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Item 66 of the provisional agenda+**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS  
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION****Letter dated 30 August 1989 from the Permanent Representative  
of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit the English text of a Government statement to be delivered by the Federal Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl, before the German Bundestag on 1 September 1989 to commemorate the outbreak of the Second World War (see annex).

It would be greatly appreciated if the present letter and the attached Government statement could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 66 of the provisional agenda.

**(Signed)** Hans Otto BRAUTIGAM

\* A/44/150.

ANNEX

Statement on the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the  
Second World War, made on 1 September 1989 by the Chancellor  
of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Bundestag

I

Today in Germany, in Europe and all over the world, we are remembering the outbreak of the Second World War fifty years ago. This imposes a special duty on us as freely elected representatives of the German people. We face this duty with the earnestness that this day demands of us.

Today we are filled with sorrow and with the sense of responsibility that the memory of the Second World War entails. Particular responsibility derives from the fact that the war was unleashed by the criminal régime that was in control of Germany then. We feel sorrow at the untold suffering inflicted on people and nations by Germans and in the name of Germany, and we mourn the many innocent victims from the midst of our own nation.

As the perpetrators themselves intended, the war was a merciless war of racism and destruction. It acquired a dimension of terror that had never been seen before - and should never recur. It was the final outcome of a totalitarian ideology, which, in its fanaticism, idolised a single race.

Keeping alive its memory is what we owe to the innocent victims, above all those of the Shoah, the unparalleled genocide of the European Jews, to the Poles, against whom Hitler waged a total war of enslavement and annihilation, to the Sinti and Romanies, and to the many other victims of the National Socialist tyranny.

We mourn the victims of oppression and deprivation of fundamental rights, which Hitler's dictatorship inflicted first on Germany and then on the world; we mourn the innocent victims at the battlefronts and at home, as well as the victims of expulsion.

We also remember the millions of soldiers from many nations who perished while prisoners-of-war or who returned home disabled. Who could forget the women who waited in vain for their husbands, and the mothers who waited in vain for their sons! And how many children lost their father or mother!

Remembering the innocent victims means keeping the horror in our minds, keeping it present, as it were. It must always serve as a warning to us. It must not be made light of by false comparisons. Let us guard against thoughtlessly or polemically using words like "fascism" or "resistance" to describe current situations.

There is not only a temptation to make light of the past. It is also thoughtless and unfeeling to close one's eyes to present-day suffering. Let us remember at this moment those people and nations who are still denied a life in dignity and freedom.

After that **world** war and the destruction wrought in the period from 1939 to 1945, after **Auschwitz** and **Babi Jar**, after Oradour and **Lidice**, our world could never be the same as before. Traditions and seemingly self-evident truths must therefore be critically examined **time and** again.

Continuity is only justifiable **if** it involves a deliberate perpetuation of **good**, which can never be destroyed. This includes the liberal **traditions in the** history of our **nation**. They are the moral fabric from which we shaped the Federal Republic of Germany - the most liberal society that has ever existed on German soil.

To be **sure**, even after 1945 some **incorrigible** people who refused to learn spoke **out**, but they were strongly condemned by the vast majority of survivors and rebuffed once and for all. **For** the survivors had personally experienced the effects of the former evil doctrines and were only too familiar with their devastating impact.

The evil in history will not **survive** in the long run. This gives **cause for** hope. With his fanatical **belief** in a racial State, Hitler defied all historical experience. But history passed him over. After 12 years his so-called "**Thousand-Year Reich**" vanished in rubble and **ashes**.

It is true that too **many** people in Germany and **some** abroad were blinded and deceived by that tyrant. But the **judgement** of the National Socialist dictatorship **hinges** solely on its crimes, its campaign of destruction and its genocide.

The wounds **caused** by the Second World War have not yet healed. They are burned into the minds of nations. But they have also branded the people individually, everyone who experienced that period of **horror**, even as a child. **I** myself am unable to this day to rid myself **of** the images that were deeply impressed on my mind in 1939 - I was **nine** years old then - and in the **war years** that followed. I still recall the terrible night-time bombing in **my home town**, the **many** dead lying in the streets and in demolished houses.

Other people still vividly recall the cattle wagons of the "death trains", packed with people-destined **for** the extermination camps; the battlefields of the war, where millions of soldiers experienced fear, want and death) the **seemingly** endless processions of emaciated children, **women** and old people who were **fleeing** or had been **expelled**; the **trains** carrying refugees in which mothers clung to their frozen children.

Those who innocently lost their lives then and those who survived the **horror** - all of them are a warning to us not to forget that man's inalienable dignity must always and everywhere be the yardstick of **our** actions. The **dignity** of the weakest must **be** the touchstone,

Particularly in Germany, the memory of the past must not **be** lost. It is a heavy burden for us Germans, but it has also helped us to shape our society responsibly. And it is the prerequisite for our being able to do so in future, too.

Unlike the period after World War I, after 1945 there was **no** discussion about **war** guilt. Hitler had wanted, planned and unleashed the war. There was not and cannot be any doubt about that. We must strongly oppose all attempts to modify this assessment. Veracity as well as political and moral decency demand this of us. Enlightened patriotism also requires it of us. **For** Hitler's destructive drive was ultimately also directed against the **German** nation itself: faced with total **defeat**, he intended to drag it **into** the abyss with himself. He had **spoken** of a "national community", but in reality he wanted to exclude, and not integrate, many sections **of** the **nation**. He was obsessed by the notion of race, to which he subjugated everything, even the concept of nation.

He had spoken of "divine providence" but **in** truth he wanted to destroy religious ties and Christian ethics. Europe's ethical culture meant nothing to **him**; his own despotism everything.

Today we can note with gratitude that the Federal Republic of Germany, **our** free society, differs radically **from** everything that **the** National Socialist despots aspired to. In **over** 40 years we have, through joint efforts, built a republic that is committed to **freedom** and peace and enjoys high **esteem** throughout the world. The Federal Republic of Germany rests firmly on precisely those values which Hitler deeply abhorred and rabidly **combated**.

## II

The men and women who deliberated on our constitution, the Basic Law, in the Parliamentary Council were well aware of this contrast. They acted in the light of their own experience. They had witnessed the rise of National Socialism. But very few of them had ever imagined where Hitler's dictatorship would ultimately lead. Their **motto** was thus "principiis obsta". **For** the disaster had **not** started in 1939, but years earlier, even **before** 1933. The development that could initially have been stopped became ever harder to halt and reverse in the course of time.

The origins of the Second World War also teach us that **power**, granted for whatever **purpose**, can only be checked by counterbalances.

We do not in the least diminish the guilt of the National Socialist rulers in stating the following **today**:

- At home, sections **of** the social and political **élites** failed. Many had refused to support the **democratic Weimar** Republic. Later, quite a few, **some** of them to the very end, harboured the illusion that the fanaticism of the National Socialist rulers could be bridled by compromise and co-operation.

And it is also true that European powers unintentionally assisted a development that in fact favoured Hitler's plans. They had misjudged him. The widespread yearning for "peace in our **time**" - as Chamberlain put it in 1938 after Munich - was certainly understandable, but it was also a poor counsellor. It was essential then to see through the dictator's plans with a vigilant eye.

Only a comprehensive balance of power **can** reliably guarantee lasting peace. **But** true peace requires **more**. **For** this reason we unreservedly acknowledge in our Basic Law "inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of **every** community, of peace and of justice in the world".

The experience of the years between the wars shows that a fair balance is not possible if goodwill exists **on** one side only!. The **developments** leading up to World War II taught the **community of free nations** how important it is to be vigilant. This is still valid today, **even** though we **are** now **also** **witnessing** fundamental change **in** the relationship with our neighbours **in** the East and South-East. We all hope that the encouraging developments of our time will last and be continued. **We** shall **do** everything possible to contribute to **this**. **We** Germans are under a special obligation to do so. This stems not least **from** the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939. We are aware of the **special** responsibility that we bear on account of the fact that Hitler invaded Poland after concluding that pact, which many described as satanical. Poland thus became the first victim of the National Socialist war of racism and annihilation.

The accords reached then were a shameful abuse of the independence and territorial integrity of Poland, the Baltic States, Finland and **Romania**. There was **no** justification whatsoever for that assault on international law, much less on the right to self-determination. We fully condemn it and the **subsequent** atrocities.

The **Government** of the Federal Republic of Germany has on various occasions stated that the 1939 accords are not legally valid for the Federal Republic of Germany. This also **means** that the pact itself and the supplementary accords do not **in** any way justify the ensuing violations of international law by **the** German Reich and the Soviet Union.

The Hitler-Stalin pact was a product of the cynical interaction of two dictatorships. One of them vanished forever in the inferno that it itself unleashed. The Soviet Union is **now** - 36 years after Stalin's death - in the midst of a painful process of critical self-analysis in the light of a "new thinking".

The Second World War saw the start of a development that was **for** **only** completed after the war. Our fatherland was divided. For the Germans in the German **Democratic** Republic and for many peoples in Central, **Eastern** and South-Eastern Europe, the end of the war marked the beginning of a new dictatorship replacing the former. The division of Germany and Europe can be **Partly** explained but can in no way be justified by the Second World War.

This is why remarks like the **one** made by General **Secretary** Gorbachev here in Bonn last June that the post-war period is coming to an end are a source of hope for all the **people** and nations directly suffering as a result of the division of Europe and Germany - in so far as they imply overcoming the existing situation by peaceful means.

### III

Over many generations, divided Poland clung undauntedly to the idea of national unity. Precisely the memory of Poland's fate can help us Germans to bear the burden of division as long as we have not achieved in free self-determination the unity and freedom of Germany.

We feel particularly close to the Polish people in the common desire for national self-determination. The recipient of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, who himself suffered greatly under the National Socialist tyranny, stated on this subject a little while ago: "Overcoming the division of Germany is also in Poland's interest. We seek a democracy to the West of us."

Professor Bartoszewski has signed the Joint Declaration of Polish and German Catholics marking 1 September 1989, entitled "Striving for freedom, justice and peace in Europe". The new Polish Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, has likewise signed the declaration. I gladly take this opportunity to convey our best wishes to Prime Minister Mazowiecki for his difficult post. We want him to be successful, and we want to do everything in our power to assist him in this respect.

There can be no doubt that the current political and social change occurring in countries of the Warsaw Pact holds out the historic prospect of achieving human rights to all those Europeans who were denied them in the past decades - and hence for all Germans as well.

My Government is firmly resolved to make use of this opportunity. As Konrad Adenauer stated at the Silesians' meeting on 11 June 1961, our aim is "that Europe should some day become a large, common house for all Europeans, a house of freedom".

In the Europe of the future, the main concern must be self-determination and human rights - sovereignty of the people rather than borders or territories. Not sovereign States, but sovereign peoples will one day complete the construction of Europe,

Never again must Europe follow the disastrous path from humanism via nationalism to bestiality, which Grillparzer predicted last century. Dreadful things were done to the Polish people by Germans and in the name of Germany. Who in this country still remembers that the concentration camps on Polish soil were also intended to systematically eradicate the élites of the Polish nation?

Reconciliation is possible only if we speak the whole truth. Part of the truth is the fact that over 2 million Germans perished as refugees or expellees. The loss of their native region has left deep scars for many millions of our fellow countrymen. This bitter experience must not be suppressed; we want to learn from it. For what is the point in Germans and Poles settling accounts, as some in this country and in Poland unfortunately still do? Coming generations will judge us by what we do today so that they can live in peace and common freedom.

France-German reconciliation and friendship illustrate how deep gulfs that have existed for decades or even centuries can be overcome. And our relationship with the State of Israel and with Jews throughout the world shows that even abysses can be bridged.

We seek understanding between the German and Polish peoples. This is our duty, and it accords with the yearning of both nations. Earlier this week, President von Weizsäcker expressed this heartfelt desire in his message to President Jaruzelski of Poland. Now, 50 years after the outbreak of the Second World War, the time has come for lasting reconciliation.

We are aware of the bitter feelings that emerged in the war against Germany - in Poland, in France and later in the Soviet Union, which mourned the death of 20 million people. Most European countries suffered greatly at the hands of the Germans. Today many of them are our partners, indeed our friends.

We are grateful to all those who, after the war and tyranny, reached out their hand in reconciliation - above all the American nation, which at an early stage provided generous food aid and assistance in reconstruction, thus unforgettably demonstrating active charity and political foresight. Prudent statesmen like President Truman and George Marshall and many private individuals participated in such peace efforts.

In this connection I would like to mention Joseph Rovin from France, who wrote this sentence only a few months after being freed from Dachau concentration camp: "The more our enemies have eradicated the traits of the human face, the more we must respect, indeed embellish, those traits in them".

In the last few decades, ground-breaking steps have been taken in achieving reconciliation with Poland. In this connection, I would particularly like to mention the diverse initiatives of the Churches.

The Warsaw Treaty of 1970, signed by then Chancellor Willy Brandt, constituted a further step in that direction. We shall continue to abide by the letter and spirit of the treaty. In its preamble, Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany express their will to secure a peaceful future for the new generation that has meanwhile grown up, and to establish "durable foundations for peaceful coexistence and the development of normal and good relations".

In the early 1980s, when Poland was going through a difficult period, the population of the Federal Republic of Germany manifested its solidarity with the Polish people by spontaneously providing generous assistance.

I am convinced that the opening-up of Polish society will have a favourable impact on our efforts. The opportunities for understanding between our peoples will improve, the more progress is made towards individual freedom in Poland. True reconciliation depends not just on human will, but also on political circumstances.

Prejudices and distrust will not persist where borders can be crossed, where information and opinions can be freely exchanged and people, especially the young generation, can meet each other in conditions of freedom.

France-German reconciliation has proved so successful not least because it rests on a **common** foundation of democracy and the rule of law and because new mutual understanding has evolved through increased contacts and dialogue between the French and the Germans.

#### IV

Where freedom is lost, peace is soon forfeited - first at home, then not infrequently externally as well.

The Hitler dictatorship and the Second World War warn us time and again about the seductive power of extremism or indeed totalitarianism. The danger of extremism is always present, **even** in an open, democratic society.

It is therefore essential for a democratic State to counteract such temptations as soon as possible. Seen against the background of the National **Socialist** dictatorship, this means protecting the people through the rule of law from being exposed one day to totalitarianism.

Freedom and democracy are not abstract principles. They affect every individual **most** directly. His personal freedom and happiness are at stake. Let us together ensure that people always remain conscious of this!

The people **must be** protected from the ambivalence inherent in a totalitarian dictatorship manifested by temptation and violence, justice and injustice, **conformity** and **coercion**. The National Socialist **régime** entangled people of goodwill in a confusing, diabolical net from which it became increasingly difficult to escape.

The boundaries between good and evil became increasingly blurred. A person's honesty was less and less a guarantee of proper conduct. A black-and-white portrayal of the generations of our parents **and** grandparents would therefore not do justice to them.

To this day we Germans are painfully aware of the conflicting nature of life during the war unleashed by Hitler. It is one of the tragedies of that era that the loyalty and patriotism of millions of people - whether at the front or at home - were misused for criminal purposes.

It is a reflection of the perfidy and perverseness of totalitarian **systems** that they deliberately place people in a **situation** in which there is practically no alternative to either incurring guilt or exposing oneself to danger.

*On* the one hand, there were the soldiers who fought and suffered during the Second World War. Most of them were honestly convinced that they were serving their country faithfully. There were many instances of bravery and human greatness that command deep respect.

Such attitudes do not deserve to be belittled or indeed derided, for they are associated with the experience of death, pain and fear - and in many cases tormenting qualms of conscience.

On the other hand, there are the **crimes** committed by the **Nazis**. They cannot be separated from what happened during the war. Many people suffered under this contradiction at that **time**.

**When** we speak of the destruction left behind by National Socialism, we should also **bear in** mind the devastation in the minds and hearts of the people. It is an emotional burden not only on those **who were** faced with this dilemma but also on their children and grandchildren, who themselves must try to form a fair judgement of the generations of their parents and grandparents.

We should beware of making hasty judgements **from** today's vantage point. Who among us *can* say with a good conscience that, confronted with such evil, they would have summoned the strength to be martyrs? And who among us can judge what it meant at that **time to risk** not only one's own life but the lives of one's family as well?

People today are no better and no worse than the people of that era, but they are not under the compulsion to make decisions in the conditions prevailing under totalitarianism.

We recall with gratitude that even in the darkest period in our history, during the war and dictatorship, the spirit of humanity could not be destroyed. Everywhere there were moving **examples** of helpfulness, generosity and humanity - across the battle fronts.

*There* were men and women who offered resistance. Among them were quite a few who at first served the dictator, until they **realized** that they - no doubt like the majority of Germans - had been duped, betrayed and exploited. They had the strength to turn back, and many of them paid for that with their lives.

Only democracy does not expect people to do anything that is normally beyond their power. It offers them protection from the terrible decision that the National Socialist dictatorship demanded of them: either to become accomplices, which was all too easy, or to show heroic courage.

Thus it is precisely the **memory** of the Hitler dictatorship that should induce us to resist any movement that promises complete salvation **from** all the evils of this world. Those who - whatever portents they **may invoke** - make such a promise are **certainly** on the road to new disaster. They have learned nothing from experience.

The disasters of our recent history teach us that there can be no middle road between democracy and dictatorship, that there can be no common values and no moral compromise. Freedom and bondage are, after all, as incompatible as fire and **water**.

Dictatorship may deceive and **dazzle**, but only democracy affords a person self-determination. It convinces by virtue of its sense of moderation, its soundness, and its predictability. In this prudence lies its greatness - and at the same time a reason why **some** see little attraction in it.

Democracy **was** simply **not** made for a situation of never-ending rapture **but** for normal, everyday life. It is not geared to deeds heroic and out of the ordinary **but to that which is humane and normal, in the best sense of the word.**

Political parties and the **right** of opposition are manifestations of a living democracy. It is for this very reason that the parties were so **bitterly and mercilessly fought by Hitler**; the dictator knew very well that once the parties had been removed democracy, too, would be dead.

We should call to mind **more** frequently that leading politicians of the post-war era - such as SPD Chairman Kurt Schumacher and the first Chairman of the CDU, **Andreas** Hermes - had first-hand experience of the prisons, concentration camps and indeed the death cells of the **National Socialist** dictatorship.

The **conclusion** from our knowledge of the period up to 1933 must be **that** extremism, whether **from** the right or **from** the left, can only succeed and gain power if the people **turn away from or** are indifferent to the democratic parties.

Disaster can hardly be avoided if, in addition, the social and political **élite** reach out a hand - possibly **under** the illusion that they will be **able** to cope with the extremists.

If we nip such developments **in** the bud, **extremism** has no chance. But if we treat them as something normal they will pose a threat to democracy. It is never too early to fight such tendencies.

Let us not place too great a strain on our democracy - it is a precious and at the same time fragile **asset**. Let us not misunderstand it as a panacea for all the hardships and problems of this world.

Let us always and everywhere defend democracy and the rule of law - they alone guarantee freedom and justice for all. They alone protect the **individual** from the dangers of totalitarianism - and that is why **every** individual is called upon to make them his personal concern.

V

Justice, respect for the law and legal security **are** as vital to democracy as the air we breathe. That is the legacy of the German resistance. Those who consistently defend the **rule** of law will not find **them-** **selves** in the position of one day having to resist those who challenge it.

Restoring justice, respect for the law and legal security **was** the main object of the resistance. This applies at least to the majority of all **those** who bravely

rose up against the National Socialist **régime**. Today, therefore, we pay equal **tribute** to

**the** cabinet-maker Johann Georg Eiser,

Colonel Claus Graf Schenck von Stauffenberg,

the Kreisau Circle around Helmuth James Graf von Moltke,

the **White** Rose, personified by **Sophie** and Hans Scholl,

such steadfast people as Julius Lebet and Carl Goetdeler,

and the many **others** who, on grounds of **conscience**, courageously opposed **tyranny**.

We would *not* only be detracting from the German resistance but dangerously distorting the historical facts if we were to use the term resistance, which is inseparably linked to dictatorship, arbitrarily in connection with present-day events.

By claiming a monopoly, the National Socialists fiercely combated all rival philosophies. Christians and Socialists, Liberals and trade **unionists**, Conservatives and Communists were all regarded as enemies. Without the interaction of people of completely different political **convictions**, we Germans would not have been able to make such an impressive **fresh** start after 1945,

The **moral** greatness of resistance is not determined by its **success** or failure. The attempt to assassinate Hitler had to be ventured at all events and at any price. Colonel Henning von Tresckow, who greatly **influenced** **Stauffenberg's** thoughts and **actions** from 1943 onwards, found **particularly impressive** words. Before his death, he described once **more** the main **motive** of his action:

"I consider Hitler to be the arch-enemy **not** only of Germany, but of the whole world. When I appear before the **judgment** seat of God in a few hours' **time** to account for my acts and omissions, I **believe** that I shall be able to **answer** with a clear **conscience** for what I have done in the struggle against Hitler. Just as God once promised **Abraham** that he would not **destroy** Sodom if there were just **ten** righteous persons in the city, I hope that for our sake God will not **destroy** Germany."

We owe deep gratitude to the men and women of the German resistance. Great respect is also due to those who, by emigrating, refused to support the despotic **régime** or had to flee from it. They included people who then, out of love for their fatherland, combated the Hitlerian dictatorship from abroad. Among them were the writers who attempted to rouse the world through the power of their words and to draw attention to what was happening in Germany.

For most **émigrés** it was not easy to leave their fatherland, and **some** of them **also** found it hard to return later. We are thus all the more grateful to those who

helped build the **Federal** Republic of Germany. Right up to this day, this very participation greatly assists the present-day efforts towards reconciliation and peace.

Let me also recall a man whom I deem to be one of the great heroes of the twentieth century: Raoul Wallenberg. In 1944, at the age of 32, he risked his life to rescue in Budapest hundreds of thousands of Jews threatened with death. In 1945 he was deported to the Soviet Union and has been missing ever since.

In my talks with General Secretary Gorbachev, I drew attention to the uncertain fate of that exceptionally courageous man. I very much hope that in this period of change, in which the depressing legacy of Stalinism is openly being discussed in Warsaw Pact countries, the fate of Raoul Wallenberg can be clarified in a truly convincing manner. I therefore greatly welcome the fact that the Soviet authorities recently invited relatives of Raoul Wallenberg to Moscow.

## VI

Today, 1 September, I particularly wish to address the young people in Germany. They do not hear any blame for the dictatorship and the world war - neither collectively, because there is no such guilt, nor individually, because they are too young. Yet they bear responsibility because the past remains with us. No German can escape it. But let us always perceive the burden of history as an opportunity as well. Anyone who is familiar with this century's history has a heightened awareness of the dangers and enticements of our time. Let us also resist the temptation of today scorning patriotism and love of one's fatherland because these values were abused in the National Socialist period. Showing disdain for patriotism would be to unwittingly comply with Hitler's intentions. Colonel General Ludwig Beck, who was involved in the assassination attempt on 20 July 1944, perceived this and once wrote with great alarm; "That man doesn't have a fatherland at all."

Love of one's fatherland and love of freedom, patriotism and European consciousness must never again follow separate paths - this is the conclusion that we must draw.

Similarly, it is essential to link virtues like courage, loyalty and dedication inextricably to fundamental moral standards. For example, the soldiers of the Bundeswehr do not swear allegiance to a particular person, but they pledge to defend the values enshrined in our liberal constitution, the Basic Law, promulgated over 40 years ago.

## VII

The founders of the Federal Republic of Germany shaped this, the second German democracy, in the light of the experience of German history. They led our country back to the path of liberal traditions, which neither war nor tyranny had been able to destroy.

We can take pride in our liberal constitution, *in* which we

acknowledge the absolute **precedence** of human dignity in all areas of life

reject war and force as a political tool as well as **any revanchism**; a *decision* that was **endorsed** by German expellees in the 1950 Stuttgart **Charter**;

**are committed to** the goal of a **free and united** Germany in a **free and united** Europe.

It is a manifestation of deep humanity that the authors of our Basic Law **granted** the victims of political, **religious** or racial persecution a claim to **asylum**. The humaneness of a society is demonstrated not only by respect for the freedom and dignity of its own **citizens**, but also by receptiveness to the victims of force and repression in other countries.

All these decisions paved the way for our society gaining recognition as a peace-loving member of the world community committed to freedom and justice on a scale that surely nobody would have dared dream of in 1945, at the end of the war and the tyranny. It is gratifying to be able to state this today, 40 years after the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

We are now witnessing **Europe's** entry into a new era, and we must be prepared to play a substantial part in shaping it. Europe, indeed the whole of Europe, faces far-reaching change, a radical transformation in the economic and social fields. For the first time since the end of the war, there is the prospect of emerging from the shadow of the East-West **conflict**.

The developments **occurring** on our old continent fascinate people world wide. **Which** nation could have a greater interest in the advance of freedom than our own? The disintegration of decades-old ossified structures in Europe prompts fresh hope of the unification of our fatherland.

Time is working for, and not against the cause of freedom. Thus on this day of remembrance we also look to the future. Notwithstanding **the** sorrow that we feel as we recall 1 September 1939, we are aware of our responsibility for coming generations. They **will** some day judge us by whether we drew the right conclusions from the war and dictatorship and by whether we lived up to the task of ultimately creating a better and more peaceful world.

We envision a future in which the nations of the world are peacefully united in common freedom, and we shall not relax our effort to make that vision come true. Remembering 1 September 1939, we know that this is the most valuable legacy that we can bequeath to coming generations.