

there in November 1985, he also stated that the FRG should recognize a GDR citizenship. He is the highest level politician to hold this view, a fact made more significant because he is being widely considered as the SPD candidate for Chancellor in the next federal election. His views on inter-German relations have however, been received coolly, if not rejected outright, by his party colleagues. In addition, a joint paper of principles signed by the SPD and the SED last August has been quite divisive within the SPD. It includes the statement "Neither side is permitted to deny the other its right to exist," and many in the SPD think this comes too close to de jure recognition. The mainstream SPD view is well represented by Juergen Schmude, an SPD Bundestag member, who feels that although one must be realistic about reunification, when it comes to the issues of citizenship and de jure recognition, "There can be no concessions."

On the governing CDU side, one Bundestag member, Bernhard Friedmann, stated in September that reunification should be put back on the global agenda of the US and the USSR by having it linked to arms control. Friedmann's statement was so extreme that it was rejected by the CDU caucus chairman, Alfred Dregger, himself considered to be on the right wing of the party, while Kohl labelled it as "just nonsense." Besides raising eyebrows in both East and West, statements such as Friedmann's are also likely to evoke renewed emphasis of the GDR demands from the East German side, something which would not facilitate inter-German relations. The extreme left would have to bear some responsibility since it is often their statements which elicited a right wing response in the first place.

Unfortunately, fringe conservative views are not monopolized by right wing politicians in the FRG. Wolfgang Venohr, an academic who, up until now, could not be simply written off as a radical conservative, feels that a reunified Germany should take its rightful place among the great powers of the world. Presumably, this would include the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Handling Honecker

The intense uneasiness felt by many conservative West German politicians on the occasion of Honecker's visit to the FRG last September, the first by an East German head of state, was also difficult to overlook. Honecker was accorded the full complement of diplomatic niceties, something which would have been denied him during his cancelled 1984 trip. This included displaying both flags, as well as singing both national anthems, though the East German one was referred to only as a "hymn." According to the US news magazine, *Time*, after the singing of both anthems, Kohl confided to a friend that, "It was a dreadful thing to go through." Those on the right felt that the visit accorded the GDR another increase in status, as well as being a blow to the unity of the nation. What they tended to overlook however, was that along with symbolizing the separateness of the two German states, the visit also symbolized aspects of togetherness. Honecker felt as uneasy about this as conservative West Germans felt about the protocol concessions given Honecker during the visit. He felt compelled to emphasize that "The development of our relations is characterized by the realities of our world. Socialism and capitalism are like fire and water."

The continuing political debate should not, however, be confused with the empirical question of the unity of the German nation. If the FRG granted the GDR de jure recognition tomorrow,

it would not change the reality of whether Germany is one nation or two. In addition many ordinary West Germans are also wondering whether the unity of the nation is not an illusion, which has majority political support only because of constitutional obligations.

Vacationland East

An interesting facet of this problem lies in the numbers of West Germans who visit the East. After the forced exchange of DMs was raised by the GDR in 1980, the number of visitors from the FRG and West Berlin dropped by 1.7 million to about 5 million, a figure lower than that in 1972. But it became apparent as well that many West Germans were losing their desire to visit the GDR regardless of this new financial disincentive. Looked at realistically, East Germany is not one of the world's most cherished vacation destinations. For the West Germans, the weather is just as bad as back home while the lineups are worse. They seem to say, "I'm fed up with this. Next time I'm going to Majorca." This feeling is a major development for West German policymakers trying to preserve whatever national unity might be left after forty years of division.

The prospect of increased human contacts was the overwhelming motivation on the West German side for negotiating the Basic Treaty, and it remains the operative tool by which successive governments try to maintain a "feeling of togetherness" between both Germanies. This is not to say that those in the FRG no longer foster any feelings of kinship to Germans in the east; the feelings are mixed. They are described well by Angelika Volle, a researcher at the German Society for Foreign Affairs in Bonn: "People [in East Germany] are strangers to me but you can't help feeling they are the poor cousins." Ironically, it has been from the East German side that a major positive impulse in human contacts has come. Since 1985, the GDR has allowed the annual number of visits to the West — usually by retired people — to more than triple. On October 15, Kohl announced in the Bundestag that his government expected five million visitors in 1987, one million of those below the retirement age.

No supporters of unification outside Germany

The issue of reunification can shed light on the limits of national feelings in the FRG. Any suggestion of the Soviet Union's offering reunification for neutrality—and the dynamism of the new Soviet leader has created such speculation — misses the point. Even if the international climate — including the Western powers — were favorable, the two German states are so different that the chances of reunification would be remote. The economic factors alone would act against it. Reunification would entail a massive redistribution of wealth from west to east. Under such conditions, it is unlikely that the majority of West Germans would want reunification at all.

Paradoxically, those in the FRG who most support reunification also complain that the GDR is profiting disproportionately from the current relationship. Seldom do they acknowledge that reunification would entail an even more lopsided flow. It will take a lengthy and continuing relationship of human, cultural and economic exchange before even the internal obstacles to reunification are reduced. It should be noted that there has been significant variance between the official policies of both states and the feelings of their populations. National feelings have been overemphasized by the government of East Germany and underemphasized by that of West Germany. □