

The Great European Jamboree

The East, the West, the Non-Aligned and the Neutrals
at the Pan-European Meeting (CSCE).

(Helsinki-Geneva-Helsinki, November 1972-August 1975)

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Avec quelle prodigieuse lenteur les hommes arrivent
à quelque chose de raisonnable quelque simple qu'elle
soit.

FONTENELLE, De l'Origine des Fables, 1724

I. The long journey towards a conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

A. GENESIS : THE COLD WAR 1946-1963.

Among the appalling ruins of World War II, the least evident in the late forties, yet the most far-reaching for Europe, were the downfall of her five-centuries old world supremacy and her radical partition into Eastern and Western blocs. Never, since the Moorish and Ottoman Empires, had the two halves of Europe been so drastically severed and held so totally incommunicado as by the Iron Curtain which, at the same time, split its greatest central nation right through the middle.

Mutual fear and distrust in the rival camps notwithstanding, the nostalgia of a "Europe for Europeans" (1) persisted and served as a leitmotiv to various suggestions of a pan-European gathering. Proposals to this end can actually be traced back to 1954 (barely five years after NATO was founded, the cold war furiously raging) when Mr. Molotov presented a plan for a European Security Conference and an "All-European

(1) Calling for a « Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals » in the mid-sixties, General de Gaulle, although expressing the same idea, was seen as intending to only evict the Americans.

Treaty", with China and the U.S.A. as observers. The USSR later agreed to American participation, provided Russia was granted... NATO membership. This offer, a curiosity in itself, was of course rejected by the West as an attempt to hold up the ratification of the London and Paris agreements of October 1954 by which Germany was to be re-armed and integrated into newly created Western European Union (WEU) and into NATO. After the Warsaw Pact, resulting from the "Conference of European States for the Preservation of Peace and Security" in Moscow (20 November 1954), was set up to check the Western defence organisations, the Soviet Union again, a year later, at the summit meeting of 1955 in Geneva, proposed through Mr. Bulganin a collective security agreement, which would "replace" both the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact. In spite of the relentless Cold War (the Budapest Rising in 1956), several proposals for "disengagement" were still made in the late fifties. This dubious approach and unfortunate beginning were to inhibit all further attempts for a long time to come (2).

The heart of the matter between East and West in Europe was obviously the German problem, and more specifically the question of Berlin. New negotiations in 1958-59 broke down (Soviet proposal for a German peace treaty on 10 January 1959) due to opposite concepts of this issue. Whereas the West, in the name of self-determination for the German people, insisted on reunification, the East considered this question should be dealt with by the two German States themselves, the separate existence of which therefore remained essential (3). Far from subsiding, the tension in Europe remained acute, even after some frank exchanges between Kennedy and Krushchev in Vienna on 3 June 1961, so much so that almost symbolically for Europe's division, the Berlin Wall was erected two months later.

B. THE CLAIM FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE.

Two major setbacks for the Soviet Union were nevertheless bound to change radically the course of the cold war. In the first place Krushchev's humiliating missile and bomber withdrawal from Cuba (28 October-30 November 1962) was universally felt as a recognition of America's so often questioned superiority and of their will to impose it. Secondly, the Russian feud with China, brewing since 1959, had burst

(2) European Cooperation Research Group : *The origins of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation*, 1973.

(3) NATO : *Brief Documentation relating to a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, 1972.

into the open with the bitterness of a religious schism affecting in various degrees all members of the Communist Church. Hence no longer could the Soviet Union pose as the head of a messianic and monolithic bloc threatening or seducing the outside world. Becoming increasingly vulnerable to attacks from within her sphere of influence, she had to adjust cautiously outside (4). The Moscow Treaty on the banning of nuclear tests (5th August 1963), the proposal for a general agreement on the non-use of force in territorial disputes (31st December 1963) and another on the creation of a permanent UN Peace Force were perhaps expressions of this policy, which seemed rather compromised when Krushchev was suddenly demoted and succeeded by Brezhnev and Kosygin (15th October, 1964).

A change in the Kremlin however, apparently didn't reverse the trend any more. On the contrary, the USSR having acquired thermonuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile capacity, made of its appeal for "peaceful coexistence" an almost permanent slogan. A new invitation to a European Security Conference, launched in December 1964, at the UN General Assembly by Mr. Rapacki, the Polish Foreign Minister, although seconded shortly after by the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee (5), was not well received in the West, where it was seen as an attempt to disrupt the negotiations then proceeding within NATO in view of a Multilateral Nuclear Force. The same was true as regards Gromyko's and Brezhnev's appeals (April 1966) showing renewed Soviet interest, as well as the Bucharest Declaration "on strengthening peace and security in Europe" (5th July 1966). Although the West remained suspicious of Eastern initiatives "aimed at sowing political discord" and questioning American presence in Europe, the idea of convening a Conference to discuss collective security in Europe was gaining ground as a consequence of the nuclear stalemate, the growing military parity between the Blocs and increasing attempts, such as the "hot line", to ensure a direct consultation between the rival giants.

The proposition was further explored in bilateral talks between some smaller NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. Among others, the Belgian Foreign Minister Harmel, during official visits with his Eastern colleagues, covered a lot of ground in this respect. Likewise, the "Group of Nine" and the "Group of Ten" (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Rumania, Sweden, Yougoslavia, joined in 1967 by The Netherlands) informally met several times during 1966 to consider ways and

(4) André FONTAINE : *Histoire de la Guerre Froide*, Paris, 1967, pp. 529-530.

(5) N. YURIEV : *The Foundations of Peace and Security in Europe*, International Affairs, Moscow, October 1973.

means to promote detente in Europe. Their timid understanding seemed somehow intended both to respond to and to check the growing tacit complicity between the "Two Enemy Brothers" (Raymond Aron). However, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the resulting Soviet disgrace, all attempts at reconciliation within the group could not but fail and the experiment of the Ten came to an end.

C. THE CLAIM FOR DÉTENTE.

The thaw was nonetheless in the air. Between 1966 and 1969 no less than five Warsaw Pact statements stressed the continued interest for an all-European Conference, while revealing a significant shift in emphasis and attitudes — from a "Pact-free unified Europe" to "wider cooperation". (Declaration of Bucharest, 5 July 1966 — Karlovy Vary, April 1967 — "Budapest Appeal", 17 March 1969 — Prague Declaration, 31 October 1969 — Moscow Statement, December 1970) (6). After withdrawing France from NATO, General de Gaulle had felt encouraged by his Russian hosts to state in 1966 in Moscow: "Il s'agit de mettre en œuvre successivement la détente, l'entente et la coopération dans notre Europe tout entière, afin qu'elle se donne à elle-même sa propre sécurité."

NATO itself had finally come to accept détente (rapport Harmel, December 1967), if only as a result of step by step negotiations between the two Blocs. In its reply to the Reykjavik NATO communiqué of June 1968, welcoming "mutual and balanced reduction of military forces in Central Europe", Moscow seemed to grasp the convenience of linking its proposals of a security conference in Europe to Washington's concern for limiting the arms' race. Consequently, since the Declaration of Bucharest, a diplomatic ping-pong match set off across the Iron Curtain, in which some non-committed and neutral countries like Austria, Finland and Switzerland took an active part, with various relevant proposals (7).

The Soviets felt further encouraged by President Nixon's inaugural address of January 1969, in which Washington's version of détente was outlined (no doubt by Kissinger) and its readiness for an all round negotiation (strategic armaments, Europe, Vietnam, Middle East, etc.). On 17 March 1969 the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Body responded with the "Budapest Appeal" for an all-European Conference on Security. After a carefully worded but favorable reaction from NATO (Washington, April 1969), the Finnish Government decided to

(6) Vladimír SOJAK: *European Milestone*, in *International Relations*, Prague, 1973, no. 3.

(7) Romulus NEAGU: *Emergence of a New Concept of Security*. *Revue roumaine d'Etudes internationales*, 1974, n°. 2.

make an offer to host a conference for that purpose, as well as the required preliminary consultations (May 1969).

A formal memorandum to this end was addressed on 24 November 1970 to the 34 governments of "all European States, those of East and West Germany and the governments of the USA and Canada". The invitation was accepted by the East at the Warsaw Pact Summit in East-Berlin (December 1970) and much later, after long debate and argument, by the West at the NATO Council in Bonn (May 1972).

D. TOWARDS THE CSCE.

No doubt, this result was largely due to a pressing urge, in Washington and Moscow alike, to come to terms. At the same moment (ten years after the Cuban missile crisis, the apogee of the cold war), Messrs. Nixon and Brezhnev met just before midnight on 26 May 1972 in St. Vladimir Hall in the Kremlin to sign the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. The outcome of thirty months of intensive negotiations known as the "Strategic Arms Limitations Talks" (SALT), this Soviet-American agreement was the most important turning point in Big Power politics since World War II. In fact, it was rather a beginning, not only because SALT were to continue, leading to the Vladivostok agreement in 1974 and to a permanent *tête-à-tête* between Washington and Moscow, but mainly because it opened the way to the twenty year-old Russian dream: a Pan-European Conference, which the US moreover, during Kissinger's visit to Moscow on 12th September 1972, took the additional precaution to link, by some loose parallelism, with the opening negotiations in Vienna on Mutually Balanced Force Reductions in Central Europe (MBFR).

Indeed, only as a concession to Moscow could Kissinger's indifference or contempt for a European gathering on security matters be overcome: in his view such a meeting would only obscure the real issues, hamper the relationship between the Super-powers and "clutter the stage with irrelevant demands by minor countries". The CSCE had therefore to be tightly framed within his global strategy.

In addition to the Russo-American understanding, the very idea of such an ambitious — or simply a meaningful — attempt at a general settlement in Europe required a solution of the central European problem: Germany. Since the mid-1960s, a mutual change in attitudes had already slowly developed between Bonn and Moscow. In fact, a softer Soviet policy towards West Germany had preceded, if only by a few months, the election of Herr Brandt to the Federal Chancellorship in October 1969. But only the new Ostpolitik of the Social Democratic Government leader and a *modus vivendi* with the German Democratic

Republic was to make the CSCE possible. Rather than to have its future decided by such a conference, the Federal German Republic chose to take its fate into its own hands. Willy Brandt wanted to restore German respectability and trust with the East, just as Konrad Adenauer had done with the West in the aftermath of World War II (8).

Consequently, Bonn had subscribed to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Pact and signed the Treaties of Moscow (August 1970) and Warsaw (December 1970) agreeing to the post-war de facto frontiers and renouncing the use of force. For their part, the Four Powers had signed on 3 September 1971 the first arrangement of the long-pending and crucial Berlin agreement which still appears the most tangible achievement of détente to date (End Protocol 3 June 1972). Finally, the FRG accepted the existence of its Communist twin by normalising its relations through various arrangements — provided the GDR was willing to leave the door open to reunification and to not consider itself a foreign country in its own right, but the second State of the German nation. After the Basic Treaty between the FGR and the GDR was initialled in Bonn on 6 November 1972, all the requisites seemed at hand for an open approach to a great European Consultation.

In fact, barely two weeks later, on 22 November 1972, the first informal discussions (Multilateral Preparatory Talks) set off in Helsinki between the representatives of 35 nations, in view of what had come to be known as the CSCE. They were to pave the way to the largest diplomatic conference in the history of Europe. Its erratic and laborious gestation over nearly two decades had encompassed the whole of post-war international relations in Europe, and reflected significantly their many vicissitudes (9).

II. Purpose and themes.

Although their positions had substantially changed over the years, growing cautiously towards each other, the Eastern and Western worlds gathered for their vast "Pow-wow" in different moods and with rather different objectives.

A. SOVIET AIMS.

If Moscow's claim of a "dissolution of blocs" no longer stood, the promotion of détente in Europe would nevertheless appear as weakening

(8) Malcolm RUTHERFORD : *Mapping the Helsinki route to Détente. The Financial Times*, 28 July 1975.

(9) Michael PALMER : *The Prospects for a European Security Conference*, 1971.

the West's determination to maintain effective arrangements for its collective defence, undermining the "Transatlantic connection", encouraging the progressive withdrawal of American troops and, last but not least, debilitating the Alliance itself, by advocating a new security system. "L'objectif prochain : une sorte de protectorat sur l'Europe occidentale, un droit de regard sur l'action extérieure, sur la défense et même sur la presse des pays européens." (10).

At the same time, the Soviets were felt, through the CSCE, to be securing their European flank in their bitter feud with China, while diverting Western countries from closer political and military ties between themselves in favour of some kind of vague "All-European" understanding. Peking's repeated warnings to visiting EEC leaders in this respect intended to keep Western suspicions from flagging and to stress the pertinence of this argument.

Obviously, however, the main Soviet purpose in the absence of a Peace Treaty, was to gain multilateral recognition of present European frontiers and hence the Soviet-annexed territories, together with Western acceptance of the statu quo in Eastern and Central Europe — an implicit acknowledgement of the Soviet sphere of influence.

Finally, Moscow's interest in détente was explained as a means of reaping a rich harvest from Western co-operation (financial credits, economic ventures, technological equipment and expertise) to meet increasing needs in the East, indeed to fill the widening gap with the West (11).

In the long term, the USSR could hope to assert itself, through the CSCE and its eventual follow-up, as the major, if not first European Power, draped in a new respectability. Not surprisingly, the record of the last twenty years bears testimony to the tenacity of Soviet policy in this respect and its significance: recognition of the post-war realities and admittance of a new security system in Europe. The traditional cornerstone of Russian diplomacy became understandably Mr. Brezhnev's personal concern. Was the CSCE not to shape his political stature and his place in history? Having consistently played the card of détente against the doctrinaires "purs et durs" of the Suslow school or the "hawks" of the military establishment, this old man, of ill health, seemed in need of a happy end in Helsinki in order to perpetuate his legacy in the Communist Church — at the next conference of the European Communist Parties and the 25th Soviet Party Congress in February 1976 — as well as vis-à-vis the United States (the already postponed meeting with

(10) R. ARON : *La Foire aux Diplomates*, in *Le Figaro*, 7 July 1975.

(11) *The Trouble Brezhnev has stored up*, in *The Economist*, July 13, 1974, p. 48.

President Ford) (12). Mr. Brezhnev seemed eying Helsinki as others were longing for Lourdes.

B. THE NON-COMMITTED.

As these various assumptions of Soviet aims could not be fully ascertained, neither could they all be held to be per se hostile to others, even in the West. According to some leading circles, a pan-European encounter would, indeed, be a historic event of value, likely to outbalance the "spirit of Camp David" with a new continental understanding.

Various warnings (Austrian, Yugoslav and Maltese) were given that European interests had not to coincide with those of the Super-Powers. "L'Europe ne doit pas devenir un terrain de parcours", opined M. Jobert, whereas "closer co-operation between the Superpowers could harm the legitimate interests of other States", according to the Swedish Foreign Minister, Mr. Wickham. For others still, the CSCE could prove a welcome test of Super Powers' intentions or a means to check them and, at any rate, a forum for being heard from.

C. WESTERN VIEWS.

Although evolving over the years and giving in extensively to Western demands, the Soviet insistence on a Security Conference could not but embarrass the West in general and NATO in particular (13). When avoidance appeared no longer possible, Western policy aimed at securing the best possible guarantees, the highest price for its consent and the advertisement of its own views. Thus American and Canadian participation were abundantly advocated as was the significance of the Atlantic Community, and the relevance of the Alliance to a stable world peace and order.

In contrast to Soviet activism, the United States had understandably adopted a "low profile" during the "incubation" period. Avoiding "to shape the issue" but making sure that it was not taken for granted and did not get out of hand, Washington wanted, in short, a fair prize for its agreement. "First we sold it for the German-Soviet Treaty, then we sold it for the Berlin Agreement, and we sold it again for the opening of the MBFR", Helmut Sonnenfeld, a Kissinger aide, is reported to have "confessed" (14). As stated, Washington intended furthermore

(12) Marshall D. SHULMAN: *Towards a Western Philosophy of Coexistence: Foreign Affairs*, October 1973, p. 48.

(13) *A Look at the CSCE*, in *Nato Review*, n° 5, 1973.

(14) *Newsweek*, 11 August 1975.

to link the CSCE to the complicated MBFR, in order to get the Vienna negotiations off the ground, "but it became so esoteric that it wasn't all that easy to link", according to an American representative (15). Anyhow, eventual stalling of the military talks was not obviously due to lack of conciliation in the political ones.

The more the Soviets wanted their success, the less the West was willing to please them. Instead of being "pushed around", it intended to have its way. If the CSCE was not to be prevented, better to make use of it for one's own concern. Hence tough and weary struggles over "hot" political, legal or human issues, which left no doubt as to the Western interpretation of some inevitable ambiguities (16). On the other hand, the Alliance had to streamline some differences in its midst and to work out some common denominators on matters of dissent. But on balance, the Western purpose seemed a negative, or at least a restrictive one, were it only by minimising the impact of the CSCE on public opinion which in times of crisis was felt to be dangerously receptive to détente and easy security. Contrary to Soviet "maximalism", Western policy aimed at playing down the CSCE and its importance in the wider context of East-West relations.

Unlike the United States, the nine EEC countries soon found themselves in the front row. Their experience of mutual consultation leading to consent, their common expertise and administrative know-how, brought them into a position of leadership that gained the European Community de facto recognition by all participants, including the East.

In this sense, the arduous CSCE talks have proved for the Nine to be an unprecedented test of political harmonisation, the more interesting since it covered diplomatic "virgin" ground, a sort of "New Frontier", both in tactics and on issues (representation of the EEC Commission, spokespersonship of the Nine, EEC commercial interests, etc.) (17).

This is not to say that no differences could be noted within the Community. In fact some would even distinguish between "hard-liners" and "soft-liners" in the EEC (18). Among the former were Italy (distrust of pan-Europeanism as detrimental to Western unity, fear of her large Communist Party), the Netherlands (displaying a virulent libertarian messianism in matters of human rights) and even, to some

(15) *New York Times*, 11 June 1975.

(16) « There is no hurry to wind up the European Security Conference : the longer the West goes on demanding freer contacts, the harder it is for Brezhnev to go on saying no ». *The Economist*, July 13, 1975.

(17) Crispin TICKELL: *Enlarged Community and Security Conference, in Außenpolitik*, 1/1974.

(18) Karl E. BIRNBAUM: *Die Genfer Phase der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa: Eine Zwischenbilanz*, in *Europa-Archiv*, 10/1974.

extent, France, perhaps disappointed in her hope to be considered as the principal European opposite number of the USSR. Among the latter were included the United Kingdom and, somewhat surprisingly, the Federal German Republic who saw in the CSCE a useful instrument for achieving multi-lateral East-West agreements for the benefit of her Ostpolitik.

III. The conference.

A. NATURE.

Whatever its merits or shortcomings, the convening of the CSCE was an achievement in itself, because it was unprecedented in nature, scope and audience. Not only was she to deal with a wide range of long-standing issues of misunderstanding, dissent and friction, as well as with matters of utmost gravity and complexity, but for the first time she assembled representatives of 33 European States (except Albania), of the United States and Canada, all concerned to create a new continental *modus vivendi*.

The CSCE, for that matter, was not a substitute for a peace conference nor a confrontation of rival military pacts, but was in fact meant to be a meeting place for independent States, among them, of course, neutral and non-aligned countries. Whatever the virtues or perils of this endeavour, its originality could hardly be denied.

B. STRUCTURE.

1. *Preparation of the CSCE*

As early as December 1969, the then British Labour Government proposed the setting up of a Standing Committee on East-West Relations (SCEWER) for the preparation of a pan-European Conference with the assistance of neutral and non-aligned countries. For its part, the Belgian Government had suggested a "salon ouvert" formula, under which the ambassadors of the interested countries would meet informally in a neutral capital to evolve an agenda by mutual consent.

Variants of this idea were presented by the Finnish and Austrian Governments, whereas the Warsaw Pact members proposed "direct participation of all interested countries" (Budapest June 1970). Later, a four-member preparatory group was suggested by Hungary, to be replaced by a three-members group or "troika" (19). In a formal memorandum

(19) L. RADOUX : *Report on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee on the CSCE*, 21 February 1975, Working Documents 1974-1975, European Parliament. Doc. 485/74, pp. 16-17.

of July 1970 however, the Finnish Government repeated its former offer to host a CSCE, proposing a series of "multiple bilateral talks" in Helsinki, to be eventually followed by "multilateral preparatory talks", both at the level of heads of mission. These discussions had to be considered absolutely non-committal, to make sure that the Conference would duly examine all proposals made and find sufficient common ground to allow a reasonable expectation of success. Once agreement was reached, heads of missions of potential participants to a Conference met in Helsinki from November 1972 to June 1973 to establish the agenda, procedure, date and venue of the Conference.

In order to avoid confusion or ambiguity, the Western Allies wanted an understanding on the broad issues or "terms of reference" for the benefit of the working groups (commissions) which later would handle the negotiations proper. After four rounds of intense discussions, the agenda was tabled into four categories or "baskets" and the following "mandates" were defined for each issue :—

- The General Principles of the relations between countries, including the renunciation of force and the political and security matters, together with "confidence-building measures" such as the prior notification of military manoeuvres and troop movements;
- The economic, technical and scientific co-operation among European States;
- The human and personal contacts, environmental questions and cultural relations;
- The "follow-up" of the Conference or the institutionalisation of the CSCE.

As to the form of the Conference, among several proposals (United States and USSR), a French plan in three stages (a formal opening ministerial round, a closed session of expert work in committees, and a third ministerial phase for adopting the conclusions) won, *mutatis mutandis*, the preference.

After eight months of endeavour, the diplomatic representatives had succeeded in drafting the "Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations" which, known as the "Blue Book", were submitted to a Conference of Foreign Ministers convened at Helsinki in early July.

2. *The first stage : conference of Foreign Ministers (Helsinki, 3-7 July 1973).*

After approving the conclusions of their ambassadors, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs solemnly stated at length the views of their Govern-

ments on the main problems of peace, security and co-operation in Europe and on the specific task and further work of the Conference. Moderation and restraint, even to the extent of some monotony, seemed the order of the day (20). The cautious and sober approach of Gromyko's speech was in itself significant of the feeling that this was not a popularity contest nor a show business affair. Only Malta and Spain created some major problems by raising the question of whether to consider the points of view of neighbouring non-participating States bordering the Mediterranean. The matter was shelved in the end without much damage, but the 35 participants, whose delegates were to work out, behind closed doors, the guidelines given to them, were left with no illusions about the difficulties ahead.

On 4 July 1973, the USSR had taken the initiative of presenting to the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Helsinki the draft of a General Declaration on European Security and the principles governing relations between States in Europe. Of this project, at least the skeleton was to survive and to be retained two years later in Helsinki's Final Act of 1975. The ten Principles (Decalogue) are the same in both documents and are listed in the same order (21). Together with a French and Yugoslav draft, the Soviet text and the suggestions made by Warsaw Pact countries were to become the basis for the real round of discussions which was about to start.

3. *The second stage: the Geneva negotiations* (18 September 1973 — 15 July 1975).

According to their distribution among the four "baskets", all matters were referred to Expert Commissions.

a) The First one, on *Political Questions*, was mainly charged with the task assumed by its first sub-committee, of "considering and stating, in conformity with the purpose and principles of the United Nations, those basic principles, which each participating State is to respect and apply in its relations with all other participating States, irrespective of their political, economic or social systems, in order to ensure peace and security (...) ». This "Helsinki Recommendation 17" was indeed a crucial one and referred in fact to what was already known as the Decalogue or Ten Principles (22).

(20) Fr. CARLE : *Les Pourparlers Exploratifs d'Helsinki*. Etudes Internationales, September-December 1973.

(21) Michel TATU : *Quand les Diplomates mettent les points sur les « i »*, in *Le Monde*, 31 juillet 1975.

(22) K. LAVROV : *The European Conference: Important tasks of the Second Stage*, *International Affairs*, Moscow, May 1974, pp. 16-23.

A second sub-committee was concerned with what was called "confidence-building measures", a military corollary to the political détente. The West claimed this to be essential, such as, for instance, advance notification of manoeuvres and troop movements along national borders. The question was nevertheless viewed with reluctance by the Super Powers, the USSR in particular, but also by the United States as well as some of the smaller nations (Turkey). It turned out to be one of the hardest and latest to be settled, and then only on a "voluntary" basis.

A third sub-committee had to deal with various measures to ensure respect of the general principles of the "Decalogue". To this effect, Rumania had presented a nine-point programme, which was followed by a full draft of a *Treaty on a European System of Peaceful Solutions to Conflicts*, submitted by Switzerland. Although seconded by several nations, it was doomed to fail due to the hostility of the Super Powers.

b) In short, the *Ten Principles*, roughly outlined from the beginning of the proceedings, were to become, understandably, no small issue in Geneva. They were, listed briefly :

1. Sovereign equality and respect of rights inherent to sovereignty.
2. Renunciation of the threat or the use of force.
3. Inviolability of frontiers.
4. Territorial integrity of States.
5. Peaceful settlement of disputes.
6. Non-intervention in internal affairs.
7. Respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including liberty of thought, conscience, religion and conviction.
8. Equality of peoples and their right to selfdetermination.
9. Co-operation between States.
10. Execution in good faith of all obligations of international law.

Although contained in the UN Charter, these principles were presented and interpreted in various ways by the participants. Their discussion and definition resulting from the three general drafts presented by the USSR, France and Yugoslavia, led to endless debate. No less than 35 meetings were required to agree on a mere formulation of "human rights". Among countless difficulties, the main obstacle was found in the third principle which, in the view of many countries, including the West, was to be related to the second and fourth ones. For the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the frontiers had to be seen not only as inviolable, but as untouchable so as to rule out all further territorial claims. This implied the definite division of Germany and the end of all hope of re-unification,,

which made it unacceptable to Bonn. It was no less to Eire (Ulster), Spain (Gibraltar) and the EEC countries, rather reluctant to give up the possibility of a political union and hence a territorial fusion among themselves. While admitting, in the end, the principle of a peaceful change of frontiers by mutual agreement, the Socialist States were nevertheless unwilling to include this provision in principle three. Again a time-consuming compromise had to be worked out, which finally served as a major breakthrough in the overall negotiations (5 April 1975).

Likewise, the sixth and eighth principles were obviously related and sensitive topics, likely to bring to mind the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and the ill-reputed "Brezhnev doctrine". Some non-aligned (Yugoslavia) and Communist countries (Rumania), along with Western participants, were adamant in seeking to outlaw and ostracise such interventions and their "justification" in the future. Consequently, all ten principles had to be understood and applied in the fullest sense, each of them having equal value and none to be opposed to another. Furthermore, commitments under the UN Charter were not to be contradicted and would always overrule "obligations" of another kind, such as "fraternal aid" in the name of "proletarian internationalism". Consequently, the new Declaration of Principles was not constitute a new Code of International Law and even less a specific European body of law, which could affect existing juridical situations like those on Germany and Berlin (23).

c) Contrary to the First and Third Commissions (human contacts, information, culture and education) the *Second*, dealing with *Economics, Science and Technology*, politically much less sensitive, did not run into major troubles and made rather fast progress. Its first committee handled commercial exchanges, the second industrial co-operation and projects of common interest, the third science and technology, the fourth environmental questions, and a fifth committee worked on co-operation in other fields. Although the Western and Eastern ways of thinking did not meet — the former aiming at greater facilities for commercial firms, the latter stressing principles of trade policy and non-discrimination — common ground for success largely subsisted. The Soviet Union, for one, disappointed in its hope of a "major benefit" from its commercial treaty with the US which was rejected by Congress, wanted compensation through the CSCE. Without the expected credits from the US, its trade with the West presented a deficit of £ 500 million for the first half of 1975, as against a surplus of £ 140 million in 1974. Hence an

(23) Götz von GROLL: *The Geneva CSCE Negotiations*, in *Aussenpolitik*, 1974/2.

increase of 80 % in German exports to the USSR, while Britain's sales had doubled and Japan's trebled.

However the negotiations were to stumble on the Eastern claim for a "most favoured nation" clause which, given the differences between the economic systems, the West insisted on balancing against an effective guarantee of mutual advantage.

d) It was, after all, in the *Third Commission* (Basket III) that the sharpest confrontation occurred between East and West, because their fundamental antagonism on these issues could not avoid reaching dramatic proportions, so as to threaten the outcome of the Conference itself. If the third and fourth sub-committees, dealing with cultural and educational exchanges and collaboration, encountered only regular difficulties, the first (human contacts) and second (information) ran into serious trouble. As a matter of fact, it was in this field that the West seemed most determined to make the Soviets pay the price for "their" Conference. In the course of time, more and greater concessions were claimed from them. Some agreements could be worked out on family meetings and reunions, marriages and the like. Other issues, such as swifter movement of persons, easier travelling, better working conditions for foreign journalists, freer movement of cultural objects and more direct contacts between persons in the cultural field remained bitterly disputed and deadlocked till the very end. On these points, however, firm and well-defined commitments were wanted by the West, as a pre-requisite of détente and the spirit of co-existence. An apparent hardening of the line in Eastern countries, even in more liberal ones like Poland, seemed to be further evidence to the West that the Soviet Union were shoring up its ideological defences. The Solzhenitsyn affair and the incidents involving several dissenters in the USSR (Sakharov, Medvedev, etc.), the Jewish emigration problem and other stories at the time made their claim the more relevant in the West and the more unpalatable to the East. This campaign, in which some countries like the Netherlands played a more crusading role than others, was felt by Moscow to have been orchestrated, in an attempt to transfer the cold war to Geneva and to harass or undermine the Socialist system from within. As a result, a mutual stiffening of attitudes ended in a common deadlock in the first and third Commissions, which was only overcome thanks to relentless efforts of eight neutral and non-aligned nations. The compromise finally adopted, while hardly dispelling mutual distrust on these issues, had left no doubt as to the vanity of any hope to force, from without, liberal, pluralistic or democratic procedures down the Soviet throat. But was such an expectation realistic or even reasonable? Was the CSCE intended

to reform the Socialist system? Was it to revive or increase tensions, instead of lessening them?

e) On the last Basket, dealt with by a mere "Coordinating Committee", the Western attitude appeared, in contrast, rather passive and even negative, if not outright obstructive. This reluctance of the West of any follow-up of the Conference, had disappointed many neutral or non-aligned nations in Europe who had come to consider the CSCE as their business and, at any rate, a forum to be valued (24). Proposals from Finland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia to implement its results, found no support in the West, as they all tended in one way or another to institutionalise the CSCE, whether through a simple "committee of continuation" or a permanent organisation with overall responsibilities. To the West, such suggestions were "premature", as long as some experience had not been earned on the outcome and results of the Conference. Preference was given to a "multilateral dialogue" to be continued after the CSCE. Finally, a modest Danish proposal was adopted, with minimal provisions for an eventual meeting of high officials after two years "in order to review the situation".

In fact, Western reticence merely reflected earlier reservations about the CSCE itself and the fear of its possible implications, i.e. a controlling body which, in the name of some pan-European "vagueries", would hamper West-European integration and dilute Atlantic cohesion or even compete with UN organisations, indeed with the Security Council itself. But on this point, as on others, the traditional East-West opposition appeared to give way to a new entrenchment along which smaller, neutral or non-aligned nations, with the distant following of a few sympathisers in both camps, tended to form a distinct entity. Was it this phenomenon that President Ford wanted to welcome in his address in Helsinki as the "rebirth of Europe's historical identity"?

4. *The third phase: the Helsinki summit conference and final act* (30 July — 1 August 1975).

These various arguments, as well as the new groupings, became more vocal towards the end of the second phase in Geneva and the hectic marathon that resulted from it. Several participants and principally the Superpowers, seemed bored with or worn out by the verbal guerilla war, which was gradually taken over by "minor nations" and threatened to get out of control, upsetting the Moscow-Washington understanding. The non-aligned and neutral nations nevertheless resisted successfully

(24) Jean SCHWOEBEL : *Les Petits Pays déçus par la position de la France*, in *Le Monde*, 3 juillet 1975.

the pressure to wind-up the proceedings in one way or another. The more so since, in order to ensure the strict equality of all members and the non-representativity of the Blocs, some participants (such as France and Rumania) had claimed and readily obtained, from the beginning, the rule of unanimity at the proceeding. Little Malta, because of its tenacity, was even accused of "blackmail" by the Soviets.

It had been understood that consensus was reached only if no delegate objected in such a way as to make his opposition clear (25). For the same reasons, a system had been adopted on Rumania's insistence, by which the chairmanship constantly rotated. This rule, inspired by the fear of monopoly, could hardly favour continuity and guidance for the Conference, since the chair had to change with each sitting of the Committees and ad-hoc groups — even from a morning to an afternoon meeting! At any rate, Soviet pressure to this effect not considered, the feeling was spreading that times were ripe to conclude. Mr. Brezhnev's personal lobbying, high-level diplomacy, and timely concessions on some outstanding disputes were furthermore paving the way to a constructive outcome.

A clear record and many successful initiatives notwithstanding, the EEC group appeared at the end rather undecided or contradictory; France and Germany were even accused of "schizophrenia" and "irresponsibility" by Switzerland and Poland respectively. But on 24 June, the EEC Foreign Ministers decided at last that a Helsinki Summit meeting, which they had always taken care to leave scrupulously in the open, was "possible and desirable before the end of July".

The final gathering, in the Finnish capital, of eight Presidents, 18 Prime Ministers, six Communist Party Secretaries, and two Foreign Ministers, along with some 2.000 assistants and newsmedia people, in spite of obvious differences, was not unlike the legendary Congress of Vienna, which Mr. Wilson, in comparison, chose to describe as "a well-dressed tea-party".

This is neither the place, nor is it the purpose of this outline to examine the provisions contained in some 30.000 words and 106 pages of the Final Act signed in the Finnish capital on 1st August, 1975. Less a legal obligation than a political and "moral commitment to be ignored at our mutual peril" (Harold Wilson), it was seen as "directed against nobody" (Kekkonen), and resulting from a "delicately weighed balance of compromises" in which "all win by possibilities unthinkable in the years of the cold war" (Brezhnev). Solemn pledges and public statements by the assembled world leaders, all did have some common themes: that this

(25) Bernard von PLATE, *Die Politik der Europäischen Neutralen im Ost-West Verhältnis*, in *Europa-Archiv*, n° 22, 25 November 1975.

was a possible beginning, and not an end in a continuous process of political détente, which needed to be complemented by a corresponding reduction of tension in the military field, such as new progress in the SALT and MBFR negotiations. The nations assembled in Helsinki, who represented 80 % of the world's military expenses, were reminded by the UN Secretary General that they could simply not afford "a new period of two decades of cold war".

Whereas Mr. Brezhnev's speech went far in giving all kinds of assurances in this respect, it remained significantly evasive on matters of human rights and exchanges between East and West, claimed by most Western leaders, but equally and surprisingly welcomed by Mr. Kadar and Gierk. In contrast, the American President, who drew the longest and loudest applause, delivered the thoughtest address in that it seemed (for internal purposes?) to want the East to come to understand and even admit Western libertarian ideals. Along with most Western leaders, he furthermore stressed the importance for détente of the German and Berlin arrangements, which were, instead, studiously ignored by the East.

However, such discrepancies, to be sure, surprised nobody. Most sensed, instead, a political maturity and statesmanship which compounded a general feeling of sincerity and commitment. On balance, the conviction among officialdom in the West prevailed that the best had been made of an arduous task, not to mention several unexpected gains (26). As to the EEC, after publicly asserting its identity all through the procedures, international recognition was at least tacitly given, when Mr. Moro put his signature on the Final Act in his dual capacity of head of the Italian Government and President of the Council of Ministers of the Community.

IV. Comments.

Seldom have diplomatic events given rise to more varied appreciations, indeed to so radically opposed opinions. What the British Prime Minister had called "a new chapter in the history of Europe" was held by some critics not even to be European: « Le sommet d'Helsinki a eu lieu dans l'espace et seulement entre Soviétiques et Américains (...) Nos pays ne sont que les princes et rois allemands faisant à Erfurt la claque de Napoléon, d'Alexandre et de Talma... » (27).

(26) Gotz von GROLL: *The Geneva Final Act of the CSCE*, in *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 26, 3/75.

(27) Bertrand Fessard de FOUCAULT: *La Grande Supercherie*, in *Le Monde*, 31 July 1975.

But other observers felt that the record of more than two and a half years of intensive negotiation had shown, on the contrary, that it was very much a European affair. Had the main issue in the CSCE not been shifting from an East-West confrontation to a debate between the Super-Powers and the European nations? Had there not been, across the former Iron Curtain, a growing awareness of a common heritage and a continental solidarity? In the process, Rumania, Poland and Hungary had sometimes gone as far as to join forces with neutrals and the West. Moreover, non-committed and neutral nations, with the sympathy of several countries in both camps, had asserted their rôle in taking a firm stand on various issues and prevented the Super Powers from dominating the show. Had Malta not succeeded in holding up the Conference until the Super Powers had agreed to a satisfactory formula on reducing their forces in the Mediterranean? Were most of the Conference achievements on the principles of conduct (First Basket), human rights (Third Basket) and the follow-up of the CSCE not due to the Europeans? In fact, for that reason, the general feeling in the smaller countries, aligned or non-committed alike, seemed rather positive indeed: the CSCE had been a welcome forum and a useful instrument (28).

But whoever had played the first fiddle, the more important question remained as to whether this "Magna Carta of European Peace" (M. Gierak) did, after all, really matter. At first, public opinion did not seem to think so. "Rarely had a major diplomatic event been so thoroughly discounted in advance" (29). Mr. Maudling noted in the Commons that "Thirty five world leaders were to meet for one of the biggest international conferences ever held, but the ordinary man on a Tooting bus did not know a thing about it". Ignorance, indifference or disapproval?

This reaction would, in the opinion of some, give at least comfort to those conservatives in the West who would not stop lamenting about the "demoralising" effect of the CSCE and its "nuisance value" on the moral fiber of public opinion and on the military preparedness of NATO. If the Helsinki results, far from being overrated and luring people into a false sense of security, had earned little or no credit, it was rather, in the view of some others, because détente and the need of it was already widely taken for granted. With its official platitudes and oddities, verbal esoterics, byzantinism and ambiguities, how could this all-European jamboree represent the true spirit of détente and mutual trust, when the

(28) Wolfgang WAGNER: *Zur Geschichtlichen Einordnung der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa*, in *Europa-Archiv*, 15^e Folge, 10 August 1975.

(29) J. KRAFT, in *International Herald Tribune*.

world in fact had come to face the real issues of mankind : its survival as a species from the threat of nuclear suicide, the selfdefeating arms-race, the poverty gap and the spectre of hunger in a time of plenty, at the end of the XX century, the problems of development in the Third World, the social and economic distorsions in the industrialised world, pollution, conservation, etc. ?

Hence the little sympathy or outright scepticism in the West, expressed by leading papers as *The Times* (30), *The New York Times*, *Le Monde* (31) and most representative newsmedia. Authoritative liberal spokesmen as George Ball, James Reston and Raymond Aron did as well, whereas the Christian-Democrat members of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Bundestag rejected Helsinki as contrary to the interests of the German people. Harsher critics from opposite quarters held that the "futile exercise" of the CSCE had played into the hands of the Soviets who, in the end, had won easy recognition of their post-war conquests and internal oppressions. « Du coup les choses deviennent encore plus claires. Les EU déclarent inviolables des frontières qu'ils ne reconnaissent pas ! » (R. Aron).

In exchange for "deception in 30.000 words" and some "sterile eggs in Basket Three", the West was reported to have "sold out" the enslaved peoples of Eastern Europe, together with the intellectual dissenters and the Jews in the USSR. Senator Jackson, Georges Meany (the AFL-CIO boss), Mrs. Claire Booth-Luce, Mrs. Thatcher ("the Russians are aggressive, brutal and untrustworthy") and many others agreed with the *Daily Telegraph* that "public opinion is protesting against the immoral and dangerous Helsinki charade".

In almost the same words, curiously enough, they were echoed by official voices in Albania and China. But whereas *Zeri I Populit* (29 July) warned against this "dangerous and devious Soviet-American enterprise for the sole benefit of the Super Powers", the *People's Daily* (30 July) and *New China* (31 July) prudently incriminated only the imperialism of Moscow "behaving like God issuing the Ten Commandments" (the 10 Principles) and preparing to "dismantle NATO by instilling belief in an illusory détente and eroding US influence in Europe" (sic). Both Tirana and Peking however, invoking the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the "danger of Soviet domination" of Portugal (resic), accused the West of surrendering to a new Munich-diktat and another Briand-Kellogg Pact, "void of all meaning".

(30) Nicholas CARROLL (Diplomatic Correspondent) : *Doubtful Detente, Russia should have paid more*, in *The Sunday Times*, 27 July 1975.

(31) André FONTAINE : *Les Mots et les Choses*, in *Le Monde*, 19 July 1975.

Disapproval and disbelief in the West were compounded by a somber international outlook. The economic crisis, the turmoil in Portugal, the electoral swing to the left in Italy, the Cyprus and Turkish-Greek confrontation, the diplomatic foot-dragging in the SALT II and MBFR talks, and last but not least, the doctrinal hardening in the socialist countries could hardly enhance whatever satisfaction or relief would be drawn from the "Helsinki happening" (32). "Two or three decades of peaceful coexistence as glorious as the last three, and the very concept of the West will disappear from the face of the earth" thundered the doomsprophet Solzhenitsyn, whereas Sakharov and others claimed that détente, by strengthening the ruling classes in the East, would delay the political liberalisation in their countries.

However, although many circles in the disheartened West seemed at first inclined to give in to their pessimism and gloom, more rational reactions were not long to follow.

In the first place it was recalled that nothing during the CSCE was conceded to the Soviets that they did not already hold. Mere acknowledgment was given — and no legal recognition — to a thirthy-year-old reality, the most questionable aspects of which had already, over the years, been accepted by the interested parties themselves as Germany and Poland. As for Portugal, Italy and other "trouble areas", "we cannot, after all, ask the Russians to help us check the advance of Communism", André Fontaine quoted Kissinger a confiding in a private interview. Referring to the "peoples behind the Iron Curtain", even if the current era of détente or Helsinki's Final Act may not have much impact on the daily life in Eastern Europe, remarked a commentator unsuspected of leniency towards the Soviets. "I doubt whether they are getting so worked-up about their "betrayal" as are their wellwishers in the West (...) They have long since abandoned the hope of being liberated by force of arms (...) from Soviet dominance" (33).

About Conservative hardliners in general and their "unwarranted tone of superiority" in particular, *The Times* observed that "continuing to make rude faces at the adversary may induce a moral glow among the grimacers, but it is hard to see how it does much else". Equally "dangerous" was "year after year proclaiming moral opposition to a situation the West is powerless to change".

Instead of having sold out to the East, the record would show that the West received its price for consenting to the Security Conference,

(32) *Helsinki : No News is Bad News and CSCE : Final Act - Farce or Tragedy ?* in *Soviet Analyst*, August 7 and 21, 1975.

(33) Gordon BROOK-SHEPHERD, in *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 August, 1975.

which it managed to keep up all through the process and even to raise substantially. "In the end, the Russians simply had to make more concessions than they wanted to" (34). Not only before, but during the Conference and at its conclusion, the West had secured or obtained *all it considered at the time essential* in all "baskets". Especially in the field of human rights, Soviet concessions seemed significant. To make the Russians simply agree on such an agenda already meant big progress, "because for the first time they had accepted such issues as legitimate topics for multilateral international discussion" (34).

Whatever the future may hold, some came to ponder "is there a realistic alternative to the hopes contained in Basket Three?". As to the main principles (First Basket), Mr. Brezhnev's solemn pledges, in a world forum, to non-interference (as opposed to the theory known by his name) cannot be intended as not "to mean what we mean" (Mr. Harold Wilson). In this respect, one might state « disons que pendant un certain temps, il devrait y avoir des choses qu'il sera plus difficile de faire » (35). In withholding the decision on a formal follow-up of the CSCE until 1977, the West, for its part, had furthermore ensured valuable leverage on all parties concerned.

On balance, President Giscard's views seemed largely shared that a "working relationship" with the USSR, would support those Russians who wanted the 25th Soviet Party Congress (February 1976) to celebrate a general world détente as Russia's "vested interest" instead of preparing a new cold war. The Helsinki overtures, which did not seem to have inhibited the growing capacity of Eastern countries to assert themselves, had also provided the West with new chances to enlarge their relations across the former Iron Curtain, as shown by the subsequent official visits of President Ford to Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia (36) — whereas Moscow, far from wrecking the Atlantic or European Communities, had given them, at the CSCE, unexpected opportunities for stressing and exercising their solidarity and common views (37).

In the end, beyond the exaggerated fears and hopes of détente, beyond Helsinki itself, lie some immutable realities. "These realities lead to the conclusion that there is no viable alternative to cautious, step by step progress along the tortuous road of co-existence... (so that)... the struc-

(34) *Time*, August 4, 1975.

(35) André FONTAINE, in *Le Monde*, 29 July, 1975.

(36) Following on those of ex-Chancellor Brandt, President Giscard d'Estaing, the King of the Belgians, the Belgian Prime Minister a.o., to various countries in the East since the Spring of 1975.

(37) Otto Graf SCHERIN : *Die Solidarität der EG in der KSZE*, in *Europa-Archiv*, 15^e Folge, 10 August, 1975.

ture and security of co-operation will become progressively too costly, too difficult and too dangerous to destroy. In this sense, Helsinki is a hopeful and necessary beginning" (38).

In stating this opinion, Mr. Samuel Pisar, the well-known international lawyer with a long experience of dealings with the East, was only paraphrasing the famous aphorism of the late Clement Atlee: "the only alternative to co-existence is co-death".

V. Conclusions.

Could it be that the voice of reason is also the voice of realism? Thirty years after the capitulation of the Third Reich, Europe had finally brought itself to admit the "balance of power" which had resulted over the years and established a "code of behaviour" to which all States had subscribed and promised to conform. At the same time, the two opposing social systems, existing side by side on the sub-continent, and in no position to liquidate each other, appeared to have settled their overall relations, much as Catholics and Protestants had done in international affairs by the Treaty of Westphalia after the Thirty Years' War (39).

Although both the Vienna Congress of 1815 and the Helsinki Summit one hundred and sixty years later, were attempts to legitimize post-war balances of power in Europe, the former established a new continental order, whereas the latter consecrated an existing one, the former had a legal system of commitments supported by sanctions, the latter only a moral or political one. Whereas the West, in pointing at legal restrictions had less the provisions of Basket Three in mind than the Principles of the Decalogue and the territorial statu quo, the Soviet Union claimed higher juridical value for the latter than for the former.

Both however appeared to have benefitted from the outcome. Whereas the USSR, anxious to get its "treaty", were likely to consider the Final Act itself or at least part of it as the main advantage, the West would rather find it in the negotiations proper, or during the course of the proceedings. Similarly, the ending of the CSCE could, in the near term, diminish a source of Western leverage and possibly make life rougher for some people in the Soviet Union and for independent minded people in Eastern Europe, while giving impetus perhaps to Soviet initiatives unwelcome to the West, from Asian collective security to world disarmament.

(38) Samuel PISAR, in *The International Herald Tribune*, 31 July, 1975.

(39) Philippe DEVILLERS: *La Conférence sur la Sécurité et la Coopération en Europe*, in *Revue de la Défense Nationale*, Paris, Mars 1975, p. 58.

ment (40). But it should also make it harder, in the long term, for the Soviets to justify the practice of monitoring East-West contacts through purely official channels and instead reinforce some aspects of Soviet détente policy which are important to the West, such as SALT and MBFR. Finally it should strengthen Moscow in its opinion that closer ties with the West — including all their pitfalls for the Communist system of control — are a policy worth pursuing, in fact the only valid course.

If nothing sensational has come out of the Helsinki Meeting, the signatories have given at least testimony of a common decision to end their confrontation and to accept a partnership called co-operation, according to the Charter of Helsinki, in which all European countries — not just the members of rival alliances — would share.

This eventual “rebirth of Europe’s historical identity” (President Ford) would require the acceptance and promotion of whatever diversity still exists in Eastern Europe and which could be enhanced in the right circumstances, without endangering anyone’s security in East or West (41). This is the thought which justifies the belief that détente is more likely than confrontation to create conditions for democratic evolution.

For if the ideological struggle is to continue, the competition is likely to increase within the socialist camp as well as in the capitalist world. “We are ready for such competition”, Austrian Chancellor Kreisky stated in Helsinki “Democracy is in itself such a creative form of Government that, within its framework and thanks to its principles, the main social reforms of our time have been shaped in the past and will continue to be made in the future.”

What matters now is to prevent this competition from reviving the tensions between States and to fight it according to mutually agreed minimal but essential rules. As a result, each system would have to face its own contradictions, while all over Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”, an ever better informed public opinion would have to judge, choose and act...

In this sense, one might consider that the CSCE, rather than merely homologating the territorial status quo in Europe, as is widely asserted in the West, was in fact aiming, as Metternich, Castlereagh and Talleyrand in Vienna in 1815 : “de mettre sur pied un accord général qui garantisse la protection et la sécurité mutuelle des puissances participantes et qui restaure en Europe un système fondé sur le droit public” (42).

(40) Pierre DELISLE : *La Stratégie Soviétique en Europe après la CSCE*, in *Défense Nationale*, décembre 1975.

(41) Klaus BLECH, *Die KSZE als Schritt im Entspannungsprozess (Bemerkungen zu Allgemeinen Aspekten der Konferenz)*, in *EuropaArchiv*, 22^o Folge, 25 November, 1975.

(42) Henry KISSINGER, *Le Chemin de la Paix*, Paris, p. 59.

Some like to think that it could also lead to a "pan-European system of commitments" as suggested in 1971 by the Christian-Democrat leader Dr. K. Carstens, and even to an "organisation contractuelle de toute l'Europe" such as General de Gaulle outlined 15 years ago. Only the future will tell...

December 1975.

Summary : The Great European Jamboree.

Its early roots reaching as far as 1954, the great European Post War Conference (CSCE), which lasted three years from 1972 to 1975, had to overcome the vicissitudes of the Cold War and the setbacks of the diplomatic normalization between East and West afterwards, before taking its final shape. Hence the multiple changes of its characteristics and purposes over the years.

Resulting from a global rapprochement between the Super Powers and a cautious modus vivendi between the German twin States in Europe (Ostpolitik), the CSCE, although an old Russian dream, was finally seen by the other parties as a calculated risk and possibly a beneficial one.

In the end, Western scepticism and criticism of the Helsinki Final Act were less founded on the actual outcome than on traditional reluctance towards the East and more vocal because of a darkening international outlook: the deepening economic crisis, the political disarray in Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy, Greece, Turkey) and a disheartened public opinion (Watergate, Vietnam, etc.).

A more sober view might nevertheless appreciate not only the balance of modest mutual gains for all participants, but moreover the outline and hope for a « rebirth of Europe's historical identity » (President Ford) as well as the first diplomatic acceptance of the EEC-entity and last, but not least, the « inevitability of reason », as expressed in the policy of détente and the general « vested interest » in it.

