

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

given by

The Honorable Klaus Schütz
Mayor of the City of Berlin

at the

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President Fleming, Members of the Board of Regents, Graduates and Guests,

I thank the University of Michigan for the honorary degree I have come to accept.

Permit me to do so not for myself alone. I regard it, at the same time, as a token of the unchanging friendly relations between the American public and the citizens of Berlin. The Berliners feel the solidarity it expresses; over long years of confrontation they have developed an unerring feeling for demonstrations of understanding. I thank the University of Michigan in this sense too.

Anyone speaking about the chances of durable peace in Europe may hope for a receptive audience. But he must also expect to be smiled at, just a little, or even pitied. After all, the subject he speaks about and for is something essentially good, and no one will raise his voice against it, because whoever voiced any objection would have to speak out against peace. And who would do that? The advantage that the subject of peace gives the speaker is that even though the audience may think him irrelevant he will be allowed to finish what he wants to say without interruption.

On factual grounds, however, this blind acceptance of the topic of peace is an extremely dubious thing, for it shows that there is not enough serious thinking, not enough precise thinking, in any case not enough realistic thinking about peace, about the concept of peace, about the manner of bringing it about and about what it shall look like once it has been achieved. And the kind of pity I mentioned is based in truth on a horrible reason. It derives its wretched substance not so much from the insignificance of avowals of peaceful intention and peaceful aims but from history. This pity simply accuses him who speaks about and for peace, of a failure to recognize realities: how can anyone with even the slightest

knowledge of history, above all anyone who is even the least bit aware of the present time, seriously assume that peace---more, durable peace---can be organized? And the speaker runs the risk of having this pity turned to ridicule.

In so far as ideas on peace are related to reality there must be controversies about them, otherwise they are useless. If peace is non-controversial, then peace is nothing but a vague, indistinct, remote goal with little obligation to act, even politically, nothing but irrelevant decoration, committing no one to any course of action. If this is true, I must hope to arouse contradiction in my talk of peace---at least that would prove that I am not too far removed from reality.

There is, of course, the difficulty that observations on peace move between, on the one hand, a vague although much desired future, a future which, however, people, above all in sceptical Europe, do not really believe in and therefore hardly anticipate, and the gigantic accumulation of negative experience of mankind as a whole from its entire history on the other hand. Indeed, it is distressingly close to reality to point to age-old experience which says that there has always been war---war which miserable ideologists claim to be the father of all things---and therefore to denounce all attempts to reach peace.

Pointing to the negative experience and pernicious forces in history and in the present, forces that come in many forms of intolerance from mutual slaughter---the harmless word for this is war---and daily mass murder and beyond to the various forms of totalitarianism of our day and age---pointing to these pernicious forces---which are covertly called inhuman but which are nevertheless man-made and in that sense human---pointing to all these sinister things is helpful and meaningful whenever it prevents people from carelessly disregarding reality to dream the dream of a realm of beautiful

peace. Reference to these forces is good when it contributes to keeping feet on the ground and helps thoughts of peace to be down to earth. But reference to all this is bad and irrational and inhuman in the other sense of the word when it leads one to meekly accept the bad pages of history and the present time and recommends, explicitly or tacitly, only a small adjustment to existing conditions.

For, to challenge and to resist any kind of thinking that runs in a groove and adjusts itself to what has allegedly always existed, to the status quo is a necessity for anyone who wants peace. He who wants peace does not take his imperfect day and age for granted, and does not leave things as they are but regards them as a jumping board towards a better future. "A state of peace among people living in coexistence is not a state of nature," says Immanuel Kant in his philosophical draft "Towards Eternal Peace," and he continues that the state of nature is a state of war, though not always an outbreak of hostilities, yet the continual threat of hostilities; thus peace must be made.

In other words this means nothing more or less than that it requires ceaseless effort by man to bring about peace and to work to this end.

So it is a question of indefatigably opposing the reactionaries of all creeds who, by clinging to the old ways as well as by their devotion to existing conditions, have always paved the way for the bad and the evil that are their consequences of normal conditions and have always been their henchmen.

This is not a hopeless endeavour. History, as well as our own age, provide shining examples of advances, of overcoming inhumanity and atrocities found more or less close to that which Kant calls state of nature. The replacement of a slave society in ancient times by Christianity, the codifications and

elaborations of law as formulated and implemented in England, for instance, by Magna Carta and the Petition of Rights, Habeas Corpus and the Bill of Rights, the elimination of social misery spread in the 19th century by the industrial revolution, these and other examples prove that progress, civilisation, pacification can be achieved. They provide encouragement for continued efforts towards a better future even in our time, which is filled with and beset by misery and threats, aggression and fear. History shows that a better future is possible; it shows equally that setbacks will occur.

It is therefore necessary for everyone to contribute his own share, in whatever part of the world he may live, towards urging society in the direction of peace and removing sources of conflict that have accumulated from the recent and distant past, and towards avoiding new tensions. This is essentially the task of politics.

I come from a city where, more than in any other European city, one lives with consequences of the second quarter of our century and where more than in any other European city the conflicts of the third quarter of this century are visible.

And this must be taken literally. In Berlin you need not exercise your brain in order to grasp the plight of our present human society as expressed in the present East-West conflict. In Berlin you can really "grasp" it with your own hands, you can touch the Wall. And you can hear it, too, when shots are fired in the middle of the city, the setting of the famous twenties, at refugees---not at strangers, not at unknown persons whose fate one's conscience can quickly and easily suppress but at relatives and fellow-citizens. The unanswered questions of our society, its inability to move toward mutual understanding, balance, peaceful conditions, are frighteningly and alarmingly immediate in Berlin.

And because there are not only "natives" in Berlin but, in many ways, the two Germanys so strictly separated from each other, and the two world powers, USA and USSR, as well as Great Britain and France, the world public ---if it wants to---sees, hears and understands every day what is wrong in Berlin and by implication, in world society.

From the conflicts in Europe, in Germany and in Berlin we have come among other things to the conclusion that a refusal to recognize facts does not bring about an improvement and certainly not a cure. You have to look, to diagnose and to analyse first before commencing therapy; it is only then that there is a chance of success.

It is in this very sense that I feel that Berlin presents a chance, Berlin where---if I may put it in this abstract way---a large number of the conflicts existing in Europe and beyond have focused in one point as if contracted as in reflected by a concave mirror. Berlin represents a chance to make progress towards more peace. An experiment which, if successful, can be duplicated elsewhere.

Do not misunderstand me. When I say that a world-wide public may recognize one of its great dilemmas in Berlin and its problems, when I say that dealing with the problems of Berlin is dealing with the problems of Germany and Europe, when I say that nobody in Europe and beyond can evade the situation in Berlin this does not mean that I am going in for a kind of political identity philosophy implying that the world should recognize all its problems in the problems of Berlin. We in Berlin are far from regarding ourselves as the centre of the universe.

We know that the East-West conflict for which Berlin has been something like the "locus classicus" is gradually being replaced by the oppressing contrasts which exist between the predominantly rich societies of the northern hemisphere and the predominantly poor societies of the southern hemisphere;

there are conflict-laden areas in the Middle East and in South East Asia, and every society has its own internal tensions to overcome.

I am not globalising Berlin's problems at all; our problems do not encompass all the world. On the other hand I do feel that Berlin's problems are global just as those in South East Asia and the Middle East and those between North and South are global. It is not in the interests of Berlin alone, it is in the interests of the world for the long-standing East-West confrontation to be essentially brought to an end and for Berlin, one--- perhaps the---incarnation of this confrontation, not to remain as a remnant of the cold war.

This is not to be taken in a sentimental, but in a very sober way. For it is particularly as such a relic that Berlin has been, and still is, in danger of being remembered in tense situations, and that the unsolved and unregulated, manifold and complicated problems in and around Berlin are then dusted off, topicalized and misused. We must avoid using old problems in Berlin to define new situations that may arise in the world.

Berlin does not want to be the memento that is dug out whenever it appears appropriate and useful to stage conflicts; Berlin wants to cease to be a troublespot in itself which potentially it will be as long as the consequences of old conflicts and the present difficulties have not been alleviated, lessened or removed.

He who wants to avoid serious conflicts in this part of the world, at least in Europe, must be interested in finding, if not solutions, at least settlements in and around Berlin, which are satisfactory. Now what is meant by satisfactory settlements? Allow me to digress.

Since 1945 the lives of the Berliners and the existence of the city have been under Four Power Status. In the 26 years since then the history of Berlin

has been governed by the conditions of the Four Power Status and, above all, of the confrontations between the originators and partners of this Status among themselves and thus inevitably about the Status as such. The strongest manifestation of the conflicts in and around Berlin were the Blockade in 1948-49 and the Khrushchev Ultimatum of 1958-59.

The erection of the Wall showed only too clearly right at the start of the sixties that the division of Berlin probably cannot be eliminated for the time being and that the division of Germany as a whole cannot be reversed for some time to come. But the events of the sixties, crises in Berlin and crisis above all in Cuba, also convinced the two world powers that they would have to be careful in their dealings with each other. It was generally recognized that no basic changes in the existing power structures would take place, and both sides perceived that they had to come to terms with the existing state of affairs. Both sides started to settle into the status quo.

Berlin too was given a place in this status quo thinking. It settled down in it, it made the best of the situation: that is to live normally in abnormal circumstances. This sober formulation covers a lot of things. It is naturally difficult for us Germans and us Berliners to acknowledge this situation for this means for us acknowledging not just any situation, but our own; in other words we are dealing with matters immediately concerning ourselves, and we are doing so with incisive consequences. But we must act on the basis of the situation as it is, for the only starting point for its improvement is the recognition of reality.

Thus we Germans know that we will find nobody interested in disturbing the existing balance between East and West in Europe and beyond, which is guaranteed by the two world powers and which is regarded as stable because it has incorporated the cause of the Second World War, Germany, as an

integral part. The existing balance has as far as is humanly possible, excluded Germany as a new cause of a war.

The European nations, and not only they, thus have a feeling of increased security, and they, just like the USA and the Soviet Union, will turn against any state seeking to upset this balance.

This fact is based on an experience shared by all Europeans, I reiterate: shared by all Europeans, one which goes even deeper than the recognition of realities like power ratios and power structures.

This experience is that Europe has been living with the division of Germany for a quarter of a century without war. This experience goes so deep because it meets the desire of the peoples and the nations for peace, and this experience is of a nature that cannot be changed by any reasoning however good, or rational which argues that we Germans advance in our own cause, in the "German", in the "national" cause. It is an attitude that cannot be changed even in the face of sympathy toward Germany as is predominantly the case.

Thus we Germans too must act on the basis of realities. And some of the present realities in Europe are the Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany and the free part of Berlin, East Berlin and the GDR or East Germany and the power structure which guarantee these borders, too.

In agreement with our three protecting Powers in Berlin and in agreement with the Federal German Government under Chancellor Willy Brandt, who by their policies towards the East---that is by their treaty with Moscow of last August and the treaty with Warsaw of December of last year, by the patient endeavours to achieve an orderly coexistence with the difficult GDR, by the work for a European peace settlement which is to be durable because it is to be just---who by their policies towards the East have

essentially made any progress towards peace in Europe possible, in agreement, I say with Willy Brandt and the three Western Powers and the Federal Government we in Berlin have formulated what is necessary in order to normalise, constructively and durably, the situation in present-day Europe in the framework of realities there.

Our expectations are moderate, not because we are resigned or have no hopes and wishes, and not because we are sceptical or suspicious but because we have formulated them with an eye to reality. They are of a practical nature, they are designed for the everyday lives of the Berliners.

For instance, we want our comprehensive ties with the Federal Republic of Germany---that is West Germany---which have been a matter of fact for a long time and which have long since been legitimized by the Western Powers to be recognized by the Soviet Union and its allies as well. Furthermore we want access to West Berlin from West Germany to be unhindered and free from chicanery for passenger and goods traffic. And finally we want West Berliners to be able at long last to visit again their friends and relatives in the other part of their city---in East Berlin---as well as in the GDR, East Germany.

If these expectations come true---and they can because they are not illusionary and do not mean a loss of face for any side---and because they are oriented to the present situation in the centre of Europe and thus on the mutual recognition of realities---then we shall have approached a little more nearer to a lasting peace in Europe, because Berlin will then no longer have to be what it never wanted to be: a trouble spot. Then the situation in and around Berlin will be objectively free from tension because it will be settled, satisfactorily settled.

As you know, the three Western Powers are currently negotiating with the Soviet Union and are attempting to reach agreement on a more satisfactory arrangement regarding Berlin. I strongly support these developments. The chances for a true Berlin settlement have never been greater during the last twenty years. My hopes and expectations for a satisfactory settlement are based on the more realistic approach being taken now by all parties involved. Any settlement, if reached, is likely to survive; it will be based on realities as well as hopes and honorable sentiments.

Satisfactory settlements are settlements with peace in mind. We do not delude ourselves: these settlements do not represent all-embracing general peace; they are settlements for more peace. They are, in other words, merely improvements, they are not solutions. This does not mean genuine peace but a step in the direction of peace.

We in Berlin regard this as our contribution towards general peace: We do not act as kindly but harmless apostles of peace with avowals, evocations and assurances of good intentions. For the question in truth, is how a lasting peace in Europe can be brought about, can be organized under the conditions as they are. What is needed is that a start be made towards its implementation, and that forthwith.

This means work, for the creation of peace is the opposite of an idle existence. I do not think that reason itself will lead to an evolutionary breakthrough; it must be applied. With all reservations: I am confident that reason will create reasonable conditions; it is no use not being confident in this; for what else would lead us to organized peace if not reason? Let us therefore apply reason, above all in practical ways.

Let us therefore set out gradually to replace the balance of power between East and West, which is still based on fear and deterrence, by settlements and agreements that will help us to achieve a positive concept of peace, help us to achieve genuine peace. The signs that we are approaching peace in Europe, and in fact lasting peace, are there. They must be utilized and amplified. Then this matter of peace could succeed, indeed can succeed.

Thank you for listening.

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