular importance for the FDP's foreign policy in the later half of the 1980s. By asserting their opposition to the modernization of NATO's short-range nuclear missiles in 1989 first against the Christian Democrats and then against their NATO partners, the Free Democrats utilized the Atlantic Alliance for fostering the pro-Gorbachev course on which they had embarked since the mid-1980s. Similarly, as Jeffrey Anderson and John Goodman have pointed out, Germany heavily relied on its link with international institutions during the process of German unification, using German support for NATO to reassure the United States, German membership in the EC to reassure Great Britain and France and German support for a strengthened CSCE to soothe the worst Soviet fears.¹

Even more significantly than NATO, European Political Cooperation has been an important instrument of foreign policy-making for Bonn, and in particular for the Free Democratic Party. Apart from enhancing the Federal Republic's international legitimacy via the 'European label,' EPC has allowed Germany to achieve a balance between its commitment to the United States and to detente. As Reinhardt Rummel and Wolfgang Wessels have pointed out, EPC has provided Bonn with an 'alibi function' in a number of foreign policy controversies with Washington:

"EPC was and is a highly useful framework for diverting conflicting pressure away from Bonn and transferring it to an

¹Anderson/Goodman cited in Keohane/Nye, p.10

anonymous body where the respective blame can be put on the 'group' or on other partners."²

For instance during the conflict over Afghanistan in 1980 and during the debate over European participation in Reagan's SDI project, EPC has allowed the Federal Republic to pursue the continuation of detente without risking an open conflict with the White House. The higher the intensity of the East-West conflict was, the more useful the EPC mechanism has been for Bonn.

Bonn's call for a more regular exchange of views on security matters within the EPC was certainly also partly motivated by Germany's national interest to gain a greater say in European security policy.³ The Free Democrats also efficiently utilized EPC to strengthen Bonn's influence in international organizations, such as the UN General Assembly, and in international negotiations, especially during the various phases of the CSCE. Lastly, as Rummel and Wessels have pointed out, EPC has provided great opportunities for certain political actors, "...especially the FDP Foreign Ministers" to exercise personal influence in foreign policy.⁴ Through the intensive and confidential personal contacts within the EPC framework, Genscher has been able to formulate and initiate his foreign policy, which has in return strengthened his personal position at home.

In addition to the Federal Republic's use of its membership in the various Western alliances for foreign policy-making, Bonn also relied on 'positive' economic leverage for fostering its relations with Eastern Europe. Although economic leverage was not exclusively employed by the Free Democrats, it was a central aspect of German Ostpolitik and will be considered here for the following three reasons. Firstly, the Federal Republic's economic and financial power substantially contributed to the achievement of its goals in Ostpolitik, i.e. improving the travel facilities for East German citizens, effecting permission for large numbers of ethnic Germans to emigrate from Eastern Europe, and increasing France's and the European Commission's support for German unification

²Rummel/Wessels, p.40

³The Genscher/Colombo initiative of 1981, for instance, called for a legal EPC framework for security questions.

⁴Rummel/Wessels, p.50

by announcing Germany's unwavering support for European Monetary Union in 1990.

Secondly, it is noteworthy that over time, the use of positive economic leverage became such an important and successful element of the Federal Republic's foreign policy that Bonn increasingly refused to succumb to outside pressure in this realm. This was for instance apparent in 1982 when Bonn united with its EC partners in resisting Washington's embargo on high technology exports to Moscow. Thirdly, in line with the FDP's much greater involvement in international relations in the 1980s and with Genscher's early support for Gorbachev, the Free Democrats took the initiative in positive economic leverage in 1989 by requesting that Western Europe develop a 'Marshall Plan' for Eastern Europe immediately. This suggestion contrasted with the view, held by many Western statesmen and the majority of Christian Democrats, that economic aid to Eastern Europe should only be granted after the reforms had safely been implemented.

Lastly, the Free Democrats were able to contribute to international relations during the 1970s and 1980s through their concentration on the issue of human rights. A central achievement in this area was the inclusion of Basket III in the Final Act of Helsinki, which is interesting for a number of reasons. Although the German approach to the CSCE had of course been modified by the attitudes of its negotiating partners, the West German Foreign Ministry (under the guidance of Free Democrat Guido Brunner) nevertheless phrased the first draft of all EC members in the humanitarian area, carried the main burden of the negotiations and overall put a distinctive emphasis on the theme of human contacts. Given the international and geopolitical constraints on West Germany's ability openly to advocate freedom and human rights in Eastern Europe, the fact that Basket III had made the issue of human rights into an international agenda was also very much in Bonn's and the FDP's interest.

Furthermore, although dissidents in Eastern Europe had always fought for human rights, the effect of Basket III on the internal stability of the Communist regimes was much stronger than either the East or the West had expected. The two years after the Final Act saw the rise of a number of dissident movements in Eastern Europe, and even though such liberalizing effects were increasingly stifled by the Communist regimes from about 1977 onwards, arguably, Basket III had initiated some more

long-term changes. After all, all participating states had *voluntarily* committed themselves to the humanitarian principles in the Final Act, thereby removing the taboo from issues like greater freedom of ideas and movement. Overall, with its strategy of small steps, the Helsinki of human contacts, and its efforts for extending travel between East and West, the Free Democratic Party contributed to increasing the Eastern European people's awareness of the attractions in the West.

The FDP's foreign policy since the end of the Cold War

Looked at overall, the question arises how the Free Democrats, whose foreign policy actions have been so strongly determined by the external framework for more than forty years, have reacted to the end of the Cold War and the resulting changes in the international system. Given the expiration of the Soviet threat and the survival of just one superpower, the Federal Republic's room for manoeuvre has no longer been constrained by the superpower climate, and similarly, the problems and dependencies resulting from Germany's national division have ended with unification. Only Bonn's network of alliances has provided an element of continuity, and united Germany has taken on the same institutional commitments which the Federal Republic has held since 1949. Given the discontinuity in Germany's external framework after 1989, it seems necessary to take a look at the FDP's foreign policy since unification. Have the Free Democrats attempted to steer a more independent course, if necessary at the cost of Germany's institutional commitments, or has the Federal Republic relied on the one factor of continuity, its network of alliances?

A problematic issue since the end of the Cold War has been the FDP's ambiguity concerning Germany's status in the new Europe. Along with many other German politicians, the Free Democrats have found it difficult openly to express that through unification, the Federal Republic has gained more power and typically stated at their party congress in 1991: "Liberals do not want more power for Germany, but more responsibility."⁵ In terms of concrete politics, this ambivalent attitude towards power was clearly apparent during the Gulf War, when Bonn's

⁵FDP's 'Liberal foreign policy for united Germany,' decided at the FDP's Bundeshauptausschuß in Hamburg, 25.5.1991

reluctance to take on greater international responsibilities other than financial ones and Genscher's vague position on the question of self-determination for Kuwait (after the Liberals had so strongly promoted self-determination in the context of German unification) caused negative reactions from the international community.⁶

On the other hand, the FDP's reluctance to acknowledge Germany's greater responsibility has contrasted markedly with certain independent foreign political initiatives, which have also caused some international irritation. Firstly, there is Bonn's unilateral initiative (strongly backed by Foreign Minister Genscher) in recognizing Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, only two days after agreeing on a collective EC procedure for occupation. Secondly, the Free Democrats have continued to pursue an active Ostpolitik, which has manifested itself in the conclusion of bilateral treaties with several former Communist states and in Germany's pressing for multilateral aid to the USSR and the new democracies in Eastern Europe.⁷ This German push for an extension of economic and political relations with Eastern Europe has not necessarily been equally shared by the Federal Republic's various alliance partners and has consequently encountered resistance from the United States, Britain and Japan.

In this context, a third - though only potentially - problematic aspect of German foreign policy since unification should be addressed. On the one hand, since 1990, Bonn's and the FDP's various foreign policy concerns - military and economic security, good relations with both West *and* East - have been compatible in a way that was inconceivable during the Cold War. On the other hand, the Free Democrats seem to have given little thought to the fact that the post - Cold War integrationist effort may ultimately render some of Germany's various memberships in the European Community, the Western European Union and NATO incompatible with each other.

Apart from the Federal Republic's ambiguity about its new international role after the end of the Cold War, it should also be stressed that in several ways, German foreign policy has not changed since 1990: (1), Bonn has conducted nearly all foreign policy actions within its institutional framework and (2), the Free Democrats have continued to assume a middle position between the Union and the SPD on a number of

⁶Gutjahr, p.89

⁷SAT 1, 16.7.91, Interview with H.D.Genscher

foreign policy issues. With regard to NATO, however, there has been remarkable consensus between the German government and opposition that although reforms were needed, there was no substitute to a continued (if scaled-down) presence of US military forces in Germany. Similar, though somewhat less concrete domestic consensus has existed over the indispensability and complementarity of the WEU and the CSCE.

In the debate whether German troops should be able to participate in military actions under the United Nations and/or other collective auspices, the Free Democrats have assumed a middle position: while the FDP shared the Union's view that Germany should be committed to more than peacekeeping missions, the Free Democrats agreed with the SPD that the issue required constitutional clarification, and that Germany could only participate in UN-sanctioned out-of area missions.⁸ Despite the Federal Republic's strong continued commitment to NATO, WEU and CSCE, there was little evidence of German leadership in the reform efforts under way in these three institutions, a situation that contrasted markedly with Bonn's role in the European Community.

Concerning the Federal Republic's leading role in the drive for European political and monetary union, it seems noteworthy that even Germany's continued economic interest in the European Community cannot fully account for the strong integrationist initiative in Bonn. After all, many of the reform proposals -such as the FDP's call for a European Parliament directly accountable to the European peoples and elected by proportional representation - aim at strengthening the EC at the expense of national sovereignty, including Germany itself.⁹ As Anderson and Goodman have pointed out, Bonn's and the FDP's pacesetter role in the push for European economic and political union can probably best be explained by the fact that over the last forty years, Germany's reliance on a web of international institutions to achieve its foreign policy goals has become so complete that Bonn's institutional commitments have become an integral part of the Federal Republic's foreign policy.¹⁰

In general, this dissertation has shown that Germany's external environment is of essential importance for assessing the main question at

⁸Anderson/Goodman, pp.47-48

⁹Gutjahr, p.87

¹⁰Anderson/Goodman, p.60

stake in this study, namely how the FDP's capacities for action in Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 can be both explained and defined. The next section will consider another parameter which has proved vital in answering the research questions posed in this thesis.

Domestic context

Concerning the impact of domestic politics on the FDP's foreign policy under Hans-Dietrich Genscher between 1974 and 1990, two main points will be considered. Firstly, Chapters Four and Seven have shown that the domestic context had nearly the opposite effect on Liberal foreign policy before and after 1982: during their coalition with the Social Democrats, the domestic factors frequently constrained the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre, while during the Christian-Liberal coalition, the FDP was able to exploit most of the domestic-political constellations to its advantage. The second point which will be addressed here is the question of how the generally favourable link between German domestic politics and the FDP's Ostpolitik holds up by international comparison. More specifically, the question is whether - compared to other Western European liberal parties - the relationship between the domestic context and Liberal foreign policy as analysed in this dissertation, is a specific characteristic of German politics, or whether it exists in a similar version in other Western European countries.

The domestic context and Liberal Ostpolitik, 1974-1990

Regarding the first point, that is the impact of domestic politics on Liberal Ostpolitik before and after 1982, this thesis has found that in terms of the distribution of power between the Chancellor's and the Foreign Office, the Free Democrats enjoyed far greater room for manoeuvre during the Christian-Liberal coalition than under Chancellor Schmidt: (1), Kohl and Genscher had been both neighbours and friends for years when they formed a coalition in 1982, (2) in contrast to Schmidt, Kohl was neither an expert in foreign policy nor an Economist, which complemented perfectly with the Foreign Minister's growing recognition and expertise, and (3) after 1982, Genscher further benefited

from his far-reaching foreign political agreement with the new Federal President von Weizsäcker.

Despite the favourable division of labour between Kohl and Genscher, it would be wrong to assume that the Chancellor's Office completely left the field of foreign policy to the Free Democrats after 1983. On the one hand, Kohl's appointment of fellow-Christian Democrat Horst Teltschik as foreign policy adviser in the Kanzleramt introduced a good deal of rivalry between the Chancellor's Office and the Foreign Office, and also markedly contrasted with the FDP's successful resistance against Schmidt's 1976 attempt to unite the competences for Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik in the hands of one new state secretary, Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski. On the other hand, while for most of the time period since 1974, the Free Democrats had successfully ignored the fact that German policy was theoretically assigned to the Chancellor's Office, from late 1989 onwards, the situation became more problematic for the FDP: Kohl and Teltschik now seized the initiative in Deutschlandpolitik with the Ten Point Plan and retained it throughout the unification process.

Nevertheless, regarding the issue of parliamentary opposition in the Bundestag and Bundesrat, we have also seen that the domestic situation improved for the Free Democrats after 1982. For much of the 1970s, the Union's fierce opposition against Social-Liberal Ostpolitik caused heated parliamentary debates and complicated the passage of several agreements, such as the 1976 Polish Accords. During the Christian-Liberal coalition, however, parliamentary consensus was unusually high, as the Union had by then come to endorse detente, and the SPD continued to support it. The FDP's main advantage stemmed from the fact that, in contrast to the Union, it had been the co-architect of Social-Liberal Ostpolitik, and, in contrast to the SPD, was still in power.

Concerning the impact of domestic factors on the Liberals' foreign policy, the role of the Basic Law should also be addressed. As shown in Chapters Four and Seven, before 1989, the Basic Law mostly affected German politicians by providing the constitutional anchoring of certain foreign policy principles. By 1990, however, when the prospect of German unification - and with it the inner-German debate about the constitutional procedure of joining the two Germanies - had arisen, the Free Democrats were once again able to seize the matter for themselves. While most Liberals concurred with the Union in their support of proceeding according to Article 23, their greater emphasis on East

Germany's right of self-determination effectively shielded the FDP from both domestic and international criticism about the government's tendency to "gobble up East Germany."

Two other important factors of domestic politics - coalition consensus and public opinion - also had a much more favourable effect on the FDP's foreign policy during the 1980s than during the 1970s. As shown in Chapter Four, the Social-Liberal coalition's high level of agreement on Ostpolitik had made for a very promising start, but the failure to maintain such consensus resulted in the coalition's breakdown by 1982. On the surface, the chances for intra-coalition consensus seemed even smaller during the Christian-Liberal coalition, given the strategic and ideological competition between the FDP and the CSU. In practice, however, Chancellor Kohl's style of leadership - that is avoiding any commitments towards either side for as long as possible before endorsing the Liberals' position in the end - ensured a much stronger coalition consensus than during the Social-Liberal era.

Similarly, between 1974 and 1982, the Free Democrats had not been very successful in claiming public opinion for themselves, (1) because of the high level of agreement in Social-Liberal foreign policy for most of the 1970s, and (2) because the FDP's pro-Atlanticist course was out of line with the growing German peace movement in the 1980s. During the Christian-Liberal coalition, in contrast, the FDP's call for avoiding a renewed arms race interacted favourably with the German public's anti-nuclear sentiments. Furthermore, Genscher's running ahead of his NATO colleagues in promoting Gorbachev not only consistently made him the first or second most popular politician in West German public opinion polls, but also made the FDP into an occasional 'leader' of public opinion in the 1980s.

With regard to the FDP's functional position in the German party system, the domestic situation was also much more favourable during the Christian-Liberal coalition than before. Given the CSU's right-wing positions, during the 1980s, it was easier for the FDP to prove its indispensability as 'third force' in the German party system by acting as a moderating and stabilizing force in German foreign policy. What is more, in face of Genscher's growing reputation, the Liberals were better able to exploit the 'personalization effect' between 1982 and 1990. During the Christian-Liberal coalition, the FDP not only used Genscher's function as Foreign Minister as bargaining chip in all coalition

negotiations, but also ran all election campaigns at least partly on Genscher's personality.

In sum, the analysis of the FDP's domestic context between 1974 and 1990 in Chapters Four and Seven has helped to highlight both how unfavourable domestic constellations have occasionally constrained the Free Democrats' room for manoeuvre in foreign policy, and how domestic politics helps to account for the FDP's disproportionately large role in foreign policy. The contrast between the FDP's small size and its frequently disproportionate impact on foreign policy raises the question whether this relationship between domestic politics and Liberal foreign policy is a unique characteristic of German politics or whether it exists in a similar version in other Western European countries.

The interaction between domestic politics and liberal foreign policy in Western Europe

A comparison with other Western European liberal parties shows that by several criteria, the Free Democratic Party has a relatively weak starting position, at least on the surface: firstly, although most liberal parties are unable to boast strong organizational resources, the FDP ranks especially low in terms of organized membership, alongside the French UDF (Union pour la Démocratie Française) and the Dutch D'66 (Democraten 66). Secondly, while empirical studies show that the electorate of many liberal parties in Western Europe is heavily made up of transient voters (ranging from 40 to 65 percent), the FDP's lack of close ties with a large segment of voters makes it particularly dependent on so-called 'fickle' votes.¹¹ Thirdly, compared to the liberal parties in Belgium, France and Luxemburg, whose percentage of the votes resembles the other major parties in their respective systems, the Free Democrats' electoral showing has been very modest.

Despite the FDP's comparatively weak organizational and electoral strength, an international comparison also reveals that the German Liberals have benefited much more from their domestic environment than have the other liberal parties in Western Europe. In other words, the FDP's ability to make use of the domestic context for exerting a disproportionately large influence over foreign policy is fairly unique,

¹¹Kirchner, *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, p.482

both by domestic comparison with the SPD and the CDU/CSU and by comparison with most other Western European liberal parties. Why this is so and most importantly, what it says about the FDP's relationship with foreign policy, will be examined next.

To begin with, the Free Democrats have profited from being among those Western European liberal parties whose comparatively poor electoral results have been inversely linked with high levels of government participation.¹² Apart from the FDP, the Finnish SFP (People's Party of Finland), the Dutch VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) and the Italian PRI (Republican Party) have also participated in government far more than their electoral performance would imply, partly due to their country's favourable electoral system. The extent of the FDP's advantages due to the electoral system becomes perhaps most marked by comparison with the British Liberal Party, which would almost certainly participate in government, if it were not for the operation of the single-member plurality system in Great Britain.

Furthermore, a comparison with other Western European liberal parties shows (1) that the German domestic context has strongly favoured the FDP in the process of coalition formation and in the subsequent allocation of ministries, and (2) that foreign policy has played an important role in both processes. The combination of the German people's aversion against majority government and the unlikelihood of a 'grand coalition' between the Social- and Christian Democrats has assigned a pivotal role to the Free Democratic Party in the process of coalition formation. As Kirchner has pointed out, in principle, the liberal parties in Austria, Belgium and Luxemburg could play a similarly advantageous role, but in practice have not because 'grand coalitions' involving the two major parties have been much more common in those countries.¹³

Importantly, foreign policy has played a central role in the Free Democratic Party's coalition formation and has hence reinforced the FDP's favourable domestic position. This thesis has shown that all throughout the Social-Liberal coalition, the FDP's decision to continue the alliance with the Social Democrats was to an extent motivated by its

¹²Of the forty-five years of the Federal Republic's existence, the FDP has been in government for thirty-eight.

¹³Kirchner, Liberal Parties in Western Europe, p.483

desire to guarantee the continuity of Ostpolitik. Similarly, the FDP's 1982 decision to enter a coalition with the Union was partly linked to security-political issues, and foreign policy has also played an important role in the Free Democrats' decision to renew their commitment to the Christian-Liberal coalition in all elections since the 'Wende'.

In addition, the FDP's central role in coalition formation has allowed it to gain disproportionate pay-offs in terms of the allocation of ministries, which has for instance been apparent in its long-term occupation of the German Foreign Ministry. A comparison with other Western European liberal parties reveals that even very small liberal parties in general have had their claims for leading ministries fulfilled, usually either in the field of protecting individual rights (Interior, Justice) or in the realm of free market principles (Economics, Finance, Trade). However, the FDP's position is once again unique, firstly because the Free Democrats' pivotal role in the formation of German coalitions has led to a disproportionate pay-off regarding both the quantity and the quality of cabinet posts, and secondly because the FDP has monopolized the German Foreign Ministry since 1969. Compared with the other Western European liberal parties, only the Liberal Party in Luxemburg can boast a similarly high extent of holding the Foreign Ministry in the post-Second World War period.¹⁴

The FDP's long-term control over the Foreign Ministry has in return produced a number of additional advantages, for instance the fact that by its very nature, the Foreign Ministry has conferred media prominence on the party. Furthermore, the Free Democrats have had the opportunity to influence the Foreign Office with liberal principles and values, which in return has enhanced their credibility for further office-holding. Lastly, the significance of the Foreign Ministry has often been heightened by political developments, for instance crises in the EC and detente and the process of German unification, which has allowed the FDP to claim much credit for the foreign policy achievements of the governments in which it has participated.¹⁵

In addition to the Federal Republic's electoral system and favourable domestic context, the Free Democrats have succeeded

¹⁴Kirchner, Liberal Parties in Western Europe, p.479 Note that the FDP has also occupied the post of Minister of Economics since 1972.

¹⁵Roberts, The Free Democratic Party and the New Germany, p.151

comparatively well in projecting themselves into the limelight with the help of leading liberal personalities. A comparison with other liberal parties in Western Europe shows that such a reliance on the 'personalization effect' it is not an uncommon practice, considering for instance the Luxemburgian Liberal Party's heavy concentration on its leader Gaston Thorn and the Italian PRI's focus on the two Prime Ministers from its ranks.¹⁶ However, once again, the case of the FDP's reliance on Hans-Dietrich Genscher has been particularly marked. On the one hand, his eighteen years in office have made Genscher the longest-serving Foreign Minister in the Western world, and on the other hand, no previous West German Foreign Minister has succeeded in mobilizing the press for himself to such an extent. Thus, while during his early years in office, Genscher was aware of his dependence on the Liberals' electoral success, over the years, this situation slowly reversed, and the FDP increasingly relied on Genscher's growing reputation at home and abroad.

Lastly, the FDP has greatly profited from the fact that since 1949, it has overcome the Liberals' historical problem of being divided into two strands. This is remarkable, for while the Liberals in Austria, Luxemburg, Sweden and the United Kingdom are also united in one party, in the majority of Western European countries, there continue to exist two or even more liberal parties. The benefit of overcoming the German Liberals' historical division for instance becomes apparent by comparison with the situation in Italy, where the two liberal parties PRI and PLI have only managed to be *together* in government for very short periods of time, which has been at the cost of their influence over Italian policy-making. What is more, the FDP's regular incumbency of government office has helped the German Liberals to conceal an inherent ambivalence between their left- and right-wings, as coalition agreements have often required one or the other wing to compromise.

In this context, it should also be pointed out (1) that within the FDP, there has been remarkably little disagreement over foreign policy and Ostpolitik, and (2) that in the few debates about foreign policy which *have* taken place, the FDP has not differed greatly from most other liberal parties in Western Europe. For instance, concerning the Free Democrats' internal disagreement over the stationing of US Pershing

¹⁶Note that the PRI 'merely' has an electoral means of 2.74%.

missiles in the Federal Republic after 1983, the left-wing's strict opposition to deployment was reflected in the Dutch D'66 and in the British Liberal Party. Similarly, along with the FDP's right wing, the Dutch VVD staunchly supported the deployment of US Pershing missiles on their country's territory. On the whole, it seems noteworthy that, apart from some left-wing liberals' stronger anti-nuclear stance, most liberal parties in Western Europe have been united in their firm support for NATO, and that, although many Western European liberal parties have continued to be divided over socio-economic issues, their views of foreign policy have tended to be nearly identical.¹⁷

Overall, a comparison with other Western European liberal parties has demonstrated that the Federal Republic's electoral system, the process of coalition- and government formation in Germany, and the FDP's situation as a unified party with strong leadership has positioned the FDP particularly well to capitalize on the favourable interaction between domestic politics and liberal foreign policy. In face of the FDP's comparatively advantageous position in the Federal Republic, many authors besides this study have raised the question as to what degree the FDP has used its strategic advantages in the German system to hold on to power at the cost of a loss of programmatic distinctiveness. Rüdiger Zülch, Jürgen Dittberner and Christian Soe, for instance, have all argued that the FDP's functional role has led it to sacrifice policy and ideology at the cost of government participation.¹⁸

To some degree, this thesis has tended to confirm these hypotheses, and this has been most apparent in relation to Hans-Dietrich Genscher's particular style of leadership. With his strategy of committing the FDP to a coalition partner before the elections and with his consequent and exclusive emphasis on the Free Democrats' positive aspects, Genscher succeeded in covering up the party's lack of clearly liberal policies and therefore contributed to the FDP's regular re-election, but only at the price of renewed suspicion about their opportunistic character. Arguably, precisely Genscher's strong leadership accounts for some of the FDP's problems today: (1) just as Genscher found it difficult to follow in Walter

¹⁷For a further discussion of the FDP's foreign policy values in international comparison, see pp. 274-278

¹⁸Zülch, pp.12-18; Dittberner, pp.142-154; Soe, The Free Democratic Party, pp.112-120

Scheel's footsteps during the early years of his office, his successor Klaus Kinkel now faces an unfavourable comparison with his predecessor, (2) since the Free Democrats can no longer hide behind Genscher's personality, their lack of clear programmatic positions has become much more obvious, which is (3) aggravated by the fact that with unification and the break-up of Eastern Europe, the Free Democrats have lost Ostpolitik as their field of special expertise.

Nevertheless, the question remains whether the combination of the Federal Republic's external environment and the FDP's favourable domestic position can fully account for its foreign policy actions or whether, as Chapters Two and Five have attempted to answer, the Free Democrats have also been guided by liberal principles and ideology. This is precisely the question which will be addressed in the next and last section of this Conclusion.

Liberal ideology

There are three main aspects of the impact of liberal ideology on the FDP's Ostpolitik between 1974 and 1990 to consider. Firstly, this section will attempt to determine the special characteristics of German liberal foreign policy by domestic and international comparison. Secondly, we shall assess the overall compatibility of the FDP's various principles (as shown in Chapters Two and Five), and thirdly look at some of the contradictions and dilemmas inherent in liberal foreign policy ideology.

Special characteristics of the FDP's ideology in domestic and international comparison

Clearly, the attempt to define the special characteristics of the FDP's foreign policy values by domestic comparison poses a number problems. To begin with, none of the goals which the Liberals supported were seriously contested by the SPD or the Union, which made it difficult for the FDP to claim that its objectives were specifically 'liberal.' There was a remarkable domestic consensus in Germany both about the need firmly to integrate the Federal Republic into the Western community of states and about a policy of rapprochement with Eastern Europe.

Similarly, the Free Democrats could hardly claim credit for advocating worldwide peace and more human rights, since these values tend to be supported by all democratic forces. Furthermore, as Garton Ash has pointed out, after the end of the Cold War, all German parties naturally tried to claim the credit for unification, with the Christian Democrats drawing a straight line from Konrad Adenauer to Helmut Kohl, the Social Democrats pointing to Willy Brandt's influential role in the 1970s and in 1990, and the Free Democrats celebrating the triumph of Genscherism.¹⁹

However, Chapters Two and Five have shown that in some ways, the FDP's foreign policy values did differ from those of the Social Democrats and the Union, for instance regarding the Liberals' view of the Soviet Union's intentions and their resulting policy towards Eastern Europe. Along with the Union, the Free Democrats evaluated Moscow's intentions as expansionist, but contrary to many Christian Democrats, the Liberals did not think that an arms race or a confrontational policy would lead to Soviet counter-concessions. While the FDP shared this latter view with the SPD, the Liberals did not agree with most Social Democrats' (apart from a small wing around Chancellor Schmidt) evaluation of the Communist states as insecure regimes which called for recognition and one-sided concessions. Overall, regarding their assessment of the Kremlin's intentions and their resulting policies, the Free Democrats assumed an ideological middle position between the two major parties.

In terms of concrete politics, this for instance manifested itself in the three parties' approach to human rights. In line with their view of the Eastern European states as insecure, most Social Democrats opposed a human rights campaign against the Communist bloc, whereas the Christian Democrats were more prone to believe that moral pressure on the Soviet Union would force the Kremlin into counterconcessions. As shown above, the Free Democrats preferred to elicit humanitarian concessions via a policy of small steps or through Eastern Europe's voluntary commitment to more human rights in a process of 'do ut des.' In addition, it has been demonstrated that the FDP assumed an ideological middle position between the SPD and the CDU/CSU on the issues of detente and defence.

Chapter Five has also shown that the Free Democrats have differed from the other German parties in their unremitting efforts for extending

¹⁹Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, p.363

the ties between West Berlin and the Federal Republic, right up to the 1991 debate in the Bundestag about united Germany's future capital. The FDP's striving for extending the competences of the United Nations, e.g. Genscher's 1976 call for a UN Court of Human Rights, also distinguished the Free Democrats from the other West German parties, if making the Liberals prone to attacks about their 'idealism.'

Lastly, the FDP was the only West German party which *continuously* supported the two main pillars of West German foreign policy after World War II, that is both West- and Ostpolitik. While the Christian Democrats steadily supported the Federal Republic's firm commitment to the West, the Union's long and fierce opposition to Ostpolitik and its initial vote against the Final Act of Helsinki calls for some modification of the argument about a straight line from Adenauer to Kohl. Similarly, the SPD had not officially accepted Westpolitik before 1959 and, during their time in opposition from 1982 until 1990, came to embrace the concept of 'liberalization through stabilization' so fully that many Social Democrats opposed German unification in 1990.

The question remains whether the Free Democrats' foreign policy values were a special characteristic of *German* liberalism, or whether the FDP's principles are shared by most other liberal parties in Western Europe. In assessing this question, this section will rely on Derek Hearl's analysis of the party platforms of fourteen Western European liberal parties (see Table pp.276-277). In order to determine whether the policies advocated by these parties can justifiably be labeled 'liberal,' Hearl has compared their programmes since World War II to those of all other parties in Western Europe. While on the one hand, Hearl's analysis has revealed the striking similarities between the policies of *all* democratic parties in Western Europe, on the other hand, it has also demonstrated that liberal parties tend to attach greater importance than most other parties to the values of democracy, individual freedom, human rights, European unification and foreign special relations.²⁰

Are there any special characteristics of German liberalism, then? A comparison of the ten most salient issues in the Western European liberal parties' platforms over the post-war period, again based on Hearl's

²⁰Hearl, pp.438-444 and 451-452 Hearl has also analysed that some of the issues which liberals focus on today would qualify as 'new' as opposed to 'old' liberalism - in other words, peace, internationalism, democracy and foreign special relations represent the issues of the 1970s and 1980s rather than those of the 1940s and 1950s.

model, leads to three interesting observations: firstly, in the FDP's party programmes, foreign policy has played a more important role than in any other of the thirteen Western European liberal parties. Out of the FDP's ten most prominent policy priorities, three have been related to foreign policy, while the other Western European liberal parties have on average merely listed 1.5 foreign policy issues as most urgent objective.²¹

Secondly, each of the FDP's three foreign policy priorities - human rights, European Community and special foreign relations - is noteworthy by itself. To begin with, although most Western European liberal parties attach great importance to the issue of human rights, in terms of relative importance, human rights rank highest with the FDP (second most important priority). In contrast, the FDP's concern with the European Community is only shared by the Italian PLI, and no other Western European liberal party shares the FDP's preoccupation with special foreign relations.

Thirdly, regarding the question why the German Liberals have attached such comparatively great importance to foreign policy in the first place and to the issues of human rights, European/national unification and special foreign relations in particular, the answer most likely lies in a combination of two factors: the German Liberals' historical tradition and the Federal Republic's special post-war situation as a non-sovereign state. While Hearl's analysis has demonstrated that all Western European parties strive for more human rights, for the FDP, a policy of small steps geared at humanitarian improvements in Eastern Europe has been especially important, considering the great number of ethnic Germans in the Communist states, Germany's division into two halves and the Federal Republic's geographic proximity to Eastern Europe.

Similarly, the combination of the German Liberals' historical heritage and Germany's unsatisfied demands after World War II also helps to explain the FDP's concentration on (1) special foreign relations (with the Eastern European states) and (2) on the European Community, as the Free Democrats have firmly believed that national unification could only be achieved within a pan-European peace order. This is not to say that the Free Democrats have solely been motivated by national

²¹If one includes democracy in the analysis, given the inherent link between democratic values and liberal foreign policy, the FDP names four out of ten main values in the realm of foreign policy, while the other parties on average list 2.2.

Liberal Party Policy 'profiles'

Source: Derek Hearl, 'Ambivalence revisited: an analysis of liberal party manifestos since 1945,' in Emil Kirchner, *'Liberal Parties in Western Europe.'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

N = Number of manifestos since World War II in each case

% = Average proportion of each manifesto devoted to the various issues named in the party programmes

Austria			Belgium		
FPÖ	(N=9)	%	PRL/PVV	(N=13)	%
Democracy		13.56	Free enterprise		10.56
Internationalism		7.49	Non-economic groups		7.94
Social justice		5.92	Middle-class groups		6.85
Freedom and human rights		5.25	Economic orthodoxy		3.99
Social services		5.17	Agriculture/farmers		3.69
Free enterprise		4.38	Decentralisation		3.54
National effort		4.22	Government efficiency		3.47
Agriculture/farmers		4.20	National effort/social harmony		3.27
National way of life		4.10	Freedom and human rights		3.21
Non-economic groups		3.93	Technology and infrastructure		2.97
Denmark			Denmark		
Radikale Venstre	(N=16)	%	Venstre	(N=16)	%
Productivity		5.95	Economic orthodoxy		8.78
Social justice		5.06	Productivity		4.77
Military: negative		4.88	Incentives		4.27
National effort/social harmony		4.69	Free enterprise		3.86
Non-economic groups		4.34	Social justice		3.44
Specific economic goals		3.23	Specific economic goals		2.53
Incentives		2.97	Education		2.25
Internationalism		2.41	Decentralisation		1.88
Social services		2.31	Freedom and human rights		1.83
Education		2.22	Agriculture/farmers		1.83
Regulation of capitalism		2.22			
Germany			Italy		
FDP	(N=8)	%	PLI	(N=8)	%
Social justice		6.54	Free enterprise		7.58
Freedom and human rights		4.20	Social justice		4.51
Technology and infrastructure		4.15	Freedom and human rights		4.39
Non-economic groups		3.77	Democracy		3.46
Agriculture/farmers		3.68	Regulation of capitalism		3.01
Education		3.41	Economic orthodoxy		3.00
Social services		3.18	European Community		2.51
Foreign special relations		3.00	Government efficiency		1.88
Democracy		2.55	Labour groups		1.78
European Community		2.54	Non-economic groups		1.77

Italy
P R I (N=6) %

Government efficiency	6.68
Democracy	4.67
Social justice	4.18
Freedom and human rights	3.71
Economic planning	2.37
Decentralisation	2.20
Non-economic groups	2.10
Specific economic goals	1.60
Productivity	1.49
Traditional morality (negative)	1.33

Luxemburg
D P (N=7) %

Middle-class groups	12.40
Social services	8.97
Agriculture/farmers	6.70
Social justice	6.67
Non-economic groups	5.88
Freedom and human rights	4.42
Democracy	4.26
Education	4.02
Technology/Infrastructure	3.72
Art, sport, leisure, media	3.72

Netherlands
V V D (N=11) %

Free enterprise	10.75
Social justice	5.88
Economic orthodoxy	5.65
Social services	4.28
Non-economic groups	3.89
Education	3.83
Freedom and human rights	3.67
Incentives	3.46
Internationalism	3.04

Netherlands
D ' 6 6 (N=4) %

Social servies	9.40
Democracy	9.19
Environment	7.79
Social justice	6.39
Internationalism	4.97
Freedom and human rights	4.86
Technology/infrastructure	4.72
Education	4.31
Government efficiency	3.40

Norway
Norges Venstre (N=11) %

Social services	7.96
Education	7.40
Technology/infrastructure	6.81
Agriculture/farmers	6.46
Social justice	6.10
Productivity	5.19
Art, sport, leisure, media	4.87
Environment	4.77
Middle-class groups	4.50
Decentralisation	4.44

Norway
Det Nye Folkepartiet (N=1) %

Technology/infrastructure	7.68
Environment	7.68
Internationalism	7.09
Non-economic groups	6.30
Agriculture/farmers	6.10
Democracy	5.41
Decentralisation	5.41
Social services	5.41
Education	4.82
Social justice	4.43

Sweden
Folkpartiet (N=13) %

Social services	13.48
Social justice	5.59
Freedom and human rights	5.39
Democracy	5.13
Internationalism	4.97
Education	4.40
Free enterprise	4.37
Incentives	4.12
Economic orthodoxy	3.95
Environment	3.68

United Kingdom
Liberal Party (N=11) %

Democracy	5.10
Internationalism	4.77
Social services	4.48
Decentralisation	4.15
Social justice	3.56
Full employment	3.43
National effort/social harmony	3.24
Agriculture/farmers	3.19
Non-economic groups	3.08
Freedom and human rights	3.08

considerations in foreign policy, but it is an attempt to explain the FDP's slightly different accents in foreign policy, although this chapter has shown that overall, the Free Democrats' foreign policy principles are quite representative of Western European liberalism in general. Next, we shall consider the link between liberal values and foreign policy in more detail, both by assessing the overall compatibility of the FDP's various principles and by looking at some of the dilemmas inherent in liberal ideology.

The impact of liberal ideology on the FDP's Ostpolitik

An examination of the FDP's history and ideology in Chapters Two and Five has shown firstly that the Liberals have been significantly influenced by their predecessors' legacy and secondly that the Free Democrats have benefited from the relative compatibility of their various foreign policy values with each other. In other words, the Liberals' fairly balanced approach to the issues of domestic politics and foreign policy, German nationalism and European integration, realism and idealism, human rights and intervention aided them in the pursuit of their objectives and also increased their room for manoeuvre in Ost- and Deutschlandpolitik.

To begin with, after World War II, the Free Democrats continued to adhere to the traditional liberal conviction that "...free foreign policy and free domestic policy depend upon each other," that is to say only a country with a democratic constitution could conduct a 'liberal' foreign policy.²² However, for a number of reasons, the Free Democrats' attempt to balance domestic and foreign policy has been more successful than their predecessors', (1) because their negative past experience has led the Liberals to attach greater priority to domestic freedom than to national freedom and (2), since the Free Democrats have overcome the Liberals' historical division into two wings, which greatly contributed to domestic stability. (3), given the Federal Republic's limited room of manoeuvre in international relations after 1949, many Free Democrats have considered it especially important to make "a sensible domestic politics" into an "element of foreign policy," and (4) were greatly aided in this attempt by Germany's much more democratic domestic structure since World War

²²Maier cited in Reinhold-Maier-Stiftung (II), p.26

II, apparent in the democratic party system, the Basic Law, the social market economy, public opinion, and the attitudes of the elite.²³

Furthermore, the Free Democrats' Ostpolitik profited from their concept of embedding Germany's national problems in the wider European framework. From the 1960s onwards, the Free Democrats increasingly relied on Gustav Stresemann's conviction "that precisely via international relations one can and must pursue national goals."²⁴ First the FDP, and then most other German politicians, concluded that the way for Bonn to achieve reunification was to work towards a European peace order, in which the Germans could achieve unity in free self-determination. In Hans Dietrich Genscher's words, the new maxim was: "The more European German politics is, the more national it is..."²⁵ By renouncing some of their sovereignty, the Germans ultimately hoped to regain it, and by calling for self-determination and human rights everywhere, the Free Democrats hoped to achieve these objectives for the Germans, too. Timothy Garton Ash has assessed this link between the German question and European integration as follows: "...As with Stresemann, there was the mixture, so difficult to analyse, of genuine Europeanism and genuine nationalism..."²⁶

With the concept of embedding national interest in international relations, the Free Democrats have also inherited a certain blend of 'realist' and 'idealist' elements from Gustav Stresemann. On the one hand, both Stresemann and the Free Democrats have proved 'realists' by pursuing the national goal of restoring German sovereignty (and after 1949, German reunification). On the other hand, the means employed both by Stresemann and the FDP to achieve their objectives have been 'idealist,' i.e. the readiness for cooperation with Germany's Allies and the FDP's emphasis on the new elements in post-1945 international relations, such as economic, technological and scientific interdependence and the need for multilateral cooperation.

Chapter Five has also shown that the Free Democrats tried to resolve the dilemma over the principle of non-intervention and their

²³Heuss cited in Heß, p.91; Garton Ash, In Europe's Name, p.359

²⁴Stresemann cited in Thimme, p.126

²⁵Wirtschaftswoche, 16.9.88, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²⁶Garton Ash, In Europe's Name, p.358

striving for more human rights by distinguishing between their short- and long-term objectives. In the short run, the FDP regarded the principle of non-intervention prior to a human rights campaign, as the latter would be dangerously destabilizing. For the time being, the Liberals thus put peace above democracy and focused on a pragmatic policy of detente, small steps, and coexistence. In the long run, however, the Free Democrats' order of priorities was reverse for three reasons: (1), in the FDP's view, the Liberals' efforts to get the Communist states voluntarily to sign human rights obligations, such as in the Final Act of Helsinki, no longer allowed the Eastern European states to complain about Western interference with their internal affairs, (2) the Free Democrats firmly believed that the liberal idea was superior to Communism and would eventually assert itself, and (3), in line with Kant's legacy, the Free Democrats tended to view any action less than dictatorial interference as principally legitimate if it served the cause of democracy, such as their attempt to save the Eastern European people from Soviet dictatorship.

This study has also shown that in many ways, Hans-Dietrich Genscher has epitomized the search for compromise, balance and compatibility that has characterized the FDP's foreign policy making since the end of World War II. Firstly, there is Genscher's aversion to strong words and plain speaking, which he once expressed by stating that in foreign policy, "speech is silver but silence is golden."²⁷ Timothy Garton Ash, who has called Genscher "...the archetypal Bonn waffler" and described his speeches as "...endless coats of many shades of grey, ...layered wedding-cakes of blancmange, ...monuments of *sowohl-als-auch*," has also pointed out that Genscher's vague, harmonising use of language served Germany's purposes well in this period, as the Federal Republic mainly aimed at bridging the gaps between East and West.²⁸

Secondly, Genscher was particularly representative of the FDP's search for compromise in foreign policy. Long before his appointment as Foreign Minister, during the FDP's 1967 party congress in Hanover, Genscher already suggested a compromise formula concerning

²⁷DFS, 13.9.84, Interview with H.D.Genscher

²⁸Garton Ash, In Europe's Name, p.375 Garton Ash has argued that "It was this getting on with all sides, not the specific advocacy of taking Gorbachev at his word, that was the real essence of Genscherism."

Germany's acceptance of the Oder-Neisse border (over the telephone because he had turned ill), which a majority of the Free Democrats eventually supported.²⁹ Similarly, during the 1976 debate about the ratification of the Polish Treaties in Parliament, Genscher's successful plea for a minor change in the Polish text eventually won over the Union's assent. During the East German refugees' occupation of Bonn's embassy in Prague in 1989, it was Genscher who came up with the face-saving formula which resulted in East Germany's permission to let the refugees emigrate to the Federal Republic, and in 1990, Genscher's NATO plan contributed to the process of German unification by taking Soviet sensitivities about the future military structure of Germany into account.

Thirdly, Genscher has personified the FDP's harmonising effect on foreign policy through the balance which he attached to the various liberal priorities according to the 'Zeitgeist.' When he feared that Germany would depart from the appropriate support for NATO's deterrence measures in 1982, the Foreign Minister changed over to a Christian-Liberal coalition to maintain the 'right' balance between detente and defence. Likewise, when Genscher sensed that Gorbachev was seriously ready for reform in the mid-1980s, he unambiguously announced his support for the Soviet leader. Thus, while Genscher's approach to foreign policy was generally representative of German Liberalism, the special 'Genscherist' element lay in certain aspects of his personal style, which rendered him the epitome of German Liberalism in this period: his vague, harmonising use of language, his talent at devising compromise formulas, his efforts to get along with all sides (both at home and abroad) and his capacity of sensing both the risks and chances inherent in change more quickly than others.

An assessment of liberal foreign policy ideology

So far, it has been shown that the FDP's concentration on certain foreign policy issues can to a high degree be explained by historical liberal values and by Kant's legacy, and that the Liberals have profited

²⁹The formula ran; "...while the final decision about the Eastern borders can only be taken after a peace treaty, the possible unification of the two parts of Germany must not fail due to territorial question..." Kaack, Die FDP. Grundriß und Materialien zur Geschichte, p.104

from the relative compatibility of their various foreign policy values with each other. Yet, despite their historical and philosophical heritage, the Free Democrats' preoccupation with daily politics and the need to adjust their concepts to the reality of world politics has caused a number of contradictions and dilemmas in liberal foreign policy, both at the theoretical level and at that of praxis. It is to these incompatibilities and dilemmas in liberal ideology that we shall turn next.

To begin with, while Kant in his pamphlet on 'Perpetual Peace' very deliberately discussed the philosophical heritage of the Enlightenment, the Free Democrats were much more ambiguous about acknowledging their foreign policy convictions as some form of ideology. On the one hand, the Liberals occasionally openly admitted that they aimed at transferring their values to the other parts of the world in the long run. Wolfgang Mischnick, for instance, said in 1980:

"We are aware how difficult it is to transfer the politics which was undeniably successful in Europe to other parts of the world. That's a principal aim of our foreign policy, an old free-democratic goal..."³⁰

In line with this view, most Liberals regarded the breakdown of Eastern Europe as a triumph of Liberalism.

On the other hand, the Liberals refuted the view that their support for the democratization process in Eastern Europe was an attempt to assert liberal ideology. Based on the FDP's assumption that the Soviet Union was a full member of Europe, and that Europe's joint liberal ideological heritage had always continued to exist and had only been covered up by the Cold War for some time, the Free Democrats regarded the process of liberalization in Eastern Europe as a *return* to the joint European values and as a process of "de-ideologization."³¹ Taken literally, the term 'de-ideologization' seems to imply that the breakdown of Communism would leave an ideological vacuum in Eastern Europe. There is no trace of an assessment within the FDP how far the ideals of the French Revolution also made up for an ideology, and whether the 'de-

³⁰Mischnick, DB, 196th sess., 17.1.80, debate about the government declaration

³¹fdk 11, 11.1.90, Lambsdorff's speech in Tel Aviv on 11.1.90 on 'Europe and Germany at the beginning of the 1990s'

ideologization' of Eastern Europe was not rather a replacement of one ideology with another. Similarly, in talking about the return to Europe's joint heritage, the Liberals clearly referred to the values of the Enlightenment and did not pay much attention to the question whether Europe might have shared some values *before* the Enlightenment.

Apart from the FDP's ambiguous position on its views as an ideology, several liberal foreign policy objectives also proved incompatible with each other, thus causing dilemmas both on the theoretical and on the practical level. Despite the Free Democrats' frequent references to the prominent role of the principle of self-determination in the liberal value system, there is little trace of a critical examination of the concept as such. For instance, the FDP never openly acknowledged the difficulty or even futility of the attempt to identify those criteria which a national group should fulfil in order to be entitled to self-determination. Nor did the German Liberals ever address the question of how far the principle of self-determination was compatible with other international principles, i.e. territorial integrity and world peace. As Harald Johnson has pointed out:

"It would be highly explosive to allow an unrestricted claim for any group, minority, population of foreign origin...or irredentist faction which felt that it had a grievance."³²

Recently, the impossibility of a universal application of the principle of self-determination has become obvious in terms of the Balkanization we see today.

Furthermore, concerning the Free Democrats's conviction that only a state with a democratic constitution could conduct liberal foreign policy, in terms of the resulting question as to whether this meant that all states had to become democracies before liberal foreign policy goals could be achieved worldwide, Kant produced much the clearer concept. While Kant was aiming at the emergence of a system of perpetual peace in the long run, the philosopher also emphasized that, for the time being, he did not want to replace the existing world system by republican states only "since this is not the will of nations, according to their present conception of international right."³³ There is little trace of an FDP

³²Johnson, p.86

³³Kant 'On Perpetual Peace' in Reiss, p.105

attempt to analyse the compatibility or incompatibility of simultaneously aiming at democracy for all states and worldwide peace.

Lastly, Liberal politics and philosophy have also hardly been compatible regarding the liberal aim of a worldwide peace order based on international law. The Free Democrats never openly acknowledged the dilemma that while Liberalism has finally been very successful in creating a zone of peace among the liberal democracies, it has equally strikingly failed to guide foreign policy outside the liberal world. Michael Doyle has partly explained this failure with the fact that outside the democratic world, the liberal regimes are caught in the international state of war as the Realists see it, with conflicts being a natural result of the struggle for resources, prestige and security among sovereign, independent states.³⁴

The Free Democrats have thus had to contend with the mismatch between the egalitarian order of law as they promoted it and the hierarchical order of power in international relations. While in law, all states are equal, in reality, they are not. As a matter of fact, states are far more unequal than the individuals in a state, and any attempts to create moral standards of behaviour in international relations have proved very difficult. As Fred Halliday has pointed out:

"International affairs are, notoriously, the area where moral considerations apply least, and we have come to accept different moral criteria for states than for individuals."³⁵

Even the Free Democrats' hope that the great powers would do their best to sort out the moral problems in the world has not proved realistic since such hopes have overstated the willingness of the great powers to assume their global responsibilities.

Overall, the Free Democrats have demonstrated a certain blend of 'idealism' and 'realism' on many foreign policy issues. The Liberals' position on the question of man's fundamental nature and on the balance between detente and defence can, for instance, be viewed as 'realist.' However, in general terms, their foreign policy approach should be classified as idealistic, a fact which has manifested itself in two ways.

³⁴Doyle, p.325

³⁵Halliday, p.12

First, the Free Democrats have been true idealists according to Charles Beitz's definition that idealists do not claim that the realization of their goals will be easy or that they can foresee the dynamics by which they may be realized. Ideal theory only requires that its realization in practical terms is theoretically possible.³⁶ The Free Democrats have not claimed that the achievement of national unification, worldwide human rights, international law and global peace could be guaranteed by a certain point of time or by a certain approach. Equally, they have not abandoned these goals as too difficult.

Instead, the Liberals have viewed the absence of such a world community of liberal-democratic states as a challenge to construct one. In fact, the FDP's belief that their ideals would most likely have some bearing on present world politics even if it was not possible to realize them immediately has been the second idealist element in their foreign policy making. Kant had expressed similarly optimistic convictions in 'Perpetual Peace' by stating that if his preliminary articles were adhered to, they would at least push the system in the right direction - towards perpetual peace.³⁷ Hans-Dietrich Genscher was a major representative of this liberal aspiration to turn theory into practice. Even though one must keep in mind that German unification had just been completed when looking at the following statement of his, it is nevertheless indicative of the close link he saw between theory and practice: "For me, wanting something and making it come true is always identical."³⁸

Despite their awareness of the evil in man's nature and despite their reservations about the feasibility of achieving their goals, both Kant and the modern German Liberals have ultimately been optimists. Thus, in contrast to the international and domestic parameters, whose impact on the FDP's room for manoeuvre in Ostpolitik changed substantially between 1974 and 1990, liberal ideology and personalities have provided a crucial element of continuity, independence and indeed identity for the party.

³⁶Beitz, Political Theory, pp.156, 160

³⁷Brown, p.34

³⁸Genscher cited in *Die Zeit*, 3.10.91

Chronology

1974

- 6 May Willy Brandt resigns as Chancellor after the discovery of an East German spy in his office
- 16 May Helmut Schmidt becomes Federal Chancellor and head of the Social-Liberal coalition. Hans-Dietrich Genscher succeeds Walter Scheel as Foreign Minister
- 20 June Bundestag ratifies Prague Treaty
- 9 August President Nixon resigns; Gerald Ford becomes President of the United States
- 30 September-2 October FDP Party Congress in Hamburg. Genscher replaces Scheel as Party Chairman
- 28- 31 October Schmidt and Genscher visit the Soviet Union. Third German-Soviet natural gas pipeline agreement signed

1975

- 1 August Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded in Helsinki with the signing of the 'Helsinki Final Act'
- 9-10 October Genscher visits Poland. Agreements on credit, pensions and emigration of ethnic Germans signed
- 19 December Inner-German agreement on transit arrangements between West Berlin and the rest of the Federal Republic signed

1976

- 19 February Bundestag ratifies Polish Treaties
- 3 October Bundestag elections - Social-Liberal coalition re-elected
- 2 November Jimmy Carter elected President of the United States

1977

- 13- 15 June Genscher visits the Soviet Union
- 4 October First CSCE follow-up conference begins in Belgrade (closes 9 March 1978)
- 28 October Schmidt's speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, pointing to the West's security gap in the area of intermediate-range nuclear missiles

1978

- 7 April President Carter indefinitely delays the decision about producing the neutron bomb
- 4-7 May Brezhnev visits the Federal Republic. German-Soviet agreement on long-term economic and industrial cooperation signed
- 16 November Inner-German negotiations about traffic and payment transactions concluded

1979

- 5-6 January Presidents Carter, d'Estaing, Callaghan and Chancellor Schmidt meet in Guadeloupe
- 18 June Carter and Brezhnev sign SALT II agreement in Vienna
- 21-24 November Andrei Gromyko visits Bonn
- 12 December NATO dual-track decision taken
- 27 December Soviet Union invades Afghanistan

1980

- 15 May West Germany joins US boycott of Moscow Olympic Games
- 22-23 June G7 summit in Venice
- 30 June-1 July Schmidt and Genscher visit Moscow
- 5 October Bundestag elections - Social-Liberal coalition re-elected
- 17 October Beginning of Geneva talks between the USA and the Soviet Union on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF)
- 4 November Ronald Reagan elected President of the United States
- 12 November Second CSCE follow-up conference begins in Madrid (closes 15 July 1983)

1981

- 1-2 April Genscher meets Gromyko in Moscow
- 22-25 November Brezhnev visits Bonn
- 30 November USA and Soviet Union resume INF talks in Geneva
- 11-13 December Schmidt visits the GDR. Summit meeting with Honecker at the Werbellinsee
- 13 December Martial Law declared in Poland

1982

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 17 September | Four FDP ministers resign. Social-Liberal coalition ends |
| 1 October | Schmidt loses his office as Chancellor through a constructive vote of no confidence. Succeeded by Helmut Kohl |
| 10-12 November | Brezhnev dies. Yuri Andropov becomes leader of the Soviet Union |

1983

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 6 March | Bundestag elections. Helmut Kohl becomes Federal Chancellor and head of the Christian-Liberal coalition. Genscher remains Foreign Minister |
| 23 March | President Reagan announces SDI programme |
| 4-7 July | Kohl and Genscher visit Moscow |
| 22 December | Bundestag votes for deployment of US Pershing and cruise missiles in West Germany |
| 23 December | Soviet Union breaks off INF negotiations in Geneva |

1984

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 13 February | Konstantin Chernenko succeeds Andropov as leader of the Soviet Union |
| May | Soviet Union begins 'revanchism campaign' |
| 20-22 May | Genscher visits Moscow |

1985

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 23-25 February | FDP Party Congress in Saarbrücken. Genscher resigns from the post of Party Chairman. Succeeded by Martin Bangemann |
| 11 March | Michail Gorbachev succeeds Chernenko as leader of the Soviet Union |
| March | US-Soviet arms control talks in Geneva resumed |
| 2 July | Eduard Shevardnadze succeeds Gromyko as Soviet Foreign Minister |
| 29 November-5 December | First Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Geneva |

1986

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 20-22 July | Genscher visits Moscow. Both sides agree to 'open a new page' in German-Soviet relations |
| 11-12 October | Second Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Reykjavik |

4 November Third CSCE Follow-up conference opens in Vienna (closes 15 January 1989)

1987

25 January Bundestag elections. Christian-Liberal coalition re-elected

6-11 July President von Weizsäcker and Foreign Minister Genscher visit Moscow

7-11 September Honecker visits the Federal Republic

8 December Third Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Washington. USA and Soviet Union sign the INF Treaty

1988

17-19 January Shevardnadze visits the Federal Republic

29 May - 1 June Fourth Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Moscow

24-27 October Kohl visits Moscow

1989

20 January George Bush succeeds Reagan as President of the United States

2 February MBFR talks ended in Vienna (after sixteen years)

19 March Conventional Force Reduction talks (CFE) begin in Vienna

2 May Hungary begins to dismantle its border with Austria

12-15 June Gorbachev visits the Federal Republic. 'Bonn Declaration' signed

10 September Hungary opens its border with Austria

30 September East German refugees at West German embassy in Prague are permitted to leave for the West in special trains

7 October GDR celebrates its fortieth anniversary

18 October Honecker resigns. Succeeded by Egon Krenz

4 November Czechoslovakia opens its borders with the Federal Republic

7 November East German government resigns

9 November Opening of the Berlin Wall

28 November Kohl announces his 10-Point Plan for overcoming Germany's and Europe's division

1990

10-11 February	Kohl and Genscher visit Moscow. Gorbachev signals readiness to cooperate on German reunification
12-14 February	2+4 formula for negotiating the external aspects of German unification announced at the Ottawa 'open skies' meeting
18 March	Free Volkskammer elections in the GDR. Grand coalition of Christian and Social Democrats formed
5 May	First 2+4 meeting in Bonn
21 June	Oder-Neisse border formally recognized
1 July	German Monetary, Economic and Social Union comes into force
14-16 July	Kohl and Genscher in Moscow and the Caucasus. Gorbachev agrees to united Germany's membership in NATO
31 August	Federal Republic and GDR sign the Unification Treaty
3 October	Day of German Unity. Germany is reunified
9 November	German-Soviet Friendship Treaty signed
2 December	First pan-German elections to the Bundestag. Christian-Liberal coalition re-elected

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26th Regular Party Congress	Mainz	27.-29.10.1975
Election Party Congress	Freiburg	30.-31.5.1976
27th Regular Party Congress	Frankfurt	19.-20.11.1976
28th Regular Party Congress	Kiel	6.-8.11.1977
29th Regular Party Congress	Mainz	12.-14.11.1978
30th Regular Party Congress	Bremen	15.-17.6.1979
Election Party Congress	Freiburg	7.6.1980
31st Regular Party Congress	München	5.-6.12.1980
32nd Regular Party Congress	Köln	29.-31.5.1981
33rd Regular Party Congress	Berlin	5.-7.11.1982
Election Party Congress	Freiburg	29.-30.1.1982
34th Regular Party Congress	Karlsruhe	18.-19.11.1983
35th Regular Party Congress	Münster	1.-3.6.1984
36th Regular Party Congress	Saarbrücken	23.-24.2.1985
37th Regular Party Congress	Hannover	23.-25.5.1986
38th Regular Party Congress	Kiel	5.-6.9.1987
39th Regular Party Congress	Wiesbaden	7.-8.10.1988
40th Regular Party Congress	Köln	27.-28.5.1989
41st Regular Party Congress	Hannover	11.-12.8.1990

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Additional Party Congress	Bochum	30.4.1977
Additional Party Congress	Saarbrücken	26.6.1977
Additional Party Congress	Frankfurt	11.3.1978
Additional Party Congress	Mainz	24.10.1981
Additional Party Congress	Mainz	17.11.1984
Additional Party Congress	Neuss	1.6.1985
Additional Party Congress	Augsburg	13.9.1986
Additional Party Congress	Baden-Baden	24.-25.10.1987
Additional Party Congress	Berlin	19.11.1988
Additional Party Congress	Saarbrücken	25.2.1989
Additional Party Congress	Celle	2.12.1989
Additional Party Congress	Kassel	19.5.1990
Additional Party Congress	Bonn	21.7.1990

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