

Germany's friends and enemies were so easy to distinguish that no one seriously questioned the future.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, an affable bear of a man, is much given to vague and uplifting references to the "fatherland" and to a Germany of happy, laughing children. In a sense he couldn't lose. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, were fatally compromised by having been in power for a long time—thirteen years—and by association with the high unemployment and steady slowdown of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle. Consequently, they had little option but to campaign on the emotional theme of the U.S. missiles and peace.

Following politicians up and down Germany, observing the record-size crowds, and speaking to individual Germans, one forms a picture of German society as one fearful for its future. While there appears to be a general consensus that some fat must be trimmed from the social welfare program, which protects Germans from cradle to grave, and that the Social Democrats were exhausted and bereft of new ideas, agreement pretty much ends there. Only committed Christian Democrat voters—usually those near retirement age and those who view all Social Democrats as closet Marxists—seemed to have voted for a party and its program. The rest, with varying degrees of political sophistication, voted *against* someone or a party, choosing the lesser of several evils. It would be misleading to conclude that the public attitude was one of apathy or boredom. Meetings brought out record numbers and almost 90 per cent of all those enrolled actually voted, including over 80 per cent of first-time voters.

Some voted for the CDU to prevent the Greens—the idealistic, alternately naive, dangerous, and harmless new entrant into German politics—from holding the balance of parliamentary power. Others voted against the SPD in the hope that a dose of opposition would do wonders for its soul. Still others voted against Herr Franz-Joseph Strauss, an engaging, baroque politician from Bavaria, the man they all love to hate. Few people seemed to know anything about the program of the swing Liberal party (Free Democrats); but they voted for its candidates because they wanted to prevent Strauss from becoming foreign minister and favored having three parties in the Bundestag.

The supporters of the Greens weighed none of the above but voted to prevent the death of Germany's forests from acid rain and to halt possible deployment of the cruise and Pershing missiles.

Unfortunately, no one really seemed to want to address the deeper problems of German society. Fat may be cut from the "social net." Growth may be recorded again. But the German economy suffers from its very successes. Industrial costs are far too high. Economic growth has come to depend on exports for its impetus. There has been far too little investment in high and new technologies. Many Germans fear, with cause, that there cannot be a return to sustained high growth; that Germany's traditional strengths in machinery and electrical goods will be eroded rapidly by low-cost rivals from Japan and Southeast Asia; that it will suffer the fate that has been Britain's since the '60s.

Perhaps the Greens' small victory, which enables it to enter the Bundestag for the first time, ought to be read as a sign both by the German establishment and the country's allies that new agendas and new faces have increasing appeal in troubled times. Unless those now in power address the citizen's real fears, some of the insomniacs' more generalized fears may be realized.

Julian Crandall Hollick is a freelance reporter currently traveling in Europe.



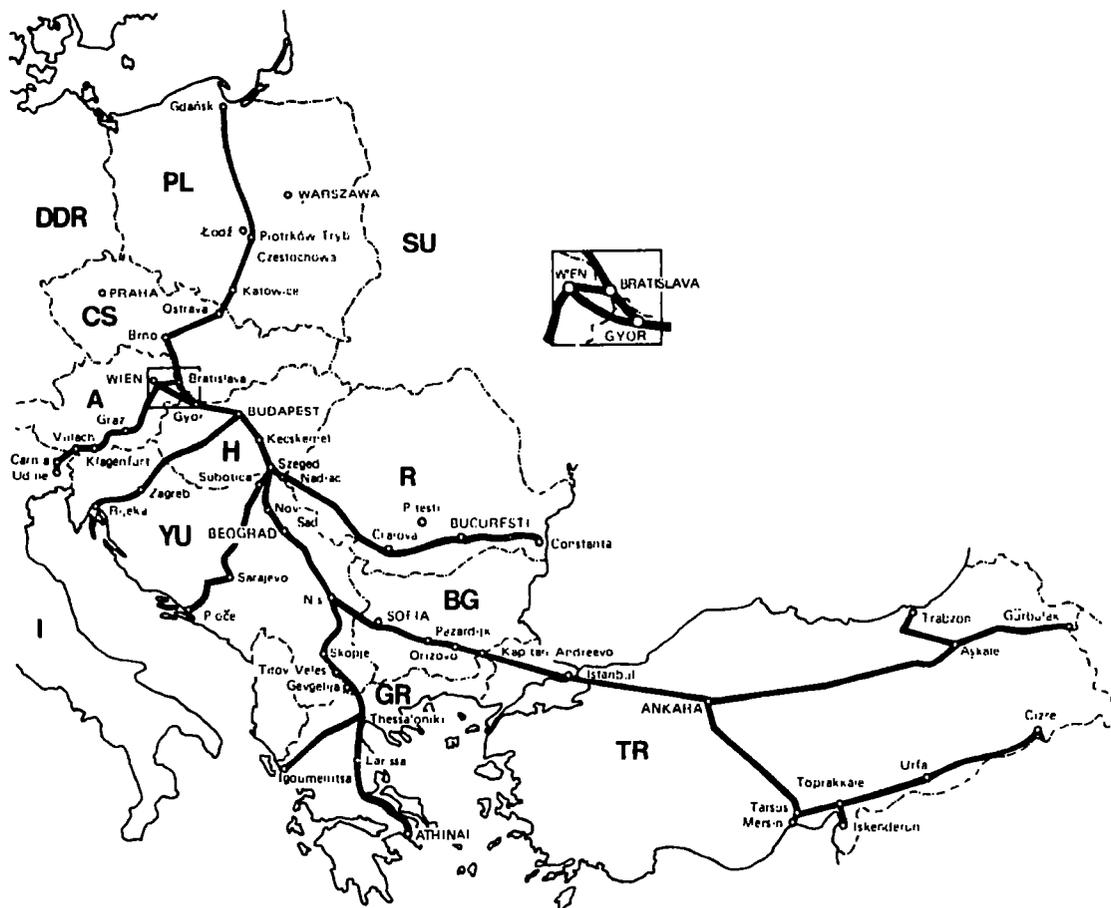
EXCURSUS 3

Thomas Land on THE NEW NORTH-SOUTH TRADE ROUTE

Planning for a ten-thousand-kilometer Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) linking the politically divided halves of the continent and enhancing trade with Africa and Asia has now entered its second stage. During the first phase of the project, begun in 1977, common standards of design and construction, including technical specifications, were adopted, and studies to forecast future traffic on each section of the road system were carried out. The second phase calls for harmonizing the timing of construction and ironing out problems of maintenance and management as well as of financing. Most of the system's series of interlinked high-capacity roadways equipped with appropriate services for modern traffic are scheduled for completion by 1990.

The gigantic project, first proposed by Poland and by landlocked Hungary in 1972, was spurred by two important developments of the 1970s—the search in the United Nations for a new international economic order marked by greater cooperation between the industrial North and the developing South, and the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is administered by the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the only international agency embracing both the Eastern and Western sectors of the continent, in cooperation with its sister organizations, the economic commissions for Africa and Asia. The U.N. Development Program (UNDP) has earmarked \$3.7 million for funding the international aspects of the project. Participating countries are to finance the sections running through their territories.

TEM's complex network will traverse Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, with Gdansk on the Baltic coast of Poland its northern terminal. At Nis in eastern Yugoslavia, after tracing a course through Warsaw, Bratislava, Szeged, and Belgrade, the road will fork. One section will continue southward into Greece and the other southeast via Sofia and across the Bosphorus to Ankara, reaching the Turkish border with Iran and linking with the Asia Highway. Another section in Turkey will extend to the Syrian frontier.



The Greek branch will have several termini at various ports, facilitating sea traffic links with the northern coast of Africa across the Mediterranean. Further north, a branch through Vienna will link up with the Italian road network at Udine, while other branches will terminate at the Yugoslav cities Rijeka and Ploce on the Adriatic coast. Yet another branch starting at Szeged in Hungary will give access to the Black Sea at Constanza. The project could gain further significance in the context of a development scheme to erect a permanent road link between Europe and Africa across the Straits of Gibraltar.

Europe's present transport infrastructure has evolved in response to limited and isolated national interests. It has lacked a continuous north-south road system adequately equipped to meet the needs of modern transport of passengers and goods. Yet despite the rising price of fuel and fears about pollution and security, road transport has expanded substantially during recent years. As a result, many of the roads used for trade between Europe and adjacent continents are overcrowded and dangerous; and provisions for services are hopelessly inadequate by modern standards.

TEM thus could become an important liberalizing influence for trade both within Europe and between the continent and its neighbors. The frustrating bottlenecks along the existing north-south routes have intensified the dependence of exporters in the developing countries on container shipping, which requires capital investment often beyond their reach. Improved roads will reduce considerably their transport problems as well as their need for northern capital and middlemen.

According to UNDP, "the TEM project offers the prospect of lower transport costs, energy savings, development of tourism, easier goods traffic, better access to trading part-

ners, a quicker turn around of vehicles, and a shorter immobilization of traders' capital." It has been launched against the background of an enormous increase in the quantity of goods transported between Europe and the Middle East, the growing role of the private car in international tourism, and the opening of the Bosphorus Bridge to Western Asia.

If similar road-building projects elsewhere are any guide, the new road system should generate a fever of further construction projects all along the routes at both sides of the expressways, encourage agricultural as well as industrial development, and provide business, employment, and income from the ancillary services to be offered.

Technical papers and seminars seeking international agreement on uniform standards have covered such topics as traffic-safety regulations, road maintenance, and parking and rest facilities—as well as the thickness and consistency of road surface, the width and number of lanes, and the design and load capacity of bridges and viaducts. A recent meeting in Timisorana, Rumania, concerned building standards; in Bucharest, photogrammetry; in Skopje, seismic issues; and in Sofia, frontier-crossing procedures.

Roads in the network will have two separate one-way carriageways, each with a minimum of two, 3.75 meter-wide lanes. A basic speed of 120km per hour has been established. The ten partners already have agreed on common standards governing technical specifications for gradients, curves, surfaces, and drainage. They are now considering standard rules on traffic control, regulations, safety, and maintenance. And probably for the first time in Europe's history the opportunity is at hand to evolve a common method of frontier controls.

Thomas Land writes from Europe on global affairs.