

CRUCIAL VIEWS ON THE GERMAN REUNIFICATION OF 3 OCTOBER 1990

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OPINII ESENȚIALE CU PRIVIRE LA REUNIFICREA GERMANĂ DIN 3 OCTOMBRIE 1990

Abstract. *Authors of this paper are examining the premises that lead to the historical event of the German reunification (deutsche Wiedervereinigung) of 1990 and simultaneously contemplate on contemporary implications. History could help to grasp the informal and official interaction of top politicians who worked for or against the German unity. Therefore, it can be thought provoking to review according to newly published works how the masterwork of the German unity was carried out and what where the main effects for the new German society?*

Approach of the authors is a simple one: it is summarised and reviewed what certain key-actors as former Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher have written about themselves (autobiography) and others have written about them (biography). Additional study concerns editions with primary sources and other evidences related to the peaceful revolution and German unification of 1990.

Keywords: *Peaceful revolution, Diplomacy, Fall of the Berlin Wall, Reunification of Germany, Deutschmark.*

Rezumat. *Autorii acestei lucrări examinează premisele care au condus la evenimentul istoric al reunificării Germaniei (deutsche Wiedervereinigung) din 1990 și simultan se stipulează asupra anumitor*

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implicații contemporane. Istoria ar putea ajuta să înțelegem mai bine interacțiunile informale și oficiale a politicienilor care au lucrat pentru sau împotriva unității germane. Prin urmare, poate fi considerat provocator să recapitulăm în conformitate cu opere recent apărute modul în care capodopera unității germane a fost realizată și ce fel de consecințe majore a avut aceasta pentru noua societate germană?

Abordarea autorilor este una simplă: este rezumat și analizat ceea ce anumiți actori-cheie, precum fostul cancelar Helmut Kohl și ministrul de externe Hans Dietrich Genscher au scris despre ei înșiși (autobiografii) iar alții au scris despre ei (biografii). Studiul suplimentar se referă la edițiile cu surse primare și alte dovezi aferente revoluției pașnice și unificării Germaniei din 1990.

Cuvinte cheie: *revoluție pașnică, diplomație, Căderea Zidului Berlinului, reunificarea Germaniei, Marca Germană.*

There is a rich and even today surprising history of the non-violent upheavals of 1989 in the GDR. The list could begin with the protest rally on the 40th Anniversary of the GDR (07. October) and could end by the first free elections of the People's Parliament on 18th March 1990. The reprocessing of these facts and circumstances is showing that the newly managed German unity is not only a history of courageous commitment for liberty and citizen rights of the oppressed against totalitarian type communism but also the professional achievement of diplomats and politicians.

The events of the peaceful revolution of 1989 and the actions of East and West Germans culminated in the possibility to perceive a unique historical moment and due to this, they carried out together the national reunification of the country, which was separated after WWII.

Germany was united on 3 October 1990 at 0:01 MEZ as the restructured federal states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and reunified Berlin officially joined the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The German Democratic Republic (former GDR) ceased to exist at that moment and Western political and economic systems were implemented in the eastern part of the country. New agreements were becoming applicable, which improved long-standing diplomatic interactions between Germany neighbouring countries and the EU. Thus, two diverse societies began to grow again together.

The events leading to the German reunification of 1990 were unanticipated, and they followed promptly, as the short contemporary review of the events clearly shows at the end of this paper. (Please see in the Register of events.)

A retrospective outlook in history has its weaknesses, but it can be productive to look at something from various angles. Behind the evaluation of interconnected and specific events of the peaceful revolution lays a strong political result: it is the reunification success of Germany.

Politicians and diplomats managed to anticipate the will of the German nation. The German reunification gradually became a controlled action and it happened by absorption of the eastern parts. There were only eleven months between the opening of the eastern border (collapse of the Berlin Wall) in 9 November 1989 and the reunification of the two German states on the historical moment of 3 October. The East Germans freed themselves from the forty-year-old SED regime and the GDR just imploded. (Please see Figure number 9.)

Chancellor Helmut Kohl used the favour of the hour and activated his entire diplomatic staff to start negotiations with the four allied powers of WWII. Subsequently the official process of the German reunification was guided by the centrum of Bonn. The terms of reunification were negotiated between East and West Germany, France, Great Britain, The United States of America and The Soviet Union, and the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany was entitled the Two Plus Four Treaty (2+4 Talks).

This contractual base opened the way towards the reunification being signed by the two German states and the four wartime allies. (Please see Figure number 8 from the List of illustrations at the end of this paper.)

The unanticipated and surprising collapse of the German Democratic Republic was initiated by the deterioration of the other socialist systems in Europe and the Soviet Union (SU). The party-political reorientation and the introduction of reforms by President Mikhail Gorbachev in the SU perturbed the Honecker administration, which by 1988 was suddenly interdicting the spread of Soviet media in Eastern Germany.

The leadership of the SED was in worry and seriously believed that Russian publications become extremely subversive. The breakdown of the Berlin Wall was coming closer in the summer of 1989 as the socialist Hungarian government decided to allow East Germans to pass the Iron Curtain to the West through Hungary's recently opened frontier

with Austria. By the breakdown, thousands of East German citizens preferred to take this direction, while about five thousands of other fellow citizens sought asylum in the West German consulates in Warsaw and Prague asking and waiting for permission to travel to West Germany. (Please see Figure number 3.)

The unforeseen situation developed into a serious foreign policy problem. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was the West German foreign minister at that time, offered the concrete solution to the refugees: "We have come to you to let you know that your departure has become possible today."¹ His talk from the balcony of the German embassy in Prague (30 September 1989) was an essential contribution to the end of the GDR. Short after sending the Germans of Prague to western Germany another wave of refugees from East Germany soon took its place. Moreover, mass demonstrations occurred in the streets of Leipzig and other cities. Protesters challenged the authorities and demanded political and social reforms.

The returning of a clever diplomat in the media

It is surprising that there was no biography about Genscher until now, but Hans Dieter Heumann² offers a detailed description about the diplomat exactly to his 85th anniversary. The biography³ is made up of three main chapters: "Person", "Politician" and "Statesman" where author processes all significant life stations of his father figure, Genscher.

Author is concerned in particular with following features: first in the origin and early political influences of Genscher, secondly in his impact on the German policy and policy of detente of the Federal Government, and finally in the communication mechanisms applied by Genscher by the making of foreign politics.

Moreover, Heumann processes, as he explains in the preface, beside contemporary witness's talks even unpublished sources from the archive of the German Foreign Office.

¹ Genscher: "Wir sind zu Ihnen gekommen, um Ihnen mitzuteilen, dass heute Ihre Ausreise möglich geworden ist." Source: <http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/prager-botschaft-video-101.html>

² Hans-Dieter Heumann is member of the German Foreign Service beginning with 1980 and holds a doctoral degree in political sciences.
Source: <https://www.baks.bund.de/de/team/praesident>

³ Hans-Dieter, Heumann: *Hans-Dietrich Genscher: Die Biographie*, Ferdinand Schöningh; Auflage: 1. 2011.

It is to notice that Heumann mainly focuses on Genscher's work as foreign minister in the book, but he presents the childhood and adolescent life of him as well. The presentation follows a strict chronological order. Therefore, by reading the book, one becomes familiar with the human and social development of the young politician as well. (Please see Figure number 1.) The biographer accurately analyzes the national origin, historical backgrounds, thoughts, feelings and motivations of Genscher.

Accordingly, author refers to Genscher's deep emotional connection to his hometown Halle. The politician has preserved a strong local identity despite the fact that he decided to flee of the GDR in 1952. As evidence, Heumann presents the numerous speeches, publications and personal talks in which the politician often refers to his southeastern German⁴ origin.

Middle Germany is mainly a geographical concept and builds up a region by including Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. It is interpreted as a cultural region in today's southeastern Germany. Heumann elucidates that this local identity perception and culturally stamped function is an inborn characteristic of middle Germans. It was a kind of legitimization, which Genscher used, as he saw himself as a mediator between the eastern parts of the country and western Germany. Consequently, author sees the major shaping power for Genscher's personality and political work in his "mitteldeutsche" origin. Additional influences were his professional qualification as a lawyer and the early health problems. Heumann thinks that by the profession of lawyer, Genscher could develop important professional skills for diplomacy. He learned discipline and professionalism by which he later operated strategically on domestic and diplomatic levels. Anyhow on the base of his personality was an almost limitless thirstiness for knowledge, which has been converted in the extensive, meticulous study of documentation and details. Besides, author stresses the amazing strength of mind and assertiveness of Genscher that made possible to come out of political catastrophes usually even stronger. Heumann's interpretation becomes debatably if means that certain professional traits were direct results of the early illness of Genscher in pulmonary tuberculosis. According to the author, the fight against the illness has brought the young man to a „crossroad". Thus, he had to decide between passivity and a more active way of life. Obviously, Genscher has taken the latter possibility as by the „experience of the close death", he was even more motivated to „creatively" implement decisions in the area of the politics and

⁴ In German: *Mitteldeutsche*.

diplomacy.⁵ Let us see Genscher's early life and political career in a short summary: he was born on 21 March 1927 in Reideburg (Province of Saxony), which later became part of East Germany. The German Air Force drafted him as "Flakhelfer" (anti-aircraft warfare helper) at the age of 16 during WWII. The young soldier became a member of the Nazi Party in 1945. According to Genscher's own retrospections, this had been implemented as a duty in his Wehrmacht division. Soldiers were not asked if they really want to be party members. Genscher served and fought in the 12th Army of General Walther Wenck at the end of WWII. He shortly became a prisoner of war by the Americans.⁶

After being released from prison, Genscher studied economics and law at the universities of Leipzig and Halle. He entered by 1946 the East German Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD) as a student and in 1952 Genscher fled from East Germany to Bremen, where he joined the Free Democratic Party (FDP). The ambitious young man made his second state examination in law in Hamburg, which was a very complex exam in Germany. After that, he worked a while as solicitor. From 1956 to 1959, he supported the parliamentary group in Bonn as research assistant of the FDP. In 1959, he became the manager of the FDP group, while from 1962 to 1964 he was National Secretary of the FDP. Genscher was a candidate on the North Rhine-Westphalian FDP list in 1965 and became a member of the West German parliament until his retirement in 1998. He was elected deputy national chairperson in 1968. After completing several different key-positions, Chancellor Willy Brandt appointed him Minister of the Interior. Moreover, Americans saw in Genscher from the very beginning the most important guarantor for more stable relations with Germany.⁷

Brandt's Social Democratic Party was in coalition with the FDP in 1969 and by 1974, Genscher became the foreign minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany. He was rather reserved as a minister by 1974 as he does speak neither English nor French. At the beginning, he stood in the shadow of the internationally experienced Helmut Schmidt. Nevertheless, Genscher remained a patient facilitator by always-stressing common characteristics. He tried to neutralise contrasts by letting his interlocutors to save face. Moreover, if necessary he relaxed the atmosphere with jokes by which he himself laughed snorting and rousing mouth far openly and his eyebrows were pulled up towards his forehead.

⁵ Heumann, 2011, 36.

⁶ Genscher, 1995, 9-33.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 33-57.

He continuously shaped the eastern policy line (Ostpolitik) of three Chancellors: Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl. Genscher served as foreign minister and vice chancellor of Germany from 1974 to 1992, except for a two-week break in 1982. This is making him the longest holder of either post.⁸

Now we are turning back to Heumann's writing. Unfortunately, he is presenting Genscher's diplomatic communication strategy unconnected with his media politics. Author observes that the Press and PR department of the Foreign Office developed to a key unit. Consequently, it was the person centred PR of the foreign minister that allowed him to come out unexpectedly fast of the crisis of 1982. Under the label of "Genschman" the "travel" foreign minister was stylised temporarily to a cult figure. Nevertheless, the biographer outflows the interaction fields of media and diplomatic communication strategy.

Heumann is a German chief diplomat as well, thus he is an insider who gathered and evaluated still unpublished details about Genscher's professional life. It is important to remark that author was envoy at the embassies of Washington and Paris. He had access to still secret documents of the German Foreign Office. As a result, original data was included directly in the biography or between the lines. Accordingly, the viewer can see that Genscher's term of office, as minister was full of complex challenges. Indeed, between 1974 and 1992 foreign affairs were quite difficult: the GDR was at a turning point, the Cold War went to an end and in addition, there were conflicts in the Balkans and Gulf region.

Genscher proves his diplomatic qualities in former successes, as he was a key person by the talks on the final version of the CSCE Final Act in Helsinki. The General Assembly of the United Nations approved Genscher's suggestion of an anti-terrorism agreement⁹ concerning among other issues the demands from hostage-takers under any conditions. It was finalised in December of 1976 in New York. Genscher was one of the heads who supported a new kind of political coalition in 1982 for the FDP. Thus, the party ended its partnership with the SPD to support the CDU/CSU in their vote of no confidence for Helmut Schmidt.¹⁰ Consequently, Helmut Kohl replaced Schmidt as Chancellor.

⁸ Genscher, 1995, 42-89.

⁹ The name of the document is "Drafting of an international convention against taking hostages" Source: Official Documents System of the United Nations: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/302/86/IMG/NR030286.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁰ Helmut Schmidt continued Brandt's policy of de-escalation with the socialist East, which was originally shaped in the SPD-FDP coalition. Genscher was a driving force in the establishment of the social-liberal coalition after the federal election of 1969, and

Schmidt became and remained upset because of this political lesson of Genscher. The reason for this tactical party-political decision of Genscher was the intensification of conflicts among the former coalition partners related to communal, societal and financial programmes. Despite great disappointments that followed the coalitional reorientation, Genscher's political career¹¹ remained in the ascendant. He stood for a strategy of co-operation between East and West, and established guidelines for a solid policy of détente. This was based on the continuation of the East-West diplomatic relations, inclusively a specific opening towards the SU. The politician¹² campaigned intensively by 1987 for a relaxation policy influencing the West to be receptive for the Soviets. He understood the potential of the OSZE process, which in its intricate design guided the Kremlin to more flexibility.

It seems that Genscher anticipated long before Kohl that Gorbachev's reform politic was more than a kind of simple stratagem. Kohl thought that Gorbachev's reform plan is only a public relation item and associated it with Goebbels' propaganda. After this official misinterpretation, the Secretary-General of Moscow just ignored the German chancellor.

Heumann persuasively shows that Genscher gave much more attention to the OSZE process as his chancellors, Schmidt and Kohl. Author is influenced by the output-driven temptation of biographical story writing, because he backdated this understanding of Genscher to the middle of the sixties and only justifies this by the great „visionary ability” of the foreign minister.¹³ It is surprising that Heumann himself becomes subject to teleological interpretations and cannot avoid the drawbacks of Bourdieu's „biographic delusion” about which he has warned in the preface of the biography.¹⁴ Author constructs a linear and coherent life of

was appointed Minister of the Interior on 22 October 1969. In 1974, he became foreign minister and Vice Chancellor of West Germany. Source: <http://hdg.de/lemo/html/biografien/GenscherHansDietrich/index.html>

¹¹ Genscher held his offices as foreign minister and vice chancellor through German reunification and on 18 May 1992, (23 years duty only by the federal government) he stepped back because of health reasons. Directly after his resignation as Foreign Minister, Genscher became the honorary president of the FDP. Source: *Ibidem*

¹² Genscher was an active participant in the further development of the European Union. He was an actor by the Single European Act Treaty negotiations in the mid-1980s. Moreover, he cooperated (Genscher-Colombo plan) with the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Emilio Colombo, which advocated further integration in the European Union by more federalist Europe. Source: Genscher, 1995, 50-976.

¹³ Heumann, 2011, 92.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 9.

his subject. This is perhaps one of the biggest weaknesses of a biography and it is well identifiable by research.

Without a doubt, the OSZE process also offered a kind of mutual platform to the SU and its eastern European satellites because it instigated to critical dialogue. For the meantime, Genscher mediated intensively among political leaders in 1987 by pointing out that Gorbachev has to be taken more seriously as before. In turn, Gorbachev discreetly planned to restore communism and inject his empire with German economic aids and technology. Accordingly, he gave instructions to members of the Politburo to prioritise talks with Genscher. Contemporary Soviet media and records are showing that Genscher was Gorbachev's favourite discussion partner. In line with this, he became Moscow's privileged German relation. Inversely, the West German minister focused to be in good terms with his Soviet colleague, Eduard Schewardnadse. They were together at the balcony of the German embassy in Prague, as Genscher informed the crowd that they are allowed to travel by special trains to the west.¹⁵

Previously there were about 200 GDR refugees, who were gathered by the consular office of the Federal Republic in East Berlin. These people was officially forbidden to leave the country. Instead of free departure, they were allowed to turn back to the GDR without any legal consequences. Rudolf Seiters, who was responsible for GDR relations just closed the agency. The East German leadership requested to repeat the same measure for the embassy of Prague. In-between Genscher contacted his colleague Schewardnadse for help at the general assembly of the UNO. The foreign minister gets Schewardnadse's approval to let the Germans of Prague to exit the country to the west. With Schewardnadse's support, executives of the GDR and of Prague are also ready for compromise. Thus the compromise was born.¹⁶

Hans-Dieter Heumann thinks as well that the key for the solution comes from Moscow. Ultimately, it is fact that the two German officials (Seiters and Genscher) have started parallel diplomatic actions in order to find solutions for East Germans gathered in Prague and Berlin. Moreover, author of the biography thinks that Genscher gained the mastery through Schewardnadse, but Heumann is avoiding mentioning the fact that Seiters was standing nearby Genscher on the balcony of Prague.

A few months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kohl wanted to agree with an American-British initiative to station new nuclear weapons

¹⁵ For the passages of above please see generally in Genscher, 1995, 57-526.

¹⁶ Genscher, 1995, 80-728.

in Europe. Genscher gave a warning to the chancellor that if he accepts the proposal, then the FDP will quit the coalition. A positive decision of Kohl for arms build-up would presumably have led to an ice age in the east west relations, but the Chancellor gave in because of Genscher's pressure. The so-called modernisation proposal of weapons was adjourned. After that, it was completely cancelled of the agenda. Maybe this policy stroke was the biggest achievement of Genscher as foreign minister, because in all probability Moscow would not have accepted the loss of the GDR in exact same manner as he did it in 1990 if shortly before a new arms-build up had been implemented at the territory of Germany.¹⁷ (Please see Figure number 6.)

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Chancellor Kohl undertook the „opinion leadership" in the matter of German unity in competition to his deputy Genscher. Kohl prepared a Ten-point plan „to the recovery of the state unity of Germany", which was forwarded to the Bundestag. However, the Chancellor has not consulted his western allies, Gorbachev and not even Genscher properly about the issue. Anyway, Gorbachev was confronted with problems on the domestic front and he talked to Genscher about the „extremely dangerous action" of Kohl. Gorbachev was accusing Kohl with revanchist attitude. It had been speculated that this discussion of Moscow remained secret in the German Foreign Office. It is not clear why Heumann no direct details about his sources gives. It is fact, that he does not divulge his reference.¹⁸ (Please see Figure number 7.)

The dynamic course of action of Kohl and Genscher will culminate in the 2+4 Talks. Heumann the author of the Genscher biography celebrates this moment as „a piece of luck of the diplomacy". Evidently, the „Contract about the final arrangement concerning Germany"¹⁹ was successfully finalised. Thus, the international contractual frame of the German-German reunification was ready. Although the cooperation between Schewardnadse, James Baker²⁰ and German representants has been ideal, the British Prime Minister Thatcher remained unconvinced and worked against a consensus up to the end of the negotiations. (Please see Figure number 12.)

Heumann successfully proves through contemporary witnesses, fellows and precursors including Gorbachev, James Baker or former chief diplomat of France Roland Dumas that Genscher was a clever and

¹⁷ Genscher, 1995, 128-438.

¹⁸ Heumann, 2011, 97-243.

¹⁹ In German "Vertrag über die abschließende Regelung in Bezug auf Deutschland".

²⁰ At that time the US Secretary of State.

talented diplomat. He was operating successfully at the international platform. Heumann refers to different complex situations, which were repaired through the patience, charm and humour of Genscher, especially if Helmut Schmidt and later Helmut Kohl irritated their foreign partners with heavy expressions or mismatching gestures.

The aversion that ruled between Schmidt and Carter at the end of the seventies is reconfirmed during the interviews conducted by Heumann. The US government has been „spiritually less-wealthy“, - thinks ex-chancellor Schmidt even today. The feeling seemed to be mutual, as Carters security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski thinks about the former German chancellor that he had „pathological problems“. Both, Carter and Brzezinski praised their good relation to Genscher. Unsurprisingly, the former foreign minister gives his biographer Heumann insider information as he states that he had encouraged at that time Carter to give Schmidt more counterarguments.

Practically, FDP chief Genscher has profited from the fact that he had another alternative to the social-liberal coalition, because there was a possibility to form a government also with the CDU / CSU. Schmidt was measuring before the NATO-double decision under the pressure of SPD in 1979 to shift or weaken the military proposal; - but in the meantime Genscher was contradicting him. Three years later, it was finally foreseeable that the SPD wanted to tilt the double decision of the NATO and Genscher just changed in the alliance with the union.

Kohl was on first name basis with Genscher and they were even friends, but today they do not speak about one another, at least not publicly. Biographer Heumann could only draw out of the chief liberal politician that he disliked the governing style of his chancellor.

According to his objective as stated in the preface, Heumann attempts to demythologize Kohl's central position as the „chancellor of the unity“. Moreover, Heumann even tries to make more “justice” by historical arguments for the former western foreign minister, because in his argumentation: Genscher was the real architect of the unity.²¹ Authors of this paper are thinking that this position of Heumann is slightly exaggerated. Nevertheless, it is fact that Genscher's role in the reunification process of Germany was treated unfairly and for some time even the media remained silent. It is not to forget that the legacy of the reunification of 1990 is still a highly political issue in today's Germany. Simultaneously, it is to see that Genscher's political career was closely

²¹ Heumann, 2011, 8-10.

related to the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP). (Please see Figure number 2.)

The biographer identifies in Genscher's political communication a principal issue: his endeavour to gain trust among partners on diplomatic level. He achieved this by his appearance as he has a special charisma. Richard von Weizsäcker has remarked about Genscher that he is a „personified confidence-building measure”.²²

However, Genscher's diplomatic openness influenced most notably the countries of the Eastern bloc that concurred with the mistrust of the US government. It was the background where the highly polarised concept of "Genscherism" was born and coined, but Heumann fails to clearly define what he means by applying this notion. Moreover, the biography has no real analytical sharpness, for example, author misses to go along the key concept of the communication of Genscher in his narrative and as a substitute persists too much at descriptive and explicatory levels. However, exactly by a deeper communicational analysis it has been possible to interpret the junction of media, diplomacy and federal politics within the biography of Genscher.

During the months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kohl and Genscher have had a harsh dispute with each other. Kohl's people scattered in Washington that Genscher has not to be taken seriously, as he is low on the totem pole. Therefore, Genscher used his good contacts to Paris and transmitted to Mitterrand that he considers, like the French, that the Oder-Neisse line should remain the final east border of Germany. Paris interpreted this as a request to remain hard in this question. At the same time, Genscher was ready to defend his chancellor, because Kohl does not inform neither his allies nor Gorbachev about his intentions. Kohl's famous Ten-point plan generated serious tensions and skepticism among neighbor countries and the two superpowers.

According to Heumann, that was the last time that the foreign minister has had to step in for Kohl because he was getting in his diplomatic top form in the year of the unity. Thus, he does not permit himself additional mistakes. Accordingly, the chancellor made no single error up to the end of the negotiations of September 1990. One and a half year later Genscher retired from his foreign ministry post.

On the one side, Heumann gives a monochrome picture about the German reunification as he reduces Kohl's diplomatic activity to that of a limited politician (label of domestic politician) and on the other side, Genscher is showed as the experienced diplomat, (brand of a picture-

²² Heumann, 2011, 46.

perfect public official) who made possible by smart and active presence the 2+4 Talks. Moreover, author speculates on the circumstance that Kohl's Ten-point plan was mainly a solo action of the Chancellor. Heumann assumes that Kohl only initiated the ten points because of electoral-tactical reasons, but there is no source included, which can prove this in the biography.

Heumann's central message mediated through the biography is that Genscher was a key figure by the reunification process of Germany. This is a very ambitious approach, because until now in this context mostly the "chancellor of the unity", thus Helmut Kohl was in the public eye. Author's book about the FDP politician contains 346 pages and these are designed to prove that during his functions as Minister and Vice-chancellor, Genscher had more influence as assumed before.

It is to notice that Heumann strongly inclines to hyperbolize Genscher's role as Foreign minister by contrast to the myth of the chancellor of the unity. Therefore, author fulfils only partially his self-formulated prerogatives of the preface. There are only a few original sources, which were rally processed in the biography.

It seems that Heumann based his assumptions principally on the statements of contemporary witnesses and memoirs, while the documents of the German Foreign Office were quoted only in isolated cases and even then mostly imprecisely. However, aspects of the above could be of secondary importance if the historically interested target readership just simply admits instead of Kohl's myth a new legendary status and enjoys a vivid historical lecture.

Instead of constructing a pure linear biography, it would have been better to deliver a more real and balanced profile of Genscher and if the focus remained on foreign policy then analysis could have been strongly incentive by new insights in the complexity of international relations. The book mainly processes the complex foreign political actions of Genscher, but also communicates Heumann's oversimplified view about the German turnaround and reunification.

What is Genscher's central message²³ in his autobiography?

As expected, he treats several political and historical aspects of German foreign policy. Accordingly, Genscher stresses that the policy of détente assured the framework conditions of change implicitly the

²³Authors' proposal concerning the identification of the central message of the autobiography is: Genscher, 1995, 490.

European basis for the German reunification. Thus, he rejects the assumption of those who are thinking that the German unity is the confirmation of Adenauer's Eastern and German policy. Following this, he also denies that Kohl could have completed Adenauer's initial strategy by certain temporary detours, - as suggested by the former Chancellor.

In Genscher's conception, it was a major achievement of German foreign policy the dexterity of fitting in the revolutionary process of a disintegrating East and West conflict the not lesser revolution of the German reunification and the incorporation of the united Germany in the NATO and EU. This representation and his view of the three pillars of German strong policy (CSCE process, UN policy and European integration) forms the core of his memoirs. The viewer becomes a clear picture about Genscher's foreign-policy credo.

Genscher accentuates repeatedly that this was only possible because of Gorbachev's and Shevardnadze's decisive contribution. Their new way of thinking has encouraged the start of the democratization in their empire. This attitude simultaneously had external political effects that were getting together in one decision: - the readiness to stop the confrontation policy. According to Genscher, democratization and more transparency are essential prerequisites for confidence building and predictability. In his vision, this correlation, which is usually a western characteristic, was emerging at that time even in Russia. Genscher's criticism applies to those Westerners who have subsequently not detected these adjustments made by Moscow with its implications back then and without doubt never respected whichever change.

Sometimes turns Genscher's reasoning so one-sided that one must refer to certain statements as empirically false. He expressed himself clearly against the expansion of NATO on the East German territory in mid-February 1990. Moreover, he won temporarily in a word battle with the help of the Chancellor against Stoltenberg, who was Defence Minister.

Stoltenberg's opinion was that the defence guarantee of the NATO must be valid for the whole Germany. As Stoltenberg was strongly supported by the US, his standpoint was implemented in the Two-plus-Four Agreement. Genscher oversees his mistake in this issue and contrary to documented statements: he is describing this process as if he had never advocated another view. There is an amazing declaration of the former Foreign Minister, because he affirms that the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties had been "replaced" by the Two-Plus-Four process.

Another criticism of German foreign policy concerns the tendency of renationalisation and their national solo effort. Genscher attacked this

in a vibrant summation where he is committed to multilateralism and institutionalized cooperation. Both were not only indispensable prerequisites of the German reunification, but rather were indeed the most suitable strategies, which assured a modern development of external policy.

That is why Genscher has grasped the CSCE not only as a tool for the transfer of Western values in the SU, but also recognised in it after 1990 a stability pact, which can be crucial for the positive evolution of European unification process. Genscher advocates regular CSCE meetings of Heads of State and the Minister, because in his opinion the further development of institutions is a necessity. Author has spread over the entire length of his memories such conceptual suggestions about the design of a responsible policy instead of power politics.

Realistic external policy understood as "responsible policy" is not only possible, but it is indispensable because only this works flexible and effective. It should show that there is still much more than just a thorough work review of a diplomat, namely the proof of the success of Genscher dynamic and evolutionary guided external policy.

Genscher's relationship with the Bush administration and the president himself seems to be affected. It is primarily because the White House started an experiment to bypass the German Foreign Minister in conflicting affairs through a direct contact with the Chancellery and with Kohl's foreign policy consultant Teltschik. This is what Genscher addresses several times. Genscher returns to the "Genscherism" indignity issues that he has experienced temporarily, and the attempt to deactivate him. It is a diplomatic attack, but Genscher does not tolerate this and answers extremely sharp by criticising the Bush administration, his Chancellor and Teltschik.²⁴

Although author mentions that Bush has supported the German unity, but the personal political role of the American President remains unacknowledged in the biography. Genscher describes repeatedly without remarks, but expressively, that Bush had been criticized in the US for not being explicitly in public for the opening of the Berlin Wall. Is unmentioned that Bush has spoken even earlier as generally known of the possibility to unite the two German states. Moreover, Bush crucially supported the unification process by his political weight in contrast to Gorbachev, Thatcher and Mitterrand with their temporarily pronounced reservations. Obviously, Genscher still has not forgiven his American colleagues of that administration.

²⁴ For this passage please see Genscher, 1995, 755.

Most notably, he dislikes Bush because he was branded unjustly as unreliable in alliance: that was named "Genscherism". Nevertheless, he banked his own role, and it is inappropriate when he presents as the solution of this disagreement the meeting of Foreign Ministers at the NATO summit in May 1989. The basic conflict occurred on the modernization of short-range systems, but instead of the opening of negotiations on these systems, other negotiations were accelerated by the proposal of the American President: those on the reduction of conventional forces (CFE). It was Bush's initiative at the summit, which generated a relatively quick solution and accelerated the crucial CFE negotiations. Therefore, the core features of the CFE Treaty were negotiated before the turnaround. Genscher practically not mentioned this in his biography, but this has substantially facilitated the negotiations about the German unification process.

What has been criticized and trivialized as "Genscherism", is presented here as the result of earlier insights on traditional German power politics, but Genscher experienced this first-hand as he was born in 1927. However, the politician correctly recognized that the conversion of the international system and with it the role of Germany creates new conditions, thus innovative external policy. The fact that he could sometimes organise certain phases just as a one-man show, which he named "Genscherism" is a glorious chapter of his legacy. Additional examples are the confrontation policy of the first Reagan administration and his practice against some resistances of the German Right. In sum: his foreign policy performance of European integration and the overcoming of the German and European disunion have been attested by history with long-term signature features.

Approximately one-half of the autobiography is dedicated to his youth and professional development as well as key aspects of German foreign politics during his term. The fifth part "Turn of an era with new partners" represents by extent and content the centrepiece of the memoirs, but the emphasis is on his tenancy as German Foreign Ministry. Author describes on almost four hundred pages meticulously the transition in Europe since the mid-eighties. Another topic is the overcoming of the division of Europe and Germany and here author presents especially his own political contribution. Unfortunately, the book of 1088 pages has no subject index. This would be necessary because the narration is not always chronologically structured. However, there is a glossary that provides the reader precious explanations *à la* Genscher.

The „black giant”: Helmut Kohl

Germans are still preoccupied with the name of Helmut Kohl. For some, he is the Chancellor of the unity, for the others, he is a self-centred power monger, whose name is associated with the largest donation affair and who has not only damaged his own party but also his family. Kohl, the politic animal from a bygone era is the greatest living historical figure of the Federal Republic. When somebody, then he is that person who can still generate strong emotions by German citizens. (Please see Figure number 13.)

A short review of his life: Dr. Helmut Kohl was born on 3 April 1930 in Ludwigshafen on the Rhine. Since 1947, he was member of the CDU. He becomes member of the Landtag of Rhineland-Palatinate from 1959 to 1976. He was Minister-President of Rhineland-Palatinate from 1969 to 1976. Kohl becomes national Chairman of the CDU from 1973 to 1998. He enters as member the German Bundestag from 1976 to 2002. He was elected Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1 October 1982 to 27 October 1998. Since December 1998, he is Honorary Citizen of Europe. Helmut Kohl is the longest reigning German Chancellor with 16 years in power up to today. He was the sixth Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and the first Chancellor of the reunified Germany. Helmut Kohl lives with his second wife Dr. Maike Richter in his home town of Ludwigshafen.

Hans-Peter Schwarz²⁵ has written the political biography²⁶ of the most prestigious Christian Democrat, former Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The book has 1052 pages and was published in 2012, thus one year after Heumann's Genscher biography.

Schwarz²⁷ knows how to present Kohl's life intricately and how to sum up in suitable formulations if necessary. Moreover, the historian

²⁵ Hans-Peter Schwarz was born on 13th of May 1934 in Lörrach. He is a German a contemporary historian, publicist and political scientist. After getting the A level in 1953 he began a study at the University of Basel and visited seminaries at the Sorbonne University as well. Further, he studied political science, sociology, history and German studies at the Albert's Ludwig university of Freiburg from 1954 to 1958. He became a fulltime professor at the universities of Hamburg, Cologne and Bonn. Source: <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/71.13460/>

²⁶ Hans-Peter Schwarz: Helmut Kohl. Eine politische Biographie. DVA, München 2012

²⁷ The historian was concerned with contemporary German history, foreign affairs and German policy, developments in Europe and the international order as well as with political actors and parties. A central research topic of Schwarz treated in numerous publications is about Konrad Adenauer and his times. His 2-volume Adenauer's

reconstructs several epoch-making items. The research is a comprehensive but largely designed account of the long political career of the Chancellor, who brought for Germans the unity of their country. Author approaches his subject with a mixture of sympathy and scepticism by using cutting hints, caustic remarks and illuminating comments to suitably portray „the energy and initiative driven” black giant of Pfalz.²⁸ Schwarz wrote to the ends of the respective great chapters some longer deliberations in which he contemplates about the basic questions of the German history after 1945. These sections are the following: „The generation of 1945 and the party democracy“ (part I); The Federal Republic of the long 1970s „After the economic miracle“(part II); The short 1980s (part III); „The unexpectedly victorious core state“ (part IV); „Helmut Kohl and the third European post-war system“ (part V).

Author describes thoughtfully the political beginnings of the worker and small employee Kohl. This is the rough climate and background of Ludwigshafe, accordingly the setting where the later chancellor was coined as a young man in his mentality and political style as „competent ascender”.²⁹ Kohl never forgot the people and the places where he is coming from. Kohl gives Geißler certain lessons in this respect in 1993 he as the politician was missing the sense of socio-political responsibility in the CDU. Kohl: „I do not live somewhere, I live among quite normal industrial workers“.³⁰ (Please see Figure number 15. and 16.)

Furthermore, Schwarz refers to the professional and social advancement of Kohl until he enters the state office of Mainz by party-political measures. After that, Kohl gets the party chair of the CDU and this is only one-step of his candidacy for the chancellorship in 1976. (Please see Figure number 4.)

According to Schwarz, this first phase of Kohl’s life proves the huge potential of a strong personality, but power hungry person. The main character traits of the politician Kohl are: his ability to build strong coalitions, the readiness to restricted risks by specific confrontations with strong local leaders as Rainer Barzel (CDU/CSU faction chief) or Peter Altmeier (Prime Minister of Rhineland-Pfalz). Schwarz really thinks that Kohl’s oppositional activity between 1976 and 1982 was generally made

biography is used as standard work in Germany. Source: <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/71.13460/>

²⁸ Schwarz, 2012, 150.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 33.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 23.

out of the strategy to politically survive in „the snake pit of Bonn”. Subsequently, Kohl managed to survive against the political rival Franz-Josef Strauss because the CDU politician understood the importance of a long-term coalition with the FDP. (Please see Figure number 11.)

What was the matter by the controversies around the „house church” of the cathedral of Speyer? The direct answer is that Mitterrand, Gorbachev and Thatcher should have been persuaded in this way about the circumstance that Kohl had pro-European intentions. Other machinations that were guided by politicians of the circles of Bonn are presented with cruel humour and ironic remarks as „Habemus Papam – Helmut goes, Helmut comes”.³¹ Schwarz shows a lot of versatility in the matter of humour within his writing style. Indeed, he has sense for witticisms and to situational humour as well. Additionally, he recognises that he was (and still is) an insider of political circles of the „hothouse” of Bonn and simultaneously convinces the readership by amazing facts that he uses his sharp observational capability. Without a doubt, Kohl has ever estimated Schwarz’s potential as biographer³² of Adenauer, but by no means as a political analyst.³³

Beside a factual biographic presentation, Schwarz focuses on an additional topic: the Euro (€). Author considers that Kohl’s Euro related policy was based on concepts and values that were rather suitable for the design of more general structures as long-term strategy. Even Kohl’s short-range plans concerning Germany were quite shapeless, as he had still in mind a kind of European federal state at the end of the 1980s. A state based on parliamentary decisions legitimised by the European Parliament and with common safety policy and foreign affairs. They will be based on a strong mutual European solidarity consciousness, just as modern western and contracted nation states have had in the meantime.³⁴ Schwarz refuses Kohl’s pan-European idea of a United States of Europe that the Chancellor partially had to say good-bye in the 1990s. Conclusively, author is highly sceptical towards Kohl’s earlier inclination to Europeanize the German nation-state. The political analyst has even less positive words if concerning the chequebook diplomacy of the former

³¹ Schwarz, 2012, 272.

³² Hans Peter Schwarz: Die Ära Adenauer 1949-1957, Stuttgart/ Wiesbaden 1981; Hans Peter Schwarz: Die Ära Adenauer 1957-1963, Stuttgart 1983; Hans Peter Schwarz: Adenauer. Bd. 1: Der Aufstieg, 1876-1952, Stuttgart 1986; Hans Peter Schwarz: Adenauer. Bd. 2: Der Staatsmann, 1952-1967, Stuttgart 1991; Hans Peter Schwarz: Anmerkungen zu Adenauer. München 2004.

³³ Schwarz, 2012, 935-937.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 409-411.

Chancellor and his Foreign Minister. Schwarz refers to the situation that Moscow finally began to change its policy concerning the Baltic question because of economic need in May 1990. Shevardnadze signals Kohl that the Kremlin was in desperate need of economic help. The Chancellor was ready to provide economic support to the USSR, thus implemented German chequebook diplomacy as an instrument in order to get Soviet concessions. This was Realpolitik tactic to circumvent the Baltic crisis to not to disturb the German national interest any further. Kohl mostly concentrated on good relations with Gorbachev, thus the FRG guaranteed a DM 5 billion credit to Moscow.³⁵

Furthermore, the Chancellor recommended Bush to follow his example by pointing out that Gorbachev might be defeated domestically if economic backing was not forthcoming, and that subsequently German unification process would be risked. As Bush was under strong domestic pressure, he remained firm and affirmed that Washington would not provide Moscow any financial aid, unless Gorbachev completely changed his politics towards Lithuania and committed the USSR to economic reforms. Although this quite persistent attitude could not be expected to facilitate compromises in American – Soviet matters, secretly Bush hoped that the deteriorated relations could be improved at the superpower summit of 30-31 May 1990. Indeed, the summit was a focal point for both the German and the Baltic problems and even for the future of American-Soviet affairs. A tacit consensus on all sides helped to reach a good result. While Gorbachev silently agreed with Germany's right to define its new security measures, the impasse over Soviet most preferred nation status and trade was hurdled. It was approved that the bilateral trade treaty has to be signed publicly, while transferring the package of measures to confirmation to Congress was made dependent on the realization of a number of Soviet obligations. These involved the revocation of the Soviet restrictions against Vilnius and the start of negotiations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania concerning their independence and finally the acceptance of a suitable migration law by the Supreme Soviet. Bush and Thatcher wanted guarantees that the Baltic people were granted self-determination, but in Gorbachev's understanding, his assurances of then did not mean real independence for the Baltic States. Both the US and UK officials rhetoric was driven by the necessity to not to lose face and credibility internationally. Thus, they were congruently activating some additional moral principles in their policy that was more reactive, rather than the conviction of being part of pro-active and pro Baltic political

³⁵Please see the unit: Die Ära Kohl 1982-1998, <http://www.helmut-kohl.de/>

partnership. Kohl's checkbook diplomacy has been criticised however, it remains an unanswered speculation what kind of other tool had worked better in order to persuade the Soviets about German autonomy.³⁶

The contemporary topic related to the the half-hearted turnaround of 1982/83 revisited by Schwarz. He quotes Johannes Gross, who stated that the CDU was only „moderately social democratic”.³⁷ Author mainly criticizes the respected political animal Kohl because he let himself mislead by the emerging „leftist Zeitgeist” of the 1960s. His inland policy as Chancellor was a combination of a kind of original trust in the performance of the German economy and working power, but with an aversion to economic cuts in the social system. Kohl's CDU stuck to the idea of generous social and economic policies as that had been usual to the social-democratic politically oriented culture of the Federal Republic of then.³⁸

Wrong directions influenced domestic political pragmatists and in the meantime, Kohl confessed that his self-deception about the extent of the economic troubles in the reunified Germany had to do with such budgetary misinterpretations as well. This was a direct consequence of the fiscal protection of the voters of the turnaround and unexpectedly the western welfare state had initiated by necessity the sponsorship of the social unity.

Schwarz stresses the Euro political line and begins with the pact of Mitterrand of the 1980s as Kohl had prepared the German variant of the Force de Frappe.³⁹ The „German atom bomb” was the Deutschmark (DM). By taking this ace, Kohl negotiated together with Thatcher instead of weapons the liberalisation of the financial markets and the European economic union.⁴⁰ According to the biographer, Kohl's plan to give up the strong DM was decisively coined before the autumn of 1989 as countries like France, Italy and Spain proactively confronted the FRG in this respect. Thus, the German reunification has not been „the determining process” of the introduction of the Euro. Author sets a new direction by this statement, because contemporary research has proven by now that the German unity of 1990 and the reorganisation of Europe were no causes for the creation of the Euro.⁴¹ The historian considers that the

³⁶ For comparison for the whole passage please see: Hiden , Vahur and Smith (Ed.), 2008, 1-6, 14-17, 101-126, 158-162. In addition, <http://www.helmut-kohl.de/>

³⁷ Schwarz, 2012, 300.

³⁸ *Ibidem*

³⁹ This was the former name for the French nuclear power.

⁴⁰ Schwarz, 2012, 430-431.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 480-485.

creation of a global capital market after „Anglo-Saxon model“ was one of the crucial processes of the 1980s.⁴² Kohl was influenced by old-school thoughts and his position developed in a setting of -self-containment policy. He tried to implement preventive measures by forming quick new interest driven coalitions by giving a defensive profile to the German foreign policy. All this was made to be capable to rapidly improve the reunification process on the domestic front. (Please see Figure number 11.)

In reality, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher launched already in 1988 plans for a monetary union. Kohl even knew of the project and after certain initial hesitation phase, he made it to his own item. He did this before the peaceful revolution in East Germany occurred. But for all that, there were powerful opposing forces in the Ministry of Finance, the Federal Bank, the Foreign Office and even in the Chancellor's Office. Opponents tried to play on time in order to postpone the introduction of the common currency at some indefinite future date. However, as the confusion in the East was growing, the time pressure awakened on diplomatic levels and gave the French diplomacy an advantage. They were imposing a fixed schedule for the way in the Monetary Union. In addition, Kohl had an impression about the French viewpoint of the decisive weeks at the turnaround of 1989/90. Thus, it becomes clear that without clever compromises the FRG risked to get very isolated in the middle of Europe, as it has been speculated on a French denial during the upcoming 2+4 negotiations.⁴³

Author confirms historical importance to Kohl also because of his Atlantic strategy, as he was full of resolution and forced his party and the whole coalition to „the execution of the post armament decision“ concerning the stationing of American Pershing II missiles, even though hundred thousand were protesting against his politics.⁴⁴ This decision of Kohl proved to be good only years later as vice president George Bush trusted him concerning the developments in German-German politics in 1989.

It becomes clear that the years 1989/1990/1991 were full of subverting tactical manoeuvrings at inner-party and foreign policy levels as well. However, Kohl was continuously massively losing his party-political partners in those dense historical times and finally even his

⁴² Schwarz, 2012 478-479.

⁴³ For this section, please see for comparison in: <http://www.helmut-kohl.de/>

⁴⁴ Schwarz, 2012, 345.

closest allies just abandoned him in their pure desperation.⁴⁵ Schwarz stresses that the case of the „half turnaround" of 1982/83 has showed,⁴⁶ that Kohl was losing his initial reformist motivation and till 1989 he mutated into a „timid giant".⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the self-proclaimed „grandson of Adenauer" has made a brilliant career since the mid-1960s. Kohl generated irritation by the CDU ancestors first in Rhineland-Pfalz and soon by the federal government by founding flexible formal and informal political networks.⁴⁸ (Please see Figure number 5.)

Schwarz is quite critical concerning the economic achievements of the early chancellor, but he is hypercritical by evaluating Kohl's controversial policy of the 1990s. According to the historian, the chancellor was a temperate reformer and only survived politically directly after the turnaround, because Gerhard Stoltenberg (Minister of Finance) was on his side. The economist Stolenberg has built an efficient team with his colleagues Martin Bangemann (FDP) and Otto Graf Lambsdorff. They have successfully cooperated for the consolidation of the federal budget before 1989.⁴⁹ At the same time, Schwarz elaborates his own thoughts about the nature of German democratic politics.

Schwarz shows understanding to those who were concerned with strong policymaking as they were in an endless struggle for the support of their voters. Accordingly, author illustrates in meticulous representations networks, machinations and clashing interests, which sometimes were converging for or against politicians. Author's understanding towards politicians has an edge, because he cannot accept when the pragmatic thinking of an official gets lost. There are permanently insecurities in the heat of the struggle for power and for professional actors it has incalculable consequences if they are not aware of this fact. Schwarz uses the idea of Carl Schmitt and according to this, the duration of the disputes of party divisions could be seen as „form of the Civil War", which happens according to half way civilized rules.⁵⁰

Schwarz pronounces his final verdict on Kohl because of its inclination to return to „reform critical statism"⁵¹ in the context of the euro crisis. At the end of the thousand-page biography of the sixth Chancellor the „architect of a united Europe" appears as a „tragic figure"

⁴⁵ Schwarz, 2012, 491.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 326.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 928.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 142.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 332-333.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 938.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 928.

who had good intentions and also made all sort of good things, „although unfortunately abundantly and overly confidingly ".⁵² The history of the euro will remain disputed until all sources will be available and processed, but from today's perspective, there is some evidence for Schwarz's estimations. There is reminiscence by senior Germans if one talks about the issue of DM and in their opinion, Kohl's European policy just swallowed up the deutschmark, as it had never existed. Schwarz thinks that the French president and his associates from the soft-currency countries of the EU have convinced the idealistic Chancellor to make of all things the money the object of „a premature large-scale experiment." It was a very risky decision on the long run and Kohl could have grasped by this time on the example of the euro the huge loss of trust of Germans in the Common Market and the EU.⁵³

Author only discloses the bare minimum from the personal life of his subject. For the politician Kohl, family matters were no priority in public, even if the chancellor himself liked to be photographed for PR reasons. Besides, he paid a personal price for this.⁵⁴ The historian associates Kohl with Bismarck who was similarly a power seeker in his private life. According to Schwarz, unlike Bismarck, Kohl was more a civilian, westernized, liberalised German, who practically disliked the military and ostracized brutality. Kohl initiated a revolutionary renunciation of Germany and brought new independence for Europe. As the „iron Chancellor" he enjoyed the global political games and adapted himself perfectly for the role of the innovative founding father of the Germans.⁵⁵ However, in the final stages of his career, he just lost control over allies, in exactly the same way as Bismarck. Furthermore, Bismarck temporarily personified the Prussian-German state power; therefore, Schwarz portrays Kohl as the „incarnation of strong tendencies" in the modern and pluralistic German society.⁵⁶ Kohl has to be reviewed, exactly as Adenauer and Bismarck in the course of their activities but on a large scale. Schwarz is far away from the sanctification of its figure, but as author, he sympathises with Kohl. Moreover, he even recognises that the Chancellor fascinates him.⁵⁷ There is no contradiction, because according to Schwarz a biographer must be biased „by accuracy, empathy

⁵² Schwarz, 2012, 963.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, 935.

⁵⁴ For this section, please see the photo galleries and the videos in: <http://www.helmut-kohl.de/>

⁵⁵ Schwarz, 2012, 735-752.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 939.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 937.

and critical detachment” at about the same time. This is author’s methodical reflection on the biographical category concerning a democratic politician.⁵⁸

Despite the fact that Schwarz scientifically classifies and summarises, the biography has very intricate passages. Besides the topic of the construction of the EU is analogously treated in notes, fluent comments and explosive references. The narration is just as if the reader would run through living history by meeting sarcastic explosions and various scarce sources. Schwarz’ deliberations are definitely historical, because he gained it from the mentality of contemporary subjects. It is interesting that his Adenauer biography is free from parallel running contemporary references. This is quite different by the biography of Kohl as here author formulates concise thoughts concerning contemporary German history. Example: it involves the big topic since 1945, thus the control of the divided German power in the middle of Europe. Schwarz states in the final chapter „At the end of the day” that he was motivated to formulate concerns about the German and European community as well.

Author manages to write the life story of a man who had powerfully influenced like no other the political upheavals at the end of the 20th century. The German Chancellor was making world history together with other political leaders as Mikhail Gorbachev, George Bush senior, or Deng Xiaoping. However, Kohl’s name is associated with party-political donations scandals and other essential mistakes. Everything has just gigantic dimensions on Helmut Kohl: his merits and his errors, as well and it is undisputable that certain decisions of him are still influencing our days.

What were the central thoughts in Kohl’s memoirs? The first volume of Kohl’s remembrances

This volume of his autobiography comprises his first 52 years until the chancellorship in 1982. It is probably more inspiring than the second and third volume.

Kohl’s thought embodies essential streams of socio-cultural development of the German post-war history. He became a leading representative of the „sceptical generation” who were born around the 1930s. To be more precise, the book includes the period of his childhood in Ludwigshafen through the 30s until the successful vote of no confidence against Chancellor Schmidt in 1982 in the Bundestag.

⁵⁸ Schwarz, 2012, 943.

Kohl shows much feeling by describing the period of childhood and youth. One can read about parents and school, family and friends. Moreover he even focuses on his first wife Hannelore whom he dedicated this volume. Author narrates how he and his wife gave their first son the name Walter. Thus, he became his name after Kohl's own brother who perished during World War II and his mother's brother, who was fallen in the First World War. The tears that were thereafter in the eyes of his mother are among the most deeply rooted experiences of those generations. Therefore, by all his will to power and assertiveness, Kohl's political coordinates and limits were marked also by such sad family stories. He was belonged to that generation, which no longer needed serve as a soldier, but witnessed very consciously the Second World War and its horrors. Another track of his personality was the coinage as a Pfälzer on the frontier with France. Therefore, he developed a patriotic but no way nationalistic understanding of homeland and nation. Here he also learned a lot about the idea of Europe that fitted perfectly into his political interests and guiding principles. These sections are belonging to the most touching passages of the book.

As one has seen, the young Kohl experienced war, nationalism, poverty, misery of refugees. It becomes obvious that this period also gives him such basic political beliefs as a common Europe, anti-socialism, nation and „the desire for peace and freedom.“⁵⁹ These few keywords and necessities were carrying him all his life. What remained were intuition for a balanced politics and an almost perfect tentative judgment for Machiavellian games.

Therefore, a question arises: how became Kohl one of the most powerful politicians of the post-war period?

His book gives some clues: the young man grasps quite early that if he really wants to change something for himself and the people around him then he should get more power. Although, he allows the reader to come close to him by describing his youth, later by presenting his political rise from about 1950 – 1976 in Rheinland-Pfalz, author continuously distances himself from the viewer. He becomes detached and dry in his writing style.

Author states that he targeted nothing more than leadership positions in the CDU from the beginning of his career. Kohl stood as candidate by 1955 in the election for deputy state chairperson of the CDU Rhineland-Palatinate against the former Family Minister Franz-Josef Wuermeling. This was very blatant for that time. „The notabilities around

⁵⁹ Kohl, 2004, 45.

the Prime Minister Peter Altmeier were visibly shocked by my candidacy." Although he suffered a narrow defeat, but this surprisingly good electoral result assured him the career jump into the Regional Executive Board of the CDU.

This triad was frequently used as a pattern by his advancement: critique of the deep-rooted notabilities, risky candidacy and to construct even from a defeat the fundamentals of the next career step.

Yet, Kohl was vigorously and effectively revolting against the conformists of his times. Kohl: „While I was openly criticising the dignitaries of the mother party, I have rapidly profiled myself. With twenty-three years as a student, surprisingly it was opened to me the chance to become Member of the Executive Committee of the CDU Pfalz.”⁶⁰

Soon thereafter, Kohl made a tight network of narrow personal acquaintances and political dependencies within the CDU. That should help his vertical ascension initially by the party, by the federal state level and by governmental functions. At some points, he grants an insight into his tactical thinking: he just pushed Peter Altmeier from his offices as prime minister and chairperson of the CDU regional in Rhineland-Palatinate, but without causing him a remarkable rupture in public. Kohl applied his unusually strong leadership will by placing purposefully only persons of his confidence at the nodal points of power.

No other politician of post-war Germany has developed such a broad network of loyalties and intentional communities for strategic purposes as Kohl. Even the former Rhineland-Palatinate Minister-President detected Kohl's political talents and knew that they are going beyond the narrow perspective of regional issues. What is striking is that Kohl sees his network of power mainly in the categories of loyalty and fidelity. However, that does not prevent himself to forget about his own promoters as he practices situational coolness and has not protected his people if they needed his help. A good example is the case of Bernhard Vogel in this respect. He is warmly lauded by Kohl as the closest fellow student. Moreover, he is praised as a congenial partner of great political potency and someone with wide intellectual horizon. Nevertheless, not all this has prevented Kohl to stand against Vogel as the succession of him was reopened in the departments of the Prime Minister and CDU state chairperson. Johann Wilhelm Gaddum and Heiner Geißler were by their mentor Kohl and wanted to adjust the way of Bernhard Vogel but without any success. In Kohl's reminders shrinks this interesting case on arid

⁶⁰ Kohl, 2004, 89.

rather mutilated lines. Indeed, confidants as Bernhard Vogel, Heiner Geissler, Johann Wilhelm Gaddum and Kurt Biedenkopf, - they could all be of particular interest for Kohl unless he already thought very early beyond a merely regional political career.

Thus, the Christian Democrats were in a cultural upheaval at both federal and state level in the long lasting Adenauer era. This was the background where Kohl has coined his early regional image as admired reformer who almost charismatically attracted political talents and the media. His political ambitions were far beyond the usual trajectory of Christian Democrats: secure social policy, strong cultural policy, administrative reform, economic policy improvement and the restructuring of the party. The „black giant“ appeared everywhere as surprisingly creative and powerfully vigorous in the practice of the targeted transformation.

The memories are not overstuffed with political ideology, tangible moral considerations or with guidelines that may be necessary for the state or the people. Instead of such an approach, author offers something else, as he rather writes about ceaseless considerations related to staff policy decisions. All this should be eventually beneficial for his career. With Kohl's own words: „I have given from the very beginning adequate attention particularly strategic matters and personnel decisions. I had a say in this case very early on who should be something in the CDU of my palatinate home and what posts were to be filled in on the state and federal level. I saw the key of the success of my party in clever and farsighted personnel policy.“⁶¹

Kohl practiced a policy of strong personal ties right from the beginning of his career and obviously, this urges him to justify that circumstance. „To gather like-minded people around, choose friends in offices, promote confidante: Many journalists always denounced and criticised this. It was ever a necessary matter of course for me.“⁶²

This method was repeatedly condemned by other sources as worthy for criticism and has been defamed as the „Kohl system“. Nonetheless, it has been „always extremely successful.“ „I gladly confess myself to this unique model of success.“⁶³ At the core of his power recollections, Kohl stresses that he had made himself competent in all the issues at stake, in each case in details and therefore he managed to convince the people. „Surely this included also slyness, cleverness and

⁶¹ Kohl, 2004, 111.

⁶² *Ibidem*, 112.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

hardness." Furthermore, Kohl comprises in about two sentences how he was usually setting thoughts and plans: „With a doctorate, I now wanted to become parliamentarian ... I had never made a secret of my passionate interest in a political career."⁶⁴ However, from the perspective of the autobiographer the topic of strong ambition remains somewhat underexposed.

This kind of ambition and political style is not despicable in fact, as it was common practice in certain networking circles back then. However, probably because Kohl applied seriously his approach, it took remarkable dimensions in real life situations around him, thus much more as expected from others. Indeed, it became an indicative of him and his policy guidelines. This is confirmed within the memories more precisely in Kohl's constantly recurring remarks about who has to thank him everything because he made possible his political career. Moreover, it comes to a specific personalization of institutions and departments as their growth was also tied to strong accumulation of various moral benefices under the control of the ruler in the party and government.

It follows an insightful section for Kohl's initial relationships construction: as he found out after the Bundestag election of 1957, that the later Federal Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger was treated in a hospital in Ludwigshafen, he went to see him several times. This contact will be extremely helpful for him in the future.

Kohl's disputes and hostilities with internal party critics and competitors take a large amount of space in this first volume. In fact, several leading CDU/CSU politicians who have long been in powerful positions in Bonn and elsewhere were astonished by what determination, strength and assertiveness the newcomer „from the province" climbed the career ladder in the Rhineland Palatinate and entered the race for the Chancellorship in the federal capital.

Kohl admits that the brilliant opportunities for advancement in the fifties and sixties were also possible because the older generation was decimated by war or had been discredited because of National Socialism. This starting point in connection with a solid ambition and will to power as well as an enormous and specific ability to assert has led Kohl after his election as youngest delegate in the Rhineland-Palatinate state parliament in 1959, within four years at the forefront of the fraction. Only three years later Kohl was designated to the successor of the aging Prime-Minister Altmeier. Concomitantly he also activated vigorously at the federal level in the CDU in which he likewise was getting within a few years

⁶⁴ For this section, please see: Kohl, 2004, 37-171.

completely forward as he was nominated for the party leadership and candidacy for chancellor. Kohl also discloses that he understood the crafty manoeuvres within the party and practiced it because he followed often more tactical rather than substantive arguments.

Certain examples on Kohl's political rhetoric: - he was arguing as Group Chairman in Mainz for a concentration of decision-making powers in the fraction, but as party leader in Bonn on the other hand, he was advocating their shifting to the party. Besides, he was talking against his opinion, and particularly against Rainer Barzel, for a division of party and faction chair, when he was a candidate against the faction leader for the party leadership. Furthermore, he criticized the maintenance of elective offices in the case of a substitution of parties, which however was no problem for him, as just occurred in the realization of the constructive confidence vote from 1972 for the benefit of the Union.

Author is outlining forthrightly his differences with Rainer Barzel who was the Chairman of the CDU from 1971 to 1973. Kohl: „The chemistry between me and Rainer Barzel was not fitting we were very different and just could (not come out) with each other. (...) With all due respect for his intellectual performance we have had right from the beginning problems with each other." Author thinks that this would have had its roots in the fact that two contradictory powers were clashing. On the one side, there was the newcomer from the regional politics and the ambitious self-organiser with a strong self-esteem of Bonn, on the other side.⁶⁵

The desired functions were coming closer. Accordingly, 1973 the CDU regional presidency, 1976 CDU / CSU Group chairman in the Bundestag and 1982 German Chancellor. Over the years developed a love-hate relationship between Kohl and Strauß. Franz Josef Strauß was the chairperson of the CSU and Bavarian Minister-President. Both had to get along with one another, but somehow in most of the cases they just refused the other part as untrustworthy and unforeseeable. Kohl experienced Strauß's attitude before the chancellor candidacy in 1976 as a personal humiliation. This was also the case by the astonishing Kreuther decision to subdivide the parliamentary group of the CDU / CSU in the Bundestag. As Strauß subsequently continued to undercut Kohl's top function, he had renounced by itself on a new chancellor candidacy for the 1980s. As an alternative, Kohl suggested Ernst Albrecht, who was

⁶⁵ For this section, please see: Kohl, 2004, 292.

subject to Strauß in the parliamentary group. Kohl was turning suddenly with demonstrative loyalty alongside Strauß.⁶⁶ (Please see figure 21.)

It seemed that Kohl's quick rise of sixties and early seventies were stopped. Author's straightforward writing style becomes even more officially and restrained as he is describing the first bitter years as Group Chairman in Bonn and the day after the lost federal elections of 5 October 1980. It reflects the heavy clashes with Strauß around the chancellor candidacy. The electoral defeat of 1980 could have been perceived by Kohl privately as a triumph because Strauß was discharged by 4.1%, which was below its own of 1976. Therefore, Kohl's worst political rival had to say goodbye to his the federal political ambitions. Nevertheless, Kohl still had the option for the office of Chancellor for the next few years if the Schmidt government would collapse.

Kohl comments these events in this way: „After the election the focus was the analysis of the election results on Monday on the National Executive Board meeting of the CDU. I thanked the hundreds of thousands of volunteers for their tireless dedication during the electoral campaign. I especially thanked Franz Josef Strauß, who had shown much personal commitment and risk in this election dispute. We fought together and lost together. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the SPD were the real losers of the election. They had not reached their goal to become the strongest faction."⁶⁷

It seems so that, author was still distressed as he was writing (dictating) this section of his remembrances because of the severe disagreements and exasperated disputes with Strauß, which were carried out especially from 1975 to 1980.

Kohl reported with full outrage: „Whether core team or executive team: He did not just wanted constantly to have a say, but preferred to decide for himself which individuals would be taken out from the Union camp during the election campaign and whom he did not want to see at the forefront. My unconditioned desire to include Kurt Biedenkopf in the core team, he just refused categorically."⁶⁸

One of the main points of contention between the two leaders was the entirely different evaluation of the role of the FDP in the German Federal policy. Kohl wanted to tie this small but essential bourgeois party

⁶⁶ For this paragraph please consult for comparison:
<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41124834.html> and
<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41124831.html>

⁶⁷ Kohl, 2004, 572.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 389.

in the long-term to the CDU. Therefore, he wanted to form a coalition with it. Strauß wanted to fight sharply with it and to exclude it from the political stage. An intensification of dissension between the two political leaders resulted from the resolution of the sister party CSU on 19 November 1976 in Wildbad Kreuth to make a separation of the fraction Community until then formed together with the CDU in the Bundestag.

The idea of Strauß was to make the CSU nationally „the fourth party“, also to attract the right-oriented voters. He wanted to entrench the sister party in order to separately compete in the election campaigns. He thought that in this way they would gain more power in the Bundestag in order to have a say in the German Federal policy-making. Kohl explained that he is convinced that such an approach would be erroneous and harmful and therefore he was arguing with all his power against the Kreuther decision. He confesses that he had „personal injuries“, which were inflicted on him in connection with the termination of the 27-year-old parliamentary group of the CDU and CSU. He evaluated this plot as an attempt to weaken the position of the national chairperson of the CDU.⁶⁹

Nonetheless, Kohl's calculus was as simple as applicable, because he had already negotiated with chairperson of the FDP Genscher about a possible coalition change. It was not possible for the FDP to go in a new coalition with a chancellor candidate like Strauß just only after its predictable failure due to lack of coalitional partners. However, for this „after Strauss“ period it may stay over only one candidate of the Union, thus the party and parliamentary group chairperson: Helmut Kohl. It happened as Kohl expected, but as author of his remembrances, he just stops to disclose more about the issue.

Kohl's relation to Genscher remains rather underexposed and restricted to a few hints. Nevertheless, Genscher were assuring his future chancellorship. Kohl reports on a meeting with Genscher on election night of 1969. Kohl: „We were on first-name at that time already and were maintaining an open collegiality, which also allowed confidential talks for a long time.“ These discussions remain unclear in Kohl's book. The same is the case with Genscher's memoirs. Thus, the long end of the chancellorship of Helmut Schmidt and the switch to the chancellorship of Kohl remains substantially in darkness. This core item of adjustment of German politics has to be detected by historians. Author alludes to individual discussions with Genscher only later, ahead of a chancellor election on 1 October 1982. The fact that Kohl himself recognises the

⁶⁹ Kohl, 2004, 422.

crucial role of Genscher it was engraved in the almost emblematic closing paragraph of the book. It contains the thanks to Genscher as without his „prudent action" and his „unflinching struggle against numerous opponents" Kohl would never had been German Chancellor.

Kohl partially shows something about his own personal weaknesses in the political struggle. This is the case in comparison with the then reigning Chancellor Schmidt. He had enjoyed considerable support in the media because he was "born" for the radio and television. Not as Kohl who was in a very difficult position if compared to Schmidt in this respect. He confesses: „My appearance certainly inelegant and my noticeable Palatinate dialect played a role, just as my ‚old-fashioned' views on political virtues. Who goes around so, will be chosen easily as a target for mockery and jokes not only by caricaturists."⁷⁰

Author complained that political opponents would have defamed him at many points and just treated him unjustly. That he himself was extremely tough against others in political fights, as it did against Richard von Weizsäcker or Johannes Rau, is considered as justified by Kohl. Only at one point, he acknowledges that occasionally was inclined to gaffes: "Me, too, was moving from time to time too hard on the edge and sometimes beyond the borders of demagoguery and was not entirely free from hurting political opponents personally."⁷¹

To sum up: the recollections of the first volume are providing very little that is new for the German readership. However, several party-political details and intrigues concerning staff decisions are an exception to this. The reason for this can be seen in the context that the life and work of Kohl was almost constantly lived in public. Therefore, his early accomplishments were already partially consciously and publicly presented, so that current reviews can hardly show a substantial novelty value. The writing flow of Kohl is as his well-known talking style, thus rarely to the point but sometimes amazing. Author rather kept frequently vague and general in this volume of his memories; accordingly, it becomes overlong and exhausting in certain sections. Authors writing style is striking as sometimes even becomes protocol-officially, therefore it can be described as quite formal and sober.

Insider backgrounds and party-political problems remain quite underexposed. Especially foreign policy challenges of Germany in the 1960s and 1970s are pending. Certain elements of domestic politics are presented more informatively as foreign policy matters in the book.

⁷⁰ Kohl, 2004, 453.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, 568.

However, motivations, principles and desirable goals of author are not clearly developed in the remembrances. In fact, Kohl's chancellorship finally moved mainly on the so typical German middle way of the Federal Republic. The processing of this era is a complex task of both for the contemporary historian as well as the autobiographer himself. The real significance of Kohl's role concretely as generally will probably only emerge over time.

The second volume of Kohl's memoirs

Kohl continued the first volume of his memoirs that was dedicated to its career as leader of the opposition. Thus, he wrote a second book, which was published in 2005. This episode is even more extensive as the first one (684 pages) and contains 1133 pages. Author's retrospective view on his achievements has no proper structure in the second volume. Part I has the title of „Meantime" in which Kohl considers the months until the elections of 1983. Part II and III give specific details of the first and second time of the Kohl government. However, the events and thoughts of Part II are concentrated around forty-two headwords. The same applies for Part III except that it has more catchwords: fifty-eighth. Taken as a whole, author's watchwords were roughly combined in a chronological order, but in each case without any inner coherence. This observation is valid for both parts of the memories.

Author is setting his goals already in the preface of this second issue. Chronologically it begins with the coalitional negotiations of autumn of 1982 and ends by the German general elections in May by 1990. The former Chancellor tries to persuade the viewer from the very beginning about his main political tasks⁷². One of this was the idea of the realization of the German unity. The next significant issue was the NATO Double-Track Decision and Kohl puts this in correlation with the reunification setting of the two German states. Moreover, he also thinks that by this accomplishment he has completed „one of the decisive conditions for the reunification". The politician denoted the negotiation successes with the NATO as „the most important achievement" of his government.⁷³

The NATO Double-Track Decision was undoubtedly part of the most significant achievements of the Kohl administration. The resolution of the NATO from 12 December 1979 offered the Warsaw Pact a mutual

⁷² In Kohl's formulation: „Präsenz aber war dieses Ziel immer" Kohl, 2005, 12.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, 11.

limitation of medium-range ballistic missiles and intermediate-range ballistic missiles combined with the notification that in case of divergences NATO would install new middle-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe. Despite tough resistance of the Social Democrats and protesting peace movements on the streets, the resolution could have been enforced in Germany. Thus, the last attempt of the SU to reach a dominant position in Central Europe through nuclear proliferation had completely failed. Moreover, it has initiated a development that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet empire. This is also a precondition for the second success of the Kohl government, because their main task was to pave the way for the German unity with a mixture of clear objectives and careful backing of unionist powers in the disintegrating GDR. At that stage, the chancellor felt himself exposed to constant hostility as he was constantly attacked by own party members. For that reason, the sharpest criticism is directed against former fellows as Lothar Späth and Heiner Geissler but other sceptics too. Späth and Geissler were managing a camarilla against the CDU chairperson in the background.

Kohl's interpretations usually contain strong depreciatory judgments about politicians. The former Chancellor sharply condemns comrades as Norbert Blum or Rita Süßmuth, but also traditional political opponents as Johannes Rau who will be later Federal President. It seems so that one of the biggest professionals of international policymaking, the successful German Chancellor of the end of the 1980s and beginning of 1990s was bearing grudges as he wrote this rows. Therefore, he also uses his remembrances to judge people retrospectively with the risks that his verdicts could even today generate quite polarizing effects.

Kohl restricted the settlement with his political rivals on relatively brief comments in the book. Nevertheless, the bitterness of his wordings clearly indicates the extent of the mortifications, which he had to endure during his term as Chancellor. SPD politicians, who have doubted in the possibility of reunification without quitting the NATO and have insisted on the two-state solution for Germany as a guarantee of peace, were mentioned particularly critical. Kohl attacks his successor at the chancellery, Gerhard Schröder and the Saarlander Oskar Lafontaine. Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker is not an exception off attack-sparked comments as he addressed criticism to the party politics in Germany and openly condemned Kohl's personnel policy.

Kohl has generally a very critical opinion about Weizsäcker. Even the description of the backgrounds of his election to Federal President shows a politician who wants the position only because of personal ambitions by disregarding the specific interests of the party. The

relationship between these two leaders had already been disturbed long before the presidency and it worsened even more because of the tenure. In Kohl's interpretation: „(...) during his subsequent ten-year term remained a significant distance between us.“⁷⁴ Author classifies von Weizsäcker as one of the „sceptics" of the German reunification process and insinuates that he had lack of joy in his achievements as Chancellor with regard to the Germany policy line, which has resulted in the reunification of the two separated states.

A severe attack on former President Weizsäcker puts Kohl in connection with his own view about the visit of Bonn of SED chief Erich Honecker in 1987. It becomes evident that Kohl still has problems in 2005 to accept this decision of Weizsäcker, and he argues that the leadership of the GDR has interpreted this official visit as recognition of their regime. Kohl is committed in his memoirs, to interpret his attitude during the visit of Honecker as a firm commitment for the German unity. The problem is that even the message of his dinner speech indicates something else. Kohl, such as the majority of other West German politicians at the time, only searched to make more bearable the division of the two states. Regarding this item, Kohl feels marooned in hindsight by Weizsäcker. According to the protocols of the GDR delegation by talks with Honecker, author accuses the former President that, he said nothing „about the human rights violations in the GDR". Moreover, Kohl continues with his stipulations according to which Weizsäcker was putting no question to the relationship between state and church or to the order to shoot of the border guards".⁷⁵ (Please see Figure number 17. and 18.)

Kohl's accounts are especially attention grabbing in terms of how he comments on his political competitors. As Kohl entered the political stage, it was an open secret in Bonn that his behaviour to Franz Josef Strauss was always intricate. This was based on reciprocity and it was already comprehensively addressed in the first volume of Kohl's memoirs. In comparison to the first book, Kohl's opinion on Strauß turns unexpectedly in moderated ton in this volume. However, author is still committed to make smaller Strauß' strong influence on federal politics. This can be perceived in the section related to the billion-credit issue or in the general acknowledgement of Kohl that he makes in the context of Strauß death. Kohl concludes: „I gladly let him in the faith that he was

⁷⁴ Kohl, 2005, 258.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, 561.

who took influence on the government coalition. But in reality tended his influence towards zero (...)."⁷⁶

Nevertheless, Kohl also stresses that the direct relationship between Strauss and him „ was coined by mutual respect in the last few years.”⁷⁷ Whether this statement is true seems doubtful, because Kohl admits that Strauß was until his death firmly convinced that he would have been "the better man in the Chancellery."⁷⁸ Strauß: „Kohl is completely incapable of Chancellor (...) Helmut Kohl will never be Chancellor. He will be writing his memoirs by 90 years: I was 40 years chancellor candidate; Lessons and experiences of a bitter era '. Perhaps the final chapter has been written in Siberia or where.”⁷⁹ By such formulations, Strauß strongly damaged his relation to Helmut who was very angry because his discrediting statements spread through the media. That generated lifelong rivalry between the two politicians as Kohl has managed to be 16 years German Chancellor. (Please see Figure number 19. and 20.)

The former Chancellor gives a broad overview about his activity with comprehensive records on his correspondence with foreign political leaders, governmental declarations, congress appearances and other relevant doings. Once again becomes clearly the continuous effort of Kohl to leave out anything crucial, but to provide proof about the correctness of his choices and actions. The first half of Kohl's term was marked by global political events that changed the face of Europe in the end. Therefore, one cannot blame the former Chancellor, as soon as he looks back with satisfaction on his work and claims without any false modesty that he has gained acceptance against critics and opponents.

In authors view, both Gorbachev and Bush were pivotal figures on the international political stage, who were responsible for the successful implementation of the „deutsche Wiedervereinigung”⁸⁰ of 1989/90. Additionally, Kohl points out that the end of the German division would have been impossible without the courageous activity of his „countrymen” who „demonstrated against the regime in the GDR”.⁸¹ Kohl also uses the preface of his book to indicate the viewer that there were severe party-political conflicts, which he fully experienced at that time. He claims that „while he was trying to influence the global political

⁷⁶ Kohl, 2005, 748.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, 747.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, 748.

⁷⁹ R 30/001 D070057/102 Stadtarchiv Bad Waldsee

⁸⁰ German reunification.

⁸¹ Kohl, 2005, 13.

changes in order to help to shape these” his former allies just turned into opponents and were already planning his overturn.⁸² According to Kohl, his rivals and secret challengers mainly worked against him to take away his party leadership and chancellorship.

The above-mentioned key-message of Kohl’s feelings turns often into self-justification by trying to legitimatise certain complicated situations. This coins the direct style and highly political background of the remembrances of this volume.

Accordingly, there were two differing, but conflicting positions within the CDU/CSU. On the one side, the chancellor who is a co-creator of international politics by trying to stipulate terms with France, the US, USSR in order to strengthen Germanys overall national self-perception and European position during the changes. On the other side, there were mainly detractors and adversaries to whom the senior Chancellor has nothing but quiet resentment. This may reflect the settings of party-political, governmental activities and intrigues back then, but cannot provide a transparent orientation to the outsider viewer, because it mainly reproduces Kohl’s points of view about persons and events.

Kohl admits some of his mistakes as well. „It was stupid of me to have named Gorbachev and Goebbels in a single breath.”⁸³ Finally makes Kohl the media responsible because quickly spreading his inexactness all over the world. Author also accuses the mass media of having motivated the scandalization of his joint appearance with President Reagan at the military cemetery in Bitburg.

Kohl has tried to write objectively when he reports about his constantly tensioned relationship to the media. Nevertheless, there is a more subdued anger over the disregard for his determined effort to make good public speeches, - in his opinion that was never detected by the press. Regarding the first half of his chancellorship, Chancellor Kohl has been confirmed by a succession of historical events. For this purpose, it was necessary to have such potentials as the persistence of sitting out quite long crisis meetings to make complicated decisions and the use of its entire, complex personality by German and international politics. However, Kohl’s public image was affected through the printed and electronic media because of his repeated refusal of controversial discussions and presumably a certain lack of humour. This is the line where his public image was stamped to let him appear a negatively complicate official. His successor as head of government was more

⁸² *Ibidem.*

⁸³ Kohl, 2005, 451.

careful in this respect and understood to keep his image much better as Kohl. Nevertheless, this type of dexterity in the public self-presentation is definitely not the benchmark for the evaluation of a German chancellor. It would still have been better to include more self-critique in the remembrances and to write in a more humorous style about conflicts, but this is only a subjective suggestion of the authors of this paper.

The third volume of Kohl's records: the memories of 1990 – 1994

Author presents his own perception about the turnaround on the core of his reign in which the destiny of a united Germany and Europe has been decided. Kohl's recognition among key party members and population has strongly decreased in 1989. The situation was so bad that there were even more coup plans against him on the national party level. On top of that, it also achieved a low and embarrassing election result. Nevertheless, the unanticipated fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, practically not only saved him but also catapulted him once again on the top. Therefore, he will get his dream office again in a new role as Chancellor of the unity. He was getting this new role as recognition in 1989-90, because as skilled negotiator it was able to achieve both: the full sovereignty of his country and the reunification of Germany. Even his critics are admitting the valorous accomplishments that he has made by difficult negotiations under hard circumstances. He could show again the effectiveness of many years of political friendships and the benefits of his complex networking. The voters expressed their gratitude with the firm re-election of him as chancellor.

Kohl had been celebrated as a winner, but this euphoria was too quickly overtaken by the difficulties and substantial errors made during the unification process. The third volume has 784 pages, which are concerned with the crucial stage of negotiations in which author played a central role. However, the memories include much more than the fulfilment of the German reunification because numerous meanwhile fading events fall into the years 1990-1994. Examples are the coup against Gorbachev in 1991, the Treaty of Maastricht, the first Gulf War, xenophobic attacks and refugee negotiations, civil war in Yugoslavia. These were top priority to receive a place in the memories.

There is a considerable introduction in almost all chapters with Kohl's readable personal thoughts. These illuminate many backgrounds of the internal life of this mentally sophisticated Chancellor, who bears in his soul, depending on the mood and situation, distinct reflectiveness mixed with geniality and authoritative attitude.

Situations and people were described based on intensive study of personal documents and associated with individual assessments. Certainly, even this recollection is biased by highly subjective matter, and it will be up to the reader, which analyses and conclusions he wants to follow to the end. If the viewer is ready to treat his explanations under the aspect that Kohl legitimately reports from his very own point of view, then it is to state that these are very thrilling statements. Furthermore, just as expected author does not tend to too much self-criticism or to the willingness to make compromises in his argumentations. He remains quintessentially his own micromanagement. The SPD politician Peter Glotz characterized Kohl by following words in September 1993: If one should summarize in one word the political nature of Kohl, one would call him „the unflinching.”

The volume is exclusively rich in contemporary historical sources, which are inviting to further critical evaluations. As author himself stresses, he does not produce historical writing but rather commemorative work. However, this is created meticulously and he uses the great advantage of several novel sources that were not accessible to researchers. Nevertheless, the volume has been written particularly long-winded. This is probably partly due to the expansion of the remembrance material. The first part was including the years: 1930-1982 and the second: 1982-1990 with at least still over eight years. Therefore only 4 years: 1990-1994 are treated here on roughly 730 pages. The fact that it has published from 2004 to 2007 thus, within three years three massive volumes of memoirs is greatest performance.

Author is very careful by dealing with economic and social topics as these are highly delicate issues even today in Germany. Special economic alterations of the western side of the republic are generally explained by the acceleration of the ratios. Another argument of Kohl is that the decision about the exchange ratio of 1: 1 by wages, salaries and pensions was acceptable back then as compared to the West, these made up only one-third. This was a passionately debated facet already in 1990. The higher conversion rate of 1: 2 by operating assets has admittedly contributed to the collapse of the East German industry. Indeed, their productivity had been generally overestimated in 1990. Kohl admits that even if it had been known before, for instance in the spring of 1990 he could not have decided more differently. Why is that so? He thinks that delays of the unification were not good for Germany. Author points out that the situation in Moscow was still critical at that time and the tidal wave of German emigrants reached the number of 64 000 by February 1990. Therefore, the over-rapid positive decision of the People's Chamber

to the Unification Treaty was only manageable at the cost of socio-political disadvantages. Kohl writes about this issue not quite so openly, but his account is quite clear as one has to accept that he was also in those days not only manager but also pushed from all possible sides.

Author really surprises the reader with such wordings that he also has „made mistakes" and underestimated the „psychological depth of separation" of the two German states. Nevertheless, in his view only in this way was possible to save the East German population of impoverishment. Only this kind of counteracting could back the new order. Author gives certain guilt for disastrous financial exaggerations to Labour Minister Norbert Blum, and parallel he criticises Richard von Weizsäcker, who was the President of West Germany, and became all-German President by 3 October 1990. Furthermore, Kohl accuses Lafontaine and his comrades that they encouraged the GDR negotiators, thus the social democrat Hamm-Brücher Hildebrandt in their demands. As a result, the Federal Government was under pressure also because the agitation of certain politicians from the SPD. Author remembers with annoyance on the case (Bad Kleinem) as the terrorist Grams were killed. Kohl condemns such magazines as Spiegel and Monitor and mostly Hans Leyendecker because of his „malevolent insinuations" that Grams had been liquidated by the GSG 9.

Kohl also practices a moderate self-criticism in terms of „failed reforms" of the German welfare state. The respective debate on reform, which began prior to 1989, had been supplanted of the political agenda by the implementation of the social union. It was necessary to decide firm and rapidly about several complex topics between 1990 and 1991, as they needed to be implemented even so quickly. There were no guaranteed concepts to structural changes in the social security system in 1990 because it was no time for something like that. Even if there had been more scenarios, it would still have been impossible to make it right for all political sides up to the reunification, not to mention implementation of it. There are also notable positive observations but this section was written in a quite personal style. Therefore, the lines about Willy Brandt and his performances during his term and in the early 90s until his death on 8 October 1992 are like a kind of introduction to prove that author was constantly in exceptional relations with this personality. However, Kohl's statements about his closeness to Brandt have a doubtful effect because he is trying to represent himself as one of the closest confidants of the political icon, but this was not the case.

A wide-ranging part of this remembrance has particular meaning and comprises reflexions on Kohl's fourth cabinet and the period of 1990

until the elections of October 1994. These happenings are close to the reader but represent new autobiographical territory and Kohl is pursuing a more feasible illustrative approach of circumstances as before. Publicist and biographical deliberations were already formulating two core questions for this period: How managed the Chancellor to prolong his influence more than 16 years? How comes that economic-psychological arguments were used to make an abrupt end to the joy of successful reunification? (Please see Figure number 22.)

Author smartly deviates from a strictly factual outlook, but considers that is quite necessary to enrich our understanding about specific circumstances. In fact, he succeeds to explain his own view of the contemporary events in 58 chapters. He mediates a specific Chancellor image, as he is indefatigable, motivated, superior, but also a leader under continuous compulsion. He uses this masked argument as explanatory effect, especially if his decision of then can be seen even today as controversial issue. Kohl is not clearly addressing the main political guidelines, instead of this he just mixes everything (events, people, facts, feelings and backgrounds), so that one perceives how complex the tasks of a chancellor really are.

There is no self-criticism concerning the introduction of care allocations according to Blüm's model that has been implemented in 1993. In addition, the pension scheme is presented as a great and praiseworthy achievement. This was in the middle of the great recession and the financial new-burden of the reunification against the well-founded resistance of the FDP, science and industry. Although the number of unemployed was increasing visibly around 1994, there were no clear countermeasures by the government at that time. Nevertheless, the viewer gains the general impression that author itself puts himself the question retrospectively why he was allowing this minister to stay so long in office (16 years).

Therefore, author has chosen an alternate order of issues, which is quite complex in this volume. He treats: - the pivotal role in numerous factual issues of the USA; - the complicated connexions with USSR and its successor the Russian Federation, but not at least only with Russia itself; - time of recession in global and European perspectives; - European politics;- wars in the disintegrated Yugoslavia; - Gulf war ; - controversial legislative procedures; - resignations of officials; - cabinet breakdowns; - budgetary crises; - party conferences, party programs and regional electoral campaigns; - intrigues over the succession to President von Weizsacker; - plenty of honours; - Kohl's most private agitations of facts and people; - state travels and other visits; - funerals; - summer vacations

in St. Gilgen by the Wolfgang lake; - the RAF terrorism coupled with unprecedented media hysteria of Bad Kleinen; - endless discussions with international statesmen as Clinton, Yeltsin, Mitterrand, Havel, Walesa, Li Peng, Lubbers and many others... Therefore, he mentions again as the basis for the positive events of 1989 and the following years: the NATO double-track decision. Author praised once again the participants of all sides for their clever performance but especially his immediate predecessor in office Helmut Schmidt, though this approval seems a bit short and uncertain.

A good third of this book treats the months between the first free elections of 18 March in the GDR until the federal election of 2 December 1990. Author sets comparably much emphasis on describing the intra-German relations of the months of the upheavals. Thus, the foundation of the Alliance for Germany, the complex relationship to GDR Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière (later difficult to explain), and beginning of the Economic and Monetary Union. It is important to note that all this happened in the sign of primary race preparations with the SPD of Lafontaine. A risky electoral battle followed as it was very well-known that from the fall of 1990 until the reunification Gerhard Schröder and Lafontaine were for the preservation of the two separate German states.

Kohl describes hardly any concrete event, but gives almost exclusively a general reflection on specific topics. For example, he offers a chapter that deals with his Asia trip but there is no factual report about the journey itself. However, the viewer becomes a general representation of the Asian policy of the Federal Republic of that period. In addition, it continues in this style: there is a chapter about the EU summit, but there are only general thoughts on European themes, its goals, its problems etc. and no tangible presentation of the course of the EU summit where he was a guiding personality. Moreover, one gets the impression that the public reflections of Kohl's Bundestag speeches, official communiqués and other official reports have been extracted from somewhere. This in turn, leads to the incident that the reader only finds a number of reduced new facts in the presented sources. This practice is occasionally interrupted, usually only by chapters that are dealing with domestic politics (for example with the death of Willy Brandt), which has the result that the writing becomes monotonous from time to time.

However, author is a strategist who keeps for the last chapter what is perhaps the biggest surprise of his memoirs in this volume. It ends with the rather brief description of Bundestag elections won by a bare majority in October 1994. Thus, the period of 1994 to 1998 is not treated at all.

Angela Merkel is mentioned on the edge. Finally, the remark that he has had decided for himself in the mid-term of his office that he would abandon in the favour of Wolfgang Schäuble as the only suitable successor.

In sum: what is presented in the report of over 700 pages is exploratory, as promised in the preface, and gives again the possibility to the author to also criticise certain personalities. Moreover, Kohl's actions are repeatedly moved into the foreground in the reviews. Author also thanks and recognises even his own actions. Therefore, a memorial is erected quasi again, a serious and thankful task: but memoirs are allowed to be subjective and they are no non-fiction. Sometimes it becomes exciting as a political thriller, especially if one still has its own memories of the time and it will be clear once again at certain points that German people was given a great chance, which was also positively used.

From the Fall of the Wall to the Reunification: My Memories⁸⁴

This new edition of 2009 has a special preface. It is used to reflect about the situation of the world, Europe and the German nation; - this is typical of Helmut Kohl. The book has a special dedication: „to my wife Mike.”

Over four decades after the beginning of the Cold War and 28 years after its construction the Wall came down on 9 November 1989. The Brandenburg Gate and the wall was a milestone of this terror. However, suddenly the wall fell, peacefully and without violence, without bloodshed, or shootout thus, a symbol of the Cold War just disappeared physically. The people of the GDR had made it through peaceful protests and forced the SED regime to its knees. The socialist regime failed. Market reforms and a will to freedom were the basic ideas. Moreover, after the collapse of the wall the reunification of the two separate German states was coming closer. Therefore, on 3 October 1990, the day of German reunification was celebrated. This book treats the breath-taking months between summer 1989 and autumn 1990 when the Chancellor recognized, understood and implemented the historic opportunity of reunification.

The most interesting accounts include those from summer of 1990 and the struggle to assure maximum sovereignty for the merging East and

⁸⁴ It is the title of the book, which specially deals with the Fall of the Wall and the reunification moment. In German: Kohl, Helmut: Vom Mauerfall zur Wiedervereinigung: Meine Erinnerungen, Knauer, 2009. The book was generally used for this section.

West Germany. What Kohl has been managing with his friend Gorbachev in the famous talks in the Caucasus and that he credited before the financially ramshackle SU, is like a piece of political thriller. Once again, it becomes clear by this crucial point how all-important the role of Gorbachev has been and that the compromise made by Kohl was a win-win situation. Author generally admits, also good fortune was part of it.

Although author has promised in the preface that he would omit anecdotes, alone the choice of pictures, particularly the black and white are like a private story conference. It is probably also featuring an adorable selection from his private album. Therefore, based on the images or the headings of individual chapters one can confidently imagine what issues are treated in the chapters. Pictures are calling to a historical journey of contemporary German events, - evidently from Kohl's perspective.

Kohl's overall, review of the amazing 1990 does not gives the reader a triumphant impression about the events that generated the unity, but rather a thoughtful and thankful balance that ends with the sentence: „Without the help of God we would have probably not make it."

François Mitterrand and the German reunification process of 1989/1990

Maurice Vaïsse⁸⁵ and Christian Wenkel⁸⁶ have gathered remarkable material in 398 pages.⁸⁷ The volume contains unknown sources, a variety of memoirs of those involved in the events. The volume comprises especially publications of in-house government documents. Editors are presenting the discussions about the German question between April 1989 and October 1990 at the French Foreign Ministry. That involves the French perception of the events in Germany.

The collected documents are presented in a strong chronological order. Editors divided the period between April 1989 and October 1990

⁸⁵ He is a university teacher at Institut d'études politiques in Paris, and publisher of French diplomatic documents. He is a specialist in the history of international relations. Source:<http://www.defense.gouv.fr/irsem/l-institut/le-conseil-scientifique/maurice-vaisse>

⁸⁶ He is a researcher at the German Historical Institute (2009 to 2011), defended a thesis on the relations between France and the GDR. He is currently working on the interactions between the Cold War and the European integration. Source: http://www.historikerkomitee.de/?page_id=743

⁸⁷ The original book is in French: Vaïsse, Maurice; Wenkel, Christian (Ed.) *La diplomatie française face à l'unification allemande. D'après des archives inédites présentées par Maurice Vaïsse et Christian Wenkel*, Éditions Tallandier, 2011 (The French diplomacy with respect to the German unification. Based on unpublished records presented by Maurice Vaïsse and Christian Wenkel)

into four sections. The first chapter deals with the development prior to the opening of the Berlin Wall. The second division treats the period between the opening of the borders and the visit of François Mitterrand into East Germany from 20th to 22nd December 1989. Editors are reviewing the developments between December 1989 and the first free parliamentary elections of the GDR on 18 March 1990 in the third part. The last chapter contains documents from the 2 + 4 talks.

As this collection was issued, the French government already published specific sources concerning the German unification process in the cyberspace by 2011.⁸⁸ This and formerly distributed references⁸⁹ have generated certain historiographical debates over the understanding of diverse sources.⁹⁰ Besides, Soviet documents were presented in German language by 2011.⁹¹

Certain historiographical debates centered on a key issue: What was the role of the French President François Mitterrand in the context of the German unification process?

Jacques Attali was Mitterrand's counselor and published certain diary-like notes already in 1996. Attali suggested that Mitterrand had long tried to prevent the reunification of the two German states. Although there were other authors⁹² who were skeptical towards the attitude of the French President as well, the French historian Frédéric Bozo⁹³ was trying to demonstrate that Mitterrand was by no means against the German unity. What is more, Mitterrand proactively challenged the united Germany for a prompt European integration. (Please see Figure number 14.) Vaïsse and Wenkel were relating to this historiographical debate in their preface. They are thinking that the rejection of the German unity by Mitterrand is only a myth. Editors' hypothesis is that the French President wanted neither to prevent nor to delay the German unification process. It

⁸⁸ www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/archives-patrimoine_3512/chute-du-mur-berlin-ouverture-anticipee-archives-diplomatiques_19850/index.html

⁸⁹ The German Federal Government published the documents of the Chancellery already in 1998. Source: Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik. Deutsche Einheit. Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90, bearbeitet von Hanns Jürgen Küsters und Daniel Hofmann, München 1998.

⁹⁰ The British documents about the process of German reunification were available by 2010. Source: Documents on British Policy Overseas, Serie III, Vol. VII: German Unification, 1989-90, London 2010

⁹¹ Aleksandr Galkin / Anatolij Tschernjajew (Hrsg.), Michail Gorbatschow und die deutsche Frage. Sowjetische Dokumente 1986-1991, München 2011

⁹² Ulrich Lappenküper, Mitterrand und Deutschland. Die enträtselte Sphinx, München 2011

⁹³ Bozo, 2005, 164-178.

is fact that the French chief of state has made powerful statements on 20 December 1989 in East Germany. Here is a part of Mitterrand's speech: „It could be an opportunity to remind the French vision of the future structure of the continent: strong focus on community building, new relationships with other European states, the role of the Council of Europe, the CSCE process development based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.”⁹⁴

Although Mitterrand was criticized for his visit to the GDR, it is fact that he was not the only politician who visited the GDR in these days. US Secretary James Baker had visited Potsdam already on 12 December 1989 in order to forestall the visit of Mitterrand and to demonstrate the power of the USA.⁹⁵

Jean-Marie Guéhenno⁹⁶ investigated a possible reorientation of the German-French affairs already in April 1989. He proposed to think together with the RFG on a reorientation concerning pre-unification of European communities. It was a suggestion of the improvement of the European integration as select manoeuvre to overcome the uncertainty in Germany. Both were meant by this: the European Community and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. RFG politicians developed a feeling of inferiority with respect to France and the other great powers in the meantime. That happened mainly because the economic world power FRG was not completely self-determining by then.

The documents collected by Vaïsse and Wenkel are originating mainly from the collections of the French Foreign Ministry. Here are ultimately two main types of sources: the vast numbers of records are reports of the French embassies in Washington, London, Moscow, Berlin, and Bonn that communicated with the headquarters in Paris. There are several situation reports and confidential conversations among ambassadors about the protagonists of the upheavals from East Germany. The other category of comprises notes of the Foreign Ministry of Paris in which officials reported about the events in Germany and their possible consequences on France. Especially the latter category of records provides specific evidences about the French perspective on the process of German reunification.

It is quite amazing, but according to these notes, there is no opposition of the French Government against the German unity.

⁹⁴ Vaïsse and Wenkel Ed., 2011, Document number 29., p. 172.

⁹⁵ Schabert, 2002, 454-455.

⁹⁶ He was the director of the „Centre de l'analyse et de prévision”.

However, Jacques Blot⁹⁷ said actually in a note of 5 December 1989 that France has to use his word war winner position in Berlin in order to obstruct the process of unification. It was immediately prior (20 December) to the famous visit of Mitterrand in East Germany, where the President pointed out: „(...) it must not be at the expense of the Franco-German agreement, nor injure the choice of the German people in their destiny."⁹⁸ The French President said at the dinner speech during this visit also the following words: „ (...) this is the first case of the Germans, who will freely decide on what their chance will be. The democratic path is the only one that remains open. Democratic and peaceful. Because it is also the matter of your neighbors who seek to preserve together the European balance, peace that our continent has known in recent decades. I am telling this by respect to agreements and treaties. I especially think on the inviolability of borders, a principle so valuable that has been dedicated to (...) the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference."⁹⁹

Was Mitterrand in reality a promoter of German unification, even if one considers all the aforementioned circumstances? Is the supposition of the editors of the book accurately?

It is just a question of interpretation, but one needs to be careful here, because the concerned quotations are public statements of the French president in East Germany. Thus, one should be aware of the historical and highly political context. Moreover, there is no additional evidence of how Mitterrand about these issues non-publicly thought. Other evidences that he declared officially are belonging to Mitterrand's deceptive maneuver.

According to certain British sources, Mitterrand made skeptical statements about a possible German union by communicating with Margaret Thatcher in 20 January 1990. Vaïsse and Wenkel are maintaining in the introduction of this volume that the above direction is only supported in the British version of the protocol. Editors' opinion is that the French version is much differently as the British one and this would prove that Mitterrand simply searched to show understanding to his British conversation partner. The problem is that the document itself has no printed version, as other notes from the legacy of Mitterrand in the French National Archives. Editors were allowed to check these sources, but they did not get the permission to publish.

⁹⁷ Blot was the director of the European Department at that time

⁹⁸ Vaïsse and Wenkel Ed., 2011, 172.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem.* 176.

Consequently, Vaïsse and Wenkel cannot neutralize systematically the legend of Mitterrand's opposition against the German unity. The sources of this volume are merely but clearly indicating that there was no opposition to the German unity in one institution: the French Foreign Ministry. Nevertheless, the collection of notes and documents is very useful since it represents a valuable basis for future research and by careful interpretations even motivates to contemporary historiographical deductions.

The German reunification from the narrow and overemphasized economic viewpoint

Issues involved with the German reunification after the fall of the Berlin Wall were from the very beginning predominantly concentrated in economic and social problems as this quotation shows:

“But much remains to be done. For the most part, the societal and political elites in the east have remained western "imports," often leading to resentment and feeling of inferiority among large segments of the population. The term "second-class citizen" remains often used in the on-going debates over the real extent of the success of German unification... “But the German government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl seriously misjudged the economic implications of unification, not only initially but well into 1992. The government's decision to rule out tax increases to finance unification...”

“One problem was that unification took place so quickly. It was next to impossible to make a reliable estimate of the financial transfers needed by the new eastern states before the end of October 1990, by which time the legal framework of unification has already been established.”¹⁰⁰

There are countless pros and cons either way concerning the German reunification of 1990. Without a doubt, by the weighing of contradictory arguments it is to state that German reunification has been a tangible success for Europe. Moreover, Germans have since made significant progress in reintegrating two different societies whose pathways had diverged sharply since World War II. East and west now enjoy mutually political judicial and economic institutions and other formal and informal developments, as well as sharing the same social

¹⁰⁰ Source: Together again: the fiscal cost of German unity. (economic impact of reunification of East and west Germany)

www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/cms/lib/.../germ_articless.doc

system. Unification has been an expensive undertaking for both societies, but by the historical step of October 3, 1990, an important German vision was successfully and peacefully realised. Although several dissimilarities were overstepped, much remains to be done. Leaders and people in the west have to behave in order that the societal and political elites in the east do not feel themselves as second-class citizens, because this is one of the most factual burdens of the success of German unification. This leads to resentment and feeling of inferiority among large segments of the population. Then again, East Germany encounters problems in finding its proper place in the federal and international division of labour.

This situation has led to unemployment statistics that are frequently more than twice as high as the average in the western parts of Germany. Several people in the East suffered not only because of drastic downward mobility, but also because of massive job cuts, by which losses were particularly women affected. Besides, the constant presence of risk associated with a market background caused feelings of apprehension and fear among several East Germans. However, less individual and social in nature, the massive economic support of western Germany has been a productive but highly polarised tool as since 1990, the western republics have transferred yearly about DM 150 billion¹⁰¹ to the east, which means 5 % of its GNP. Eastern Germany definitely needs this injection of capital as far as it is possible. Like other developed countries, the federal Germany has major government shortages, increasing government debts, slow economic growth, and high unemployment rate. It is uncertain if a united Germany can definitely break with the economic stagnation, simultaneously remain on the top, lead Europe in a global context, and continuously sustain the east by substantial economic allocations.

General conclusions according to the current understanding of authors of this paper

Specialized literature about the actual state of the German unity was presented only sporadically in public. Occasions thereto are first of all anniversaries and the time of elections. In both event types comes the nature of scientific approaches to the fore, but these are also showing the gaps between science and public discussions or various other public relation activities. Anniversaries and elections were frequently used to polarise at two levels of reflection: politics and public domain.

¹⁰¹ Thus, \$100 billion at an exchange rate of DM 1.50 per dollar.

What should this direction mean in Germany? Possibly this should measure the length of the path of socio-political changes in a reunited country. On the one hand, there is the memory of the year 1990 and the reassurance about the accuracy of the revolutionary decision to unite the two German states. Interestingly, the critique of the political and economic system of the GDR stays repeatedly in the centre of such kind of legitimisations. On the other hand, references were made on results to underline the success in economic and political terms. Such findings should therefore confirm or reconfirm the effectiveness of a chosen political route. Thereby is repeatedly pushed into the background that East Germans at least those who have not left the GDR have taken the plunge into the political responsibility. They themselves implemented the democratization by appropriate means in the frame of a peaceful revolution. Mainly people from the former West Germany wanted to teach lessons of democracy to their fellow citizens from the East by pointing out inability of western thoughts and standards. Furthermore, they wanted to explain what was irrationally in the socialist system without really knowing it, but with the expectation that their Eastern colleagues as of now just learn how their exemplary western democracy functions. This was a living experience in the east. References to the successes of the previous common path within the reestablishment of German unity were often presented but too often by stressing the huge western transfer payments to the east. This has produced false accusations, as easterners were much too ungrateful and impatient in the integration process. On the other side, easterners make accusations that the West has exploited them. There is still much to be done to make the wall disappear from the heads of the people.

Historiographical works of Manfred G. Schmidt or Andreas Wirsching are dealing with the contemporary periods of West German policy. Therefore, scientist can assure an objective analysis from various perspectives on connections and factual issues such as internal political problem situations, upheavals and foreign policy bottlenecks and even time constraints.

Register of events from 7. October 1989 to 18. March 1990

The fortieth anniversary of the GDR ended in Berlin with protest on Saturday, 7. October 1989, - the demonstration of Leipzig finished peacefully on Monday, 9. October 1989, - Erich Honecker stepped back and Egon Krenz becomes the new leader of the SED on Wednesday, 18. October 1989, - amnesty for “republic refugees”, opening of the borders

to the CSSR on Friday, 27. October 1989, - the largest protests in the history of the GDR in Berlin on Saturday 4. November 1989, resignation of the government of the GDR on Tuesday, 7. November 1989, - the Berlin Wall falls on Thursday, 9. November 1989, - the People's Parliament selects Modrow as new Prime Minister on Monday, 13. November 1989, -swearing-in ceremony of the new coalition government under Hans Modrow on Saturday, 18. November 1989, - Helmut Kohl announces his plan of ten points in order to overcome the German division on Tuesday, 28. November 1989, - the People's Parliament decides on the annulment of the guiding roll of the SED that was fixed in the constitution on Friday, 1. December 1989, - the Central committee and Politburo of the SED steps back forever on Sunday, 3. December 1989, - protesters occupy the state security service centre (STASI) in Leipzig on Monday, 4. December 1989, - the central round table meets for the first time in Berlin on Thursday, 7. December 1989, - the CDU of the GDR was formed again, the party Democratic Breakup reorients itself conservatively and the SED gives oneself the new name SED- PDS on Saturday, 16. December 1989, - Chancellor Helmut Kohl visits for the first time since the beginning of the turnaround the GDR on Tuesday, 19. December 1989, - opening of the Brandenburg Gate on Friday, 22. December 1989), - Hans Modrow (head of the government) forgoes the setup of defence of the constitution before the elections at the 6.Mai on Friday, 12. January 1990, - Politicians of the German Federal Republic endorse for the first time publicly a "German German economic and monetary union" on Saturday, 13. January 1990, - conquest of the STASI in Berlin by protesters and protection of stock of documents on Monday, 15. January 1990, - aggravation of the crisis by the SED- PDS: Wolfgang Berghofer (the popular mayor of Dresden) declares with 39 further party members his withdrawal on Sunday, 21. January 1990, - the CDU calls back his Ministers from the government on Thursday, 25. January 1990, - the Soviet state and party Chief Gorbachev declares that the unification of Germans should never and by nobody principally doubted on Tuesday, 30. January 1990, - the law about travels of citizens of the German Democratic Republic abroad comes into force officially on Thursday, 1. February 1990, -the building of a government of national responsibility, within which eight representatives of groups and parties are sending representatives to the round-table discussions on Monday, 5. February 1990, -the Federal Government builds the cabinet committee with the name of "German unity", on Wednesday, 7. February 1990, - building of a national "committee for the dissolution of the STASI on Thursday, 8. February 1990, - visit of a GDR governmental delegation in Bonn,

agreement about the formation of a common expert commission for the preparation of the monetary union on Tuesday, 13. February 1990, - People's Parliament passes the electoral law for the first free and secret elections to 18. March on Tuesday, 20. February 1990), - the formation of a trustee corporation on Thursday, 1. March 1990), - beginning of the Two plus Four negotiations on Wednesday, 14. March 1990, - the “Alliance for Germany” wins by the first free parliamentary elections in the GDR on Sunday, 18. March 1990

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