

External Aspects

As we noted earlier, the political unification of the Germans is tied to external questions being negotiated in the 2 + 4 talks that got underway last month. There are a wide range of highly complex issues involved in this process but we would limit ourselves here to reporting on three that were discussed during our visit to the Germans; the Poland-German border, Germany and the EEC, and Germany in NATO.

1. The Poland-German Border

During our visit to the West Berlin Parliament, Committee members had the rather chilling experience of seeing the flags of the German Reich of 1937 hanging along one side of the House of Representatives. Black ribbons trailed from the flags of the territories lost during the Second World War. It was later explained to us that the flags and the ribbons were there to commemorate Germans from those territories who had died in the War, and that in no way did they represent territorial claims. Nonetheless, it was a powerful reminder of some of the memories and tensions that are stirred, particularly in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, by German unification.

All Germans to whom we spoke were absolutely unequivocal that a united Germany would recognize and respect the border with Poland, although some were resigned to the fact that mistrust of Germany would remain. Michael Sturmer said that Polish mistrust was so deep that he advised West German business against investing in Poland on the grounds that it would only provoke suspicion. The only specific suggestion we heard during our trip for countering this mistrust was made by Dr. Messelwitz of the East German Foreign Ministry. "We think we would should provide whatever assurances the Poles want. We think it would be best to have treaties with both the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany before unification so that the guarantees will be seen as our choice, a German choice, and not forced upon us by the 2 + 4 process." Since returning to Canada, we have learned that the parliaments of both East and West Germany will pass a declaration on June 21, prior to economic union, that German territory will include the present West Germany, East Germany and Berlin, and no more. This would be formal recognition that the German-Poland border is fixed and that Germany does not covet or claim the land lost to Poland.

Apart from such assurances, the long-term guarantee of Germany's respect for the border probably lies in an entirely different direction, namely the anchoring of a united Germany in the European Community. One of the most powerful themes repeated over and over again by the Germans we met was that their destiny now lies in being part of, not in