

## 7. The *Virtù* of the Statesman – Willy Brandt

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1989 marked the end of the Cold War that had prevailed since 1945. It also marked the end of Willy Brandt's peace policy, which, with its policy of small steps, peaceful coexistence and change through rapprochement, contributed significantly to overcoming the Cold War and the division of Europe. Since then, the situation in Europe and in the world has changed considerably. We have been living in a new era in which the European Union has successfully expanded, but on the other hand, has lost clarity about its self-image and the shaping of its future. The same applies to NATO, accompanied by a change in the political culture in many countries and by economic and geopolitical power shifts.

When this text was written, no one thought a Russian war against Ukraine was possible. Since then, the geopolitical constellations have intensified. In 2019, the Kim Dae-jung Foundation in South Korea invited me to speak about Willy Brandt's peace policy, and other guests spoke about Kim Dae-jung and Nelson Mandela in order to explore the possibilities of peacefully overcoming the division of Korea. Another event was attended by Philip Pettit, whose research on republicanism had inspired me to assess Willy Brandt's work from a republican perspective rather than a social democratic one, which in Germany is less civic and civil society-oriented than traditionally state-oriented and paternalistic.<sup>1</sup>

When we speak of Willy Brandt's great political merits against the background of the international situation, we realise that we live in a different era, that the constellations and the balance of power are different. We cannot stay in the past, but neither can we simply transfer the specific political actions of the past century to the situation today. So what can we do?

I would like to suggest that we take a closer look at two phenomena: firstly, at the special features of Willy Brandt's statesmanship and, secondly, at Willy Brandt as a person. Both aspects are exemplary for other eras and other circumstances.

The Italian statesman and thinker Niccolò Machiavelli in the Italian Renaissance believed that the way to learn from history is to identify political actions of exem-

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1 Philip Pettit: *Republicanism: a theory of freedom and government*, Oxford University Press, USA, 1997; *Just Freedom: A Moral Compass for a Complex World*, London: Norton 2014.

plary validity. During the Renaissance, Machiavelli had for some time influenced the political fortunes of his home town of Florence. Later, in exile, he compared his own experience with that of political actors during the Roman Republic in his marvellous book *Discorsi*.

The fundamental insight that Machiavelli gained from his reflections is that the constellation of each action is determined by four basic conditions: concrete circumstances, opportunity, luck and, finally, the aptitude for action, the *virtù* (not to be confused with virtue or private virtuousness). Hence the concrete circumstances must first be studied thoroughly; the opportunity to act must be recognized at the right moment; luck, *fortuna*, which consists of unforeseen influences and events, must be favourable; finally all of this calls for *virtù*, that is, a master stroke. This kind of virtuous action requires a combination of courage, experience and wisdom, spontaneity and reflection, rationality and intuition. In sum this is what constitutes the art of political action. It is exposed to the possibility of success or failure in equal measure.

Machiavelli's writings are generally regarded as eulogies to the unscrupulous and amoral power politician who is concerned with nothing other than conquering power and defending it. But this interpretation completely overlooks the extent to which Machiavelli was a staunch defender of the Republic of Florence and the freedom of its active citizenship. He rejected the subjugation of his city to feudal, religious or moralizing rulers as much as the withdrawal of its citizens to their private lives. Freedom of the Republic demands political interest and an understanding of politics as acting in the interest of the common good.

Looking at Willy Brandt's politics from the aspect of virtuous actor places his image of man and society, his leadership qualities and his peace policy centre stage, and we will learn just how strongly he was committed to the republican interest in the common good.

## Brandt's Image of Man and Society

Under his birth name Herbert Frahm, Willy Brandt joined the small *Socialist Workers Party* SAP as a very young man at the end of the Weimar Republic. This small left-wing party had split off from the social democrats and the Stalinist communist party. When the Nazis took power, Brandt fled to Norway, worked there for the SAP, was stripped of his German citizenship, became a Norwegian citizen, travelled incognito to Berlin and Paris, fled to Sweden when German troops invaded Norway, and along with other resisters there joined the German Social Democratic Party at the end of the war. When he regained his German citizenship, he kept the pseudonym he had been using as a journalist and politician, Willy Brandt.

These years of political socialisation, both socialist and in illegality, had a profound impact on Willy Brandt – as an undogmatic left-winger whose basic values had always been freedom, justice and solidarity, and as a resister who was still being maligned as a traitor by the conservative majority in Germany twenty and thirty years after the war; the fact that he was illegitimate and came from a humble background was also used against him. Brandt was therefore an outsider in every respect. Not only did he have a perspective on the German and European situation after the war as an outsider, as a critic and nonconformist, but he also felt committed to politics and took responsibility for his country's past and its future, as well as for the situation in Europe.

When Brandt was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize following the first resounding success of his peace policy in 1971, he spoke of the values he stood for and the legacy he had inherited: ethical and social orientation towards Christianity, humanism and Kant's ideas on international law, and socialism in the form of social justice and a morally impeccable foreign policy. Among those whose legacy he stood for, he mentioned Gustav Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister who shared the Nobel Peace Prize after the First World War with French Foreign Minister Briand, following their agreement on the renunciation of violence between their countries. He also spoke of the German journalist and pacifist Carl von Ossietzky. During his exile in Norway, Brandt had persuaded the Nobel Prize Committee to award Ossietzky the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936 and thus rescue him from death at the hand of the Nazis. Brandt equally acknowledged the legacy of the German resistance, of which he himself was a part. In his Nobel Lecture he declared: "The German resistance fought and made sacrifices for decency, lawfulness and freedom. It preserved that Germany which I regard as my own and which has again fully become my country after the re-establishment of law and freedom."<sup>2</sup>

It was only when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971 that Brandt felt safe and recognized in Germany.

There was no room in Brandt's libertarian socialism for utopian social models. He saw people as varied, not homogeneous. It was not they who had to be changed, but the circumstances in which they lived. In a speech in 1949, he declared in the context of totalitarian forms of rule: "Freedom and life are one and the same. Without the guarantee of an individual legal sphere, without intellectual freedom, without the moral standards of values referring to personality, community and humanity, we are in danger of relapsing into barbarism. Only by saving the fundamental values of Western culture can we hope to ascend to higher forms of human coexistence."<sup>3</sup>

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2 Willy Brandt: *Nobel Lecture: Peace Policy in Our Time*, December 11, 1971 <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1971/brandt/lecture> (2022/10/3)

3 Cf. Helga Grebing: *Willy Brandt. Der andere Deutsche*, Munich Fink 2008, p. 83. (All German quotations translated by me, WH)

A few years before his death, Brandt portrayed the Polish-German social democrat Rosa Luxemburg and noted approvingly that “for her ... the progress of mankind was conceivable only through democratic evolution, not through coercion, but through the participation of the masses, in whose spontaneous strength and creative spirit she believed”.<sup>4</sup> Party rule and professional revolutionaries, however, undermine a vibrant democracy of this kind, whereas open criticism and the freedom of press and assembly contribute to its reinforcement. Luxemburg’s declaration that freedom is always the freedom of those who think differently was no less topical for Brandt than it is for us in today’s world.

Brandt was already a resolute European in exile. “A good German”, he declared in his lecture in Oslo, “cannot be a nationalist. A good German knows that he cannot refuse a European calling. Through Europe, Germany returns to itself and to the constructive forces of its history. Our Europe, born of the experience of suffering and failure, is the imperative mission of reason.” Brandt thus ties in with the democratic, liberal tradition of the European nineteenth century, which knew nothing of the nationalism that led to the disasters of the twentieth century. In Brandt’s view, we are aware “that the nation state alone can no longer guarantee the existence and security of a people. Supranational groupings are also necessary for the good of the nation and its protection. Our patriotism is both a European and a global political task. Measured in terms of peace, the nation is no longer the highest of all goods.”<sup>5</sup>

Hence we see that Brandt’s vision from early on was both European and cosmopolitan, we see his concern for living conditions worldwide, as he explained in his speech in Oslo: “Europe must live up to its worldwide responsibility. This means co-responsibility for world peace, and it must also mean co-responsibility for justice towards the outside world, so that hunger and misery elsewhere can be overcome. Peace is something more than the absence of war, although some nations would be thankful for that alone today. A durable and equitable peace system requires equal development opportunities for all nations.”

For Brandt, democracy was not merely the formal regulation of a policy of majorities, but the enabling of social and cultural justice. As early as 1943, he wrote in his school graduation essay, “there is no such thing as political democracy on its own ... Genuine democracy includes social and cultural democracy”<sup>6</sup>. In a similar vein, he declared in 1973 that “freedom ... in our society ... can never be complete, as long as hundreds of thousands of children in our cities and conurbations are unable to thrive, but waste away in urban jungles. And there can be no justice as long as our tax system benefits the fittest. And solidarity can rapidly become a farce if we do

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4 Willy Brandt Rosa Luxemburg, in *Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte*, April 1989, Vol. 36, p. 352.

5 In Helga Grebing: *Willy Brandt*, op. cit., p. 110.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 123.

not learn to apply it in a European and, where possible, global manner.”<sup>7</sup> In his first government declaration as Federal Chancellor in 1969, he advocated “daring more democracy”. This is based on the recognition that “people ... (want to) carry a certain amount of responsibility. In a factory this means not only having a say in major decisions, but also in humane working conditions, not simply becoming an appendage of the assembly line, but co-determining how to organize things in a better and more dignified way.”<sup>8</sup>

“The big debate in society is about the essentials of democracy,” he said. This debate does not exclude political dispute and factual discussions. It even takes these for granted so that a maximum of agreement can be reached in the broadest possible debate. And this broad debate will be more fruitful, the more the citizens participate, the more there is cooperation and joint decision-making”. According to Brandt “Democracy does not simply mean majority decision-making, but encompasses more: the protection of minorities; the exclusion of areas that cannot be voted on, now and in future; freedom of discussion and the opportunity to argue; a clear description of responsibilities”.<sup>9</sup>

Brandt’s values included something utterly uncommon among politicians, that is, praise for doubt. In Oslo he declared: “Young people often expect me to give an unqualified “Yes”, a clear “No”. But it has become impossible for me to believe in one, in the single truth, so I say to my young friends and to others who want to hear it: There are several truths, not merely the one truth which excludes all others. That is why I believe in diversity and hence in doubt. It is productive. It questions existing things. It can be strong enough to smash fossilized injustice. Doubt proved its worth during the resistance. It is tough enough to outlast defeats and to disillusion victors.”

He, the outsider, the active resistor, even has sympathy for cowardice: “I have never been able to understand this exaggerated contempt for cowardice,” he said. “Where does it say that people who are obliged to swim against the current are not allowed to be cowards?”<sup>10</sup> At the same time, he was aware of the importance of remaining steadfast in a minority position: “During my life I have seen many illusions develop and disappear; much confusion, escapism and simplification. In one place a sense of responsibility was lacking, in another imagination. I have also experienced what faith in one’s convictions, steadfastness and solidarity can mean. I know how moral strength can develop and emerge especially in times of great affliction.”<sup>11</sup>

7 Willy Brandt Rede in Bad Segeberg, 1 September 1973, in *Gesammelte Reden, Briefe und kleinere Schriften*, ed. by Helga Grebing et al. *Willy Brandt*. Berliner Ausgabe, vol. 7 Bonn Dietz-Verlag 2001, p. 454.

8 Willy Brandt Gespräch mit Rován, 22 August 1973, in op. cit., p. 438.

9 Willy Brandt Rede in Bad Segeberg, 1 September 1973, in op. cit., p. 451f.

10 Gunter Hofmann, *Willy Brandt – Portrait eines Aufklärers aus Deutschland*, Reinbek Rowohlt 1988, p. 11.

11 Willy Brandt: *Nobel Lecture*, op. cit.

Finally, and this touches on our peace policy topic, Brandt saw no justification for war, neither the "just war" of Christianity, nor, in the words of Clausewitz, as the continuation of politics by other means or as a last resort. "War is no longer the *ultima ratio* but rather the *ultima irratio*. Even if this is still not a generally held view," Brandt explained, "I personally understand a policy for peace as a genuine *Realpolitik* of this epoch." According to Brandt, no national interest can be separated from the overall responsibility for peace. In light of the possible nuclear self-destruction of all, coexistence has become *the* existential question.

## Brandt's Leadership Qualities

Willy Brandt was linguistically gifted and worked as a journalist in exile and later in Berlin. Occasional hesitation, imprecision of expression and ambiguous language, all repeatedly criticized by the political public, were by no means an indication of careless thinking, but rather an expression of open-minded thinking appropriate to the situation. In his portrayal of Rosa Luxemburg he explained that "knowledge of languages means cultural wealth, (and) of what great value it is to be at home in more than one language"<sup>12</sup>, but also how, conversely, "lack of realism and aggressive language can complement each other"<sup>13</sup>. In other words, taking note of reality and its linguistic nuances and varying perspectives protects us from unworldly simplifications and violence.

Brandt's in-depth analytical skills merged with his ability to think in broad contexts, as his detailed report on the Spanish Civil War demonstrated. His comrade in Swedish exile, the later Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, recalled his clarity, his sense of purpose and his comprehensive political knowledge, all of which placed him in a unique position. He was "the epitome of the political mind at that time and beyond that, a political leader". Another member of the resistance group described him as a "man with an immense international outlook ... prepared to sacrifice, with inner collection and harmony, focused on crushing Nazism, for democracy and peace"<sup>14</sup>. This means that taking note of a reality linguistically in its nuances and different perspectives prevents unworldly simplifications and violence. Brandt's breakthrough to a major political career was the result of his ability to take the right action at the right moment, in line with Machiavelli. But he did not do it to exploit the situation for his own career; that would be a misunderstood Machiavellianism, which Brandt

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12 Willy Brandt Rosa Luxemburg, op. cit., p. 348.

13 Willy Brandt op. cit., p. 352.

14 Cf. Einhart Lorenz *Willy Brandt. Deutscher-Europäer-Weltbürger*, Stuttgart Kohlhammer 2012, p. 64.

completely contradicted in his person and his actions. Rather, he felt both the opportunity and what had to be done, whereby he was moved by ‘compassion’: “In any case, the politics that moves me is not possible without being moved by the needs and the longings of the many, whom one cannot know at all. I want to be involved in decisions that secure peace and help people from the broad strata of the people to experience more justice.”<sup>15</sup>

The historian Helga Grebing attested to Brandt’s “extraordinary feeling for currents of the times and the course of social processes; he was someone who was able to develop far-reaching, long-term, rationally controlled ideas. Perhaps the charismatic way in which he conveyed this: cautious, floating, ambivalent, multi-layered, leaving things open and skilfully unclear, and often notoriously vague in the tenor of a strong ‘*Jain*’ (*Ja/nein*: yes and no, WH), contributed to either celebrating him as a visionary or criticising him, because one felt able to recognise the expression of weakening indecision in his behaviour.”<sup>16</sup>

The Spanish social democratic politician Felipe González attested Brandt a pronounced “sense of reality and possibility, (a) long-term thinking and sense of what is to come”.<sup>17</sup>

I would like to give two examples of his *virtù*, firstly his actions during the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, when Soviet tanks occupied the country and crushed the council organisations in city districts and factories.<sup>18</sup> Brandt lived in West Berlin, whose population led an everyday life on the borderline between the two political blocs of West and East; it was surrounded by the GDR and had had to endure Stalin’s blockade for eleven months in 1948/49. With a strong spirit of resistance, they had survived this blockade in freedom and now reacted particularly sensitively to the Soviet occupation of Hungary. Hundreds of thousands marched in front of West Berlin’s city hall. Two speakers from different parties tried to calm the demonstrators with helpless speeches. Then Brandt took to the podium and called for the severance of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and a boycott of all Soviet ships in German ports, promising to send a protest telegram to the UN. But that was not enough for the demonstrators, they made their way to the Soviet embassy in the eastern part of the city, which was on the other side of the Brandenburg Gate. Brandt was aware of the danger of bloodshed, as the demonstrators would be clashing with the armed East German VoPo police force. So Brandt jumped into a police loudspeaker van and put himself at the head of the demonstration procession. He managed to divert the demonstration to the memorial to the victims of

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15 Helga Grebing: *Willy Brandt*, op. cit., p. 89f.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

17 Einhard Lorentz: *Willy Brandt*, op. cit., p. 233.

18 See in the following Peter Merseburger: *Willy Brandt. 1913–1992. Visionär und Realist*, Stuttgart DVA 2002, p. 300f.

Stalinism. There he sang the Song of the Good Comrade, which has been sung at military funeral ceremonies since 1809. The collective singing calmed the demonstrators, who then dispersed. Twice more that night, Brandt used this method to calm down other groups of demonstrators who wanted to march to the Brandenburg Gate. Brandt wanted to keep the peace here as well as later on a large scale. This intervention paved the way for Brandt to become mayor of West Berlin.

The second example concerns his intervention in 1961 on the occasion of the construction of the Berlin Wall around West Berlin to stop the continuous flight of East Germans to the western part of the city. Again Brandt appeared as a staunch defender of his people, again he had to promise 300,000 demonstrators support and at the same time stop them from storming the Wall. “At that moment, he himself seems like a man who has been tested by suffering,” one historian explained in retrospect. “But he tells the people: I am one of you. But I am also more. I manage to act for you. That’s what marked him out in the historical situation.”<sup>19</sup> Brandt was campaigning as a candidate for Federal Chancellor at the time, but he immediately interrupted that campaign and was on hand when the Wall was built, while his opponent and incumbent Chancellor Adenauer continued his campaign unaffected and did not go to Berlin. At the rally in Berlin, Brandt explained that he had written a letter to US President Kennedy to show: I take your concerns seriously. I have addressed the head of the protecting power. “That was an oratorical achievement of the first order,” declared the journalist Merseburger, “Brandt has become a national figure in the Berlin crisis.”<sup>20</sup> According to diplomatic etiquette, Brandt was not really entitled to write to the President of the USA as mayor, and Kennedy was correspondingly disgruntled at first. But later Kennedy visited West Berlin, appeared together with Brandt and spoke his famous sentence: “All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words *‘Ich bin ein Berliner!’*”

With his determined attitude and the right action at the right time, Brandt had risen to the ranks of the most powerful international politicians.

## Brandt’s Peace Policy

Ever since his time in exile, peace had been at the core of Brandt’s actions – not peace at all costs, but in freedom, democracy and a united Europe. The division of Berlin, of Germany and of Europe could only be overcome in a joint effort. But how?

West German politics persisted in the non-recognition of post-war realities, i.e. non-recognition of the surrender of German territory to Poland and the Soviet

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19 Torsten Körner in Willy Brandt war “eine singuläre Persönlichkeit”, in *Berliner Morgenpost*, 18.12.2013.

20 Ibid.

Union. The East and West blocs were frozen. Then Brandt appeared. Similar to Kennedy in the USA, he emerged as the youthful, reformist alternative who, like Kennedy, surrounded himself with writers, artists and journalists. The situation demanded that the supposedly impossible be made possible.<sup>21</sup>

The core elements of this policy were as follows:

- 1) Not to give up the positions of freedom and security, but to offer the other side guarantees in order to initiate a process of *détente*. “Solving common problems,” Brandt explained in Oslo, “means creating bonds and connections through meaningful cooperation between states across the borders of the blocs. This means transforming the conflict. This means breaking down barriers, real or imagined, at mutual, peaceful risk.”
- 2) To do this, it is indispensable to get to know the other side in order to understand its motives, its fears and its actions in the best possible way.
- 3) Create trust through the credibility of one’s own steps. The journalist Merseburger, like many others, was convinced that Brandt “could inspire confidence. I have rarely seen anyone who could establish so much contact with the masses through his speeches”<sup>22</sup>. The same applied to the trust that Brandt created between him and the Soviet head of state Leonid Brezhnev. In Oslo, Brandt said that transforming the conflict means doing away with real or supposed barriers, and “... building up confidence through practical arrangements. And this confidence may then become the new basis for the solution of long-standing problems. This opportunity can be Europe’s opportunity in a world which, as has been proved, cannot be ruled by Washington or Moscow – or by Peking – alone.” And such trust, of course, also had to be established between Brandt and West Germany on the one hand and the Western allies on the other.
- 4) The resulting balance between states and groups of states must be more than a balanced system of military means; it must give identities and cultures their space. “A Europe living in peace,” Brandt said in Oslo, “calls for its members to be willing to listen to the arguments of others, for the struggle of convictions and interests will continue. Europe needs tolerance. It needs freedom of thought, not moral indifference.”
- 5) Finally, the renunciation of violence must be complete, and the borders must be inviolable – which did not mean that Brandt had given up the goal of reunifying Germany, only that this could only be achieved peacefully and democratically with the consent of the European peoples.
- 6) Such a process cannot happen in any other way than in small steps, persistent offers of talks. The journalist Gunter Hofmann interpreted Brandt’s position with

21 Willy Brandt *Im Gespräch mit Günter Gaus*, op. cit.

22 Merseburger in Willy Brandt war “eine singuläre Persönlichkeit”, in op. cit.

the following words: “If politics means dealing with public affairs, even in conflict, but nevertheless with a willingness to compromise, in a way that makes them understandable, if politics is understood as a piece of enlightenment work: then it takes place in the dialogue process. It is justified, explained, disputed, rejected. It is not enough to process it in files.”<sup>23</sup> It requires “the constant searching, groping, the readiness for new beginnings”<sup>24</sup>.

- 7) Only such a path, though often difficult, will lead to the goal. At the awarding of the honorary doctorate in 1965 at the New School in New York, Brandt declared: “In the life of the individual as well as in the life of nations, all too often the comfortable, the easier paths are taken, although the comfortable paths are not always the right ones. It is good to take the uncomfortable path, especially if it is the right one.”

The stages of this path were first the creation of opportunities for East and West Berliners to visit each other, then the recognition of Poland’s realigned western border, the non-violence agreements with Moscow and Warsaw, kneeling at the memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto, the Basic Treaty with the German Democratic Republic, and so on.

What remains are his peace work and his personality, formative examples that tell us that what seemed impossible can become possible. The later chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, Björn Engholm, remembered Brandt:

He was affectionate, but never used affection for populism. He did not expect more from others than he was willing and able to give himself. One to whom being was always worth more than appearances. He got by without pomp, without statesmanlike pomposity; the hollowness and mere pragmatism of many politicians were a horror to him. Instead of giving orders, Willy Brandt led. He was a gifted motivator to whom imperatives remained alien and who despised intrigue. He invited people to join in and think, not to follow him. Clever minds were brought on board and not booted out. ... What was ultimately his fascination? He was always hopeful. Perhaps we should say a visionary, who was no more a stranger to the world than he was unflinchingly willing to change it.<sup>25</sup>

In his farewell speech at the Congress of the *Socialist International* in 1992 he said: “Nothing happens by itself. Very little is permanent. Therefore – remember your

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23 Gunter Hofmann *Willy Brandt*, op. cit., p. 94.

24 Ibid., p. 96.

25 Björn Engholm Was die Größe von Willy Brandt ausmacht, in *Der Tagesspiegel*, 18 December 2013.

strength and that each era demands its own answers, and that you have to be up to them, if good is to be achieved".<sup>26</sup>

I would like to conclude by emphasizing the importance of republicanism and of cosmopolitanism which I already mentioned. As the example of Willy Brandt shows, republicanism differs from liberal democracy in active citizenship whose actions are oriented toward the common good, and its concept of freedom is characterized by a positive "freedom for" instead of the liberal, apolitical concept of "freedom from". And what seems particularly important is the fact that such action is by no means reserved for the statesman and his party alone, but on the contrary is also practiced by the citizenry. For a free society preserves its freedom only through lively participation, through an active civil society. So, we should add to the narrative of Willy Brandt's policy of *détente* the importance of an active citizenry. Brandt's policy would not have been successful without the civic movements in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Charter 77, citizens like the imprisoned writer and later first democratic president of Czechoslovakia Vaclav Havel, and the many demonstrations in 1989. The virtuoso statesman and the active society are mutually dependent.

As for cosmopolitanism, for Willy Brandt it meant above all *social* justice in North-South relations. We should expand this concept to include *political* cosmopolitanism, the recognition that we are all citizens of a common world. In the words of Hannah Arendt, this means that it is not nation-states and empires that correspond to our global human plurality, but open, unifying forms of organization such as federalism. According to Arendt, our human condition is based on plurality which is characterized by equality and diversity. Our equality makes it possible to speak to each other, but because of our diversity we need to make ourselves understood by each other. Such a plurality cannot realize itself when it is restricted by borders or ideologies.

In our times of political crises, this sounds utopian, but that is precisely why Willy Brandt can serve us as an example of courage: to make the impossible possible.

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26 Willy Brandt Grusswort an SI-Kongress, 14 September 1992, in *Gesammelte Reden, Briefe und kleinere Schriften*, vol. 8 *Über Europa hinaus. Dritte Welt und Sozialistische Internationale*. Bearb. von Bernd Rother and Wolfgang Schmidt, op. cit., p. 515f.

