

# THE TABLET

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**A plan for Ireland: Louis McRedmond**

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**The Gehlen memoirs: Terence Prittie**

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**Address to the Swedish Academy: Alexander Solzhenitsyn**

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**Christianity in China: Arne Sovik**

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**Paul Johnson's island: Douglas Woodruff**

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## Unfinished Ostpolitik

The aim of Chancellor Brandt's *Ostpolitik* has always been all-embracing, as, indeed, was the policy of his predecessor, Dr. Kiesinger. Its first purpose was reconciliation, or at least the establishment of a reasonable working arrangement with East Germany. It also included the normalisation of relations between Federal Germany and the two States most grievously and systematically wronged by Nazi Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. These lay heavily on the German, that is, Federal Germany's, conscience. About East Germany, though never much liked by the West, there was no feeling of guilt; the Democratic Republic, after all, contains some who were as enthusiastic Nazis, as much implicated in Hitler's plans of conquest and destruction, as other Germans. And about Soviet Russia the burden of guilt was much less than in regard to Poland and Czechoslovakia. Stalin had been Hitler's ally, had divided the spoils with the Nazis.

But the key to reconciliation obviously lay in Moscow. Here Dr. Kiesinger met two main obstacles: first the votes of millions of ethnic refugees, those Germans driven into exile from their homes in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and former German territories now part of Poland; next, the rise of the National Democrats. So long as they, unlike the Communists, were recognised as legitimate, able to contest elections and secure representation in Parliament—however exiguously—the Communist charge against Bonn as “revanchist” had some plausibility. Dr. Kiesinger's intense hostility to the National Democrats did not help him in his conciliatory approach to Moscow, Warsaw and Prague; his offer of a mutual treaty of non-aggression as a first step was emphatically rejected by the Soviet Government.

At length the Bonn Government was taken over by Herr Willy Brandt, the much-respected Mayor of Berlin, whose anti-Nazi credentials were impeccable. He dedicated himself wholeheartedly—paying insufficient attention, said many critics, to home politics—to the task of “reconciliation through communication” with all Moscow-dominated Eastern Europe. His repeated personal negotiations with East German representatives, upon which he entered with high hopes, were frustrated, but at last he, in co-operation with the Western occupying Powers, signed a general treaty with Moscow and Warsaw, while a Four-Power agreement was reached securing the Western rights of access to Berlin, coupled with an agreement with the German Democratic Republic on traffic and transit between the two German States. The East German régime did not reciprocate; East Germans were not allowed to go to the West in any appreciable numbers; the Berlin Wall remained, a standing proof of the East German fear of contagion. Though welcome to Germany's friends, it was a meagre result compared with what the Chancellor had hoped for, and had explored, either personally or through his indefatigable envoy, Herr Egon Bahr, since the first talks at the end of January, 1970. It was clear that they would not have gone even so far without Soviet pressure on the GDR, which Mr. Brezhnev applied to this impossibly intransigent body because he wanted, in his national interests, to obtain West German consent to a European Security Conference, and an increase in sorely-needed technical co-operation with West Germany.

Meanwhile the Socialist-Free Democrat coalition had lost its majority in parliament, making significant progress impossible until after the general elections. The Chancellor nevertheless