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More than just a Single Market: European integration, peace and security in the 1980s

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More than just a Single Market:

European Integration, Peace and Security in the 1980s

It is tempting to see the 1980s as the decade where the economic underpinnings of European integration were most self-evident. Central to the disagreements of the first part of the decade, after all, was that most narrow of squabbles about money, namely the dispute over the British budgetary contribution. Similarly, the wider impasse over the finances of the Community centred on calculations of economic self-interest on the part of the member states, rather than on lofty political ambitions. The same was also true of the two other dominant internal disputes of the period, the quest to regain an element of control over expenditure on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and French obstruction of Iberian membership. And if economic self-interest lay at the heart of the four years of internal bickering with which the decade began, it was equally prominent in the revival of Community fortunes from 1984-5 onwards. The core project around which Community Europe seemed to rediscover the dynamism and élan that had proved elusive ever since the 1960s, was fundamentally economic, the establishment of a Single Market by 1992. The winning formula turned out to be a return to an updated version of the economic agenda that had proved so effective during the Community's first decade or so of operation. Flanking this new central objective, was a crucial push to resolve the budgetary deadlock, first with the series of agreements on the British rebate and CAP financing agreed at the Fontainebleau Council of June 1984, and then, more boldly, with the so-called Delors I budgetary package of 1988. And by the decade's end, the very success of this economic focused revival had led to renewed ambitions to attain another primarily economic target, economic and monetary union (EMU), the push for which would come to dominate the EC/EU's fortunes throughout the ensuing quarter of a century. Bill Clinton's famous if unofficial campaign slogan, from the 1992 presidential election, 'It's the economy, stupid', seemed an equally good answer to the question of what drove the European integration process throughout the 1980s.

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Such a conclusion would also suggest that by the 1980s it was increasingly implausible to talk about the integration process being centrally connected to the promotion of peace and the avoidance of war. The profit motive, rather than the quest for peace appeared to be its core driver. It was perhaps no coincidence that by the decade's end, the very idea that quest for European unity had ever been driven mainly by the peace motive was under sustained historiographical attack by revisionist historians like Alan Milward.(Milward, 1984; Milward and Brennan, 1994) If there were question marks over whether building Europe had ever been an endeavour connected to the avoidance of renewed European war, how much more convincing was such scepticism when applied to a decade like the 1980s when virtually all that the European Community did seemed motivated by, and fixated upon, maximising European growth rates and promoting prosperity? And this was all the more so, given that the 1980s was the first postwar decade when most countries in Western Europe were ruled by leaders who had not experienced combat in either World War (French President, François Mitterrand being the principal exception.) As the memory and shadow of the Second World War receded, so too did the importance of the promotion of peace as a motivation for the integration process.

This article, however, will suggest that even during this seemingly unpromising period of European integration history for those seeking to demonstrate a linkage between quest for peace and that for unity, important aspects of the peace motive remained strong. These were most apparent, in the early part of the decade, in the enduring appeal of European cooperation to those European leaders frustrated by their relative marginalisation and powerlessness in international level discussions of peace and security, whether regarding East-West relations or the Middle East. To many Western European politicians, integration and the coordination of European foreign policies could be a means of exercising influence over international negotiations from which they would otherwise be excluded. In the central years of the decade, meanwhile, the promotion of intra-European peace remained at the heart of the rhetoric, the symbolism, and the international acceptability of Europe's most important political partnership, that between France and Germany. Given the centrality of

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3 collaboration between these two countries in Europe's revival during the course
4 of the 1980s, this in itself suggests that the peace motive had not faded from
5 view altogether. At the very end of the decade, it will be argued that the
6 diplomacy of German unification offers a degree of vindication of those who had
7 maintained that integration could contribute to the preservation of peace and
8 stability. The peaceful manner in which Germany regained its position as
9 Western Europe's largest state, highlighted the continent's ability to withstand a
10 potential shock of great magnitude without experiencing the type of
11 disintegrative forces that had twice triggered global conflict in the first half of the
12 twentieth century. And finally it will be suggested that both in the early 1980s,
13 and again towards the end of the decade, there were signs of the Community's
14 ability, witting and unwitting, to promote democracy in its 'near abroad'. In the
15 case of Greece, Spain and Portugal, all of which were engaged in a process of
16 seeking Community membership as the decade began, the effort to stabilise the
17 three countries' fledgling democracies was quite conscious and involved a
18 coalition of civil society actors, many of the individual member states, and the
19 European institutions. For Eastern Europe, by contrast, deliberate engagement
20 only began belatedly at the very end of the decade, but the Community's
21 gravitational pull had arguably started exercising an influence some time before.
22 This too would suggest that even in the 1980s, European integration was more
23 than a purely economic experiment, but instead an exercise that was still seen by
24 many of its protagonists as having a much wider impact, including political
25 stabilisation and the consolidation of peace within Western Europe.
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44 **Economic impasse**

45 It is certainly the case that a great deal of the impasse that characterised
46 European integration in the early 1980s centred on economic issues. This
47 applies to the debilitating and immensely time-consuming row over Britain's
48 budgetary contribution to the Community – an issue that dominated a succession
49 of European Council meetings from 1979 through to 1984 obstructing progress
50 elsewhere. (Wall, 2008, pp. 5-40; Ludlow, 2016, pp. 207–224). It also true of the
51 wider budgetary dispute by which the Community was beset in this period, a
52 row which revolved around the question of whether the Community would or
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3 should exceed a ceiling on its total expenditure set at 1% of Community GNP.
4 (Bussière et al., 2014, pp. 249–253) Economics was at the centre of the related
5 disagreement over run-away expenditure on the CAP, a burden that a times in
6 the early 1980s threatened to overwhelm the Community budget.(Bussière et al.,
7
8 2014, pp. 322–323) And economic considerations lay at the heart of the
9
10 deadlock over the Community’s membership negotiations with Spain and
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12 Portugal. The blocking by France of advance towards Iberian membership, a
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14 policy first signalled by President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing in a speech delivered
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16 to French farmers in June 1980, was largely attributable to anxiety within the
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18 French agricultural sector about possible competition from Spain in particular.
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20 (Trouvé, 2008, p. 333) Had *The Economist’s* notorious prediction of the
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22 Community’s imminent demise in March, 1982 been accurate, many of the
23
24 ailments that had led to its death would indeed have been attributable to
25
26 economic factors. (*The Economist*, March 29, 1982)

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28 This state of affairs was not something that Europe’s political class was
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30 content with, however. Nor were the solutions to the deadlock viewed as purely
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32 economic. The Belgian Foreign Minister Henri Simonet’s complaint that
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34 Margaret Thatcher was acting like a ‘fille d’épicier’, a ‘grocer’s daughter’ in her
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36 campaign to get her money back was undoubtedly snobbish, and probably
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38 sexist.(Jenkins, 1989, p. 529) But it also reflected a widely shared belief that
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40 Europe should be about more than ‘pounds, shillings and pence’; a process
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42 further-reaching than pure calculations of narrow economic self-interest. Such
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44 aspirations to transcend the impasse over how much each member state paid
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46 into the common coffers are also apparent in many of the European reform
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48 attempts of the early 1980s. Initiatives like the 1981 Genscher-Colombo plan did
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50 not seek to resolve economic squabbles simply through economic means; instead
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52 the hope was to revitalise the integration process in part through institutional
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54 reform and partly through a reassertion of its political worth. In particular, the
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56 Italian and German foreign ministers who put forward the plan hoped to bolster
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58 the impact of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) process, Europe’s
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60 mechanism for coordinating the foreign policies of its member states, thereby
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62 highlighting how much could be gained from Europe speaking with a single voice
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64 on global affairs. (Bonvincini, 1989) Similarly the Stuttgart Declaration of 1983

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3 sought to expand the scope of European foreign policy cooperation, specifically
4 referring to 'security' as a field in which joint European action was permissible
5 for the first time. (Bonvincini, 1989) Once more, therefore, an important part of
6 the solution to Europe's economic disagreements, was seen as being a
7
8 revitalisation of Europe's political role. And even the British, a little earlier in the
9 decade, had sought to redirect attention from the budgetary rows that they were
10 perceived as having caused, by demonstrating their willingness to allow Europe
11 to seize the initiative on the Middle East – a change of position that went a long
12 way to permitting the Venice Declaration of 1980. (Dab, forthcoming) Foreign
13 policy advance and engagement with pressing questions of peace and
14 international security, was hence being used as a mechanism to counterbalance
15 internal squabbling over economics.
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23 In order to understand all three of these instances, it is important to recall
24 the context. In the early 1980s, most West European countries felt seriously
25 wrong-footed by the deterioration in relations between the two Superpowers.
26 Détente may have become a dirty word in the United States, denounced by
27 conservative commentators, and increasingly avoided even by Democrats, but in
28 Western Europe it was still regarded as something of value. (Njølstad, 2010;
29 Young, 2010) The incentive to maximise Europe's effectiveness in the foreign
30 policy field was therefore sharpened by the increasing disjuncture between US
31 and European positions on the key security issue of the era. If Western
32 European countries were to resist US pressure to impose economic and other
33 sanctions on the Soviet Union in response to its invasion of Afghanistan or the
34 Declaration of Martial Law in Poland, and to encourage Washington to resume
35 the dialogue and negotiations with the Soviet leadership, their best chance of
36 doing so appeared to be to maximise their own unity on the issue. (Patel and
37 Weisbrode, 2013) The coordination of European foreign policy positions was not
38 just a luxury therefore, but instead something that could contribute significantly
39 to avoiding a situation in which tension between Ronald Reagan's America and
40 the Soviet Union endangered Western Europe's own security.
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54 Most West European powers felt similarly disillusioned with US leadership
55 over policy towards the Middle East. Here too was an issue where Europe had
56 vital interests – the region was geographically close, had traditionally been a
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3 zone of European influence, and provided most of the continent's energy
4 supplies – and yet had been largely forced out of the diplomatic debate by US
5 dominance. (Möckli and Mauer, 2011) Once more, therefore, the adoption of a
6 common European stance – ideally backed up by coordinated European
7 diplomacy – might help the Ten (in other words the then 10 members of the
8 EEC) regain a voice over another issue where Europe's own peace and security
9 were very much at stake.
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15 This being so, the references to the preservation of peace in both the
16 Genscher-Colombo plan and the Stuttgart declaration were not just window-
17 dressing or token references to a facet of European integration long since
18 overtaken by events. Instead, they reflected a genuine concern about the
19 continent's stability, and a hope that common action might begin to reduce the
20 dangers.
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25 The threat to peace that needed to be addressed was external, of course,
26 rather than internal. As such, it differed significantly from the peace rhetoric of
27 earlier decades, where integration had been presented as a cure for internal
28 feuds and rivalries more than external threats. (Although given the Cold War
29 context, the external threat had never been entirely absent.) But the basic
30 pattern of thought was similar: once again more intensive European cooperation
31 was seen as both a response to a generalised sense of powerlessness vis-à-vis
32 actions being primarily decided by others, and as something beneficial in its own
33 right. (Di Nolfo, 1992)
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40 In terms of effectiveness, neither Genscher-Colombo nor the Stuttgart
41 declaration achieved anything like the outcomes that their initiators had hoped
42 for. If the Superpowers turned away from the path towards confrontation upon
43 which they seemed bound in the first years of the decade, this had little to do
44 with Western European misgivings, individual or collective, and much more to
45 do with changes within the Reagan administration and, still more importantly,
46 within the Soviet leadership. (Brown, 2010; Fischer, 2010) Peace remained
47 stubbornly elusive in the Middle East, meanwhile, with Europe still condemned
48 to a walk-on part in the international discussions designed to address the
49 region's difficulties rather than the central role that the Ten periodically aspired
50 to. (Hollis, 1997, pp. 18–19) Nor was there much sign of a qualitative leap
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3 forward in terms of European foreign policy cooperation during these years,
4 despite the worthy sentiments expressed.(Gainar, 2012) (Although I suspect
5 that one of the historiographical trends of the next few years will be a gradual
6 reassessment of the generally negative verdict reached on the EPC process; it
7 still fell a long way short of the lofty aspirations sometimes expressed, but it
8 almost certainly accomplished much more than was noticed by the press and by
9 the general public at the time.) But for the purposes of this article it is not the
10 effectiveness that matters. What is important is the reminder that rhetoric about
11 Europe as a peace project was still alive and well even during one of the more
12 depressing moments of the integration process and the way in which this line of
13 thought underlines how many of those who would later be centrally involved
14 with the economically-centred relaunch in the mid-1980s retained a deeply
15 political view of what Europe was and should be about.

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17 In the short term this search for a political or foreign policy-centred solution
18 to the European Community's difficulties did not lead at once to the hoped for
19 breakthrough – indeed it arguably led many would-be saviours of the integration
20 process into fruitless cul-de-sacs. Genscher may claim in his memoirs that the
21 Genscher-Colombo initiative was the first stage of a three stage European rocket,
22 the second stage of which was the Single Market programme (and the third the
23 Maastricht Treaty), but most analysts would be sceptical about the tangible
24 outcomes of the German-Italian initiative or the direct causal link to the mid-
25 1980s relaunch. (Genscher, 1995, p. 368) The Stuttgart Declaration was equally
26 devoid of immediate effects. But the survival throughout the early 1980s of a
27 highly political view of European integration meant that a significant number of
28 those politicians and other actors who rallied behind the Single Market project
29 from 1985 onwards did not *just* want to encourage economic liberalisation, but
30 also aspired to a more generalised advance towards European unity. This was
31 true of both the French and German governments, and of the Italians and
32 Benelux leaders as well, to say nothing of the European Commission. As a result,
33 they were always likely rapidly to part company from their temporary allies like
34 Margaret Thatcher who genuinely saw European economic liberalisation as the
35 end goal of the process. Even at the moment when the push for economic
36 integration became most determined, in other words, a substantial part of that

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3 coalition that united behind the cause of economic advance were doing so as
4 much for political motives as they were for economic ones. And within this
5 political vision of Europe, there persisted an enduring faith in European
6 integration as a mechanism for creating and preserving European peace. The
7 ideal lived on, even if tangible results were slow to arrive.
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11 12 13 **The peace ideal and the Franco-German relationship**

14 Such peace rhetoric remained central to the core political partnership of the
15 integration process during the 1980s, namely the Franco-German relationship.
16 This article is not the time or the place to launch into a lengthy exploration of
17 either the pattern of Franco-German relations during the 1980s, or a discussion
18 of their importance. A substantial literature exists on both issues, emphasising
19 both the degree to which France and Germany had to work hard to maintain a
20 high level of cooperation and to overcome numerous disagreements and
21 divergences over their European priorities, and the concrete results obtained
22 when continental Western Europe's two largest countries were able to agree.
23 (Simonian, 1985) But what is more relevant to our theme is to recall how vital a
24 currency, both in the internal debate between the two countries, and in the
25 external justification of this most exclusive of partnerships, the theme of
26 reconciliation and the redressing of past conflict remained. In 1983, for instance,
27 it is revealing that in the first meeting between a new pair of French and German
28 political directors, Jacques Andréani and Franz Pfeffer, the latter chose to open
29 their exchanges with an allusion back to his father, who, he claimed had been a
30 major supporter of the attempted Briand-Stresemann rapprochement of the late
31 1920s.(Küsters and Hofmann, 1998) Less than a year later the weight of history
32 was even more apparent in the celebrated moment when Kohl and Mitterrand
33 held hands at a ceremony at Verdun, designed to commemorate the most bloody
34 of Franco-German battles during World War One. Similarly the 1987 decision by
35 Kohl and Mitterrand to launch a Franco-German brigade was quite deliberately
36 presented as a gesture to overcome history, rather than simply a move intended
37 to boost Western Europe's military capabilities. Former German Chancellor,
38 Willy Brandt's description of the move as 'symbolic' spoke volumes. (*Financial*
39 *Times*, June 25, 1987)
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3 Such allusions back at France and Germany's traumatic past still
4 mattered. They mattered to the protagonists, with the desire to overcome the
5 divisions of the past, a powerful lubricant in a relationship that was seldom easy
6 or natural, given the multiple differences of interest, instinct, and governmental
7 tradition between the two countries. A strong dose of idealism in other words
8 was needed to keep the Franco-German show on the road – and certainly to
9 make it as effective as it would prove during the 1980s. (Germond, 2012) But
10 such backward references also mattered to the rest of Western Europe, in as
11 much as they helped justify – even sanctify – a close bilateral relationship that
12 could easily have been viewed as disruptive or damaging to a multilateral
13 integration process.
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16 The European system after all is meant to be one in which tactical
17 alliances and partnerships are constantly shifting, and where information flows
18 easily and fluidly between all of those taking part. It was hence not an
19 environment in which one would normally expect to encounter so close a
20 bilateral relationship as that which existed between France and Germany, nor
21 one where France and Germany's partners were so accepting of this internal
22 power couple. This is all the more so, since the British, the Benelux countries,
23 and the Italians have all had periods of their history when they have felt
24 threatened by the emergence of too close a link between Paris and Bonn. The
25 British had been angered in the 1960s by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's failure
26 to stand up to Charles de Gaulle and to help put pressure on the French leader to
27 abandon his opposition to UK membership of the EEC. A cartoon from early
28 1963 portrayed Harold Macmillan as Wellington and de Gaulle as Napoleon
29 confronting one another at Waterloo, with Adenauer as Blücher heading, arms
30 outstretched, towards the French leader. The caption read 'My God! Blücher's
31 arrived on time – but he has gone over to the enemy.' (Jouve, 1967) Partly as a
32 result, one of the early objectives of Edward Heath's government, when it finally
33 managed to negotiate its way into the EEC in 1973, was to turn the Franco-
34 German axis which had dominated EEC affairs, into a triangular relationship
35 between London, Paris and Bonn. This attempt met briefly with success before
36 being undermined by Heath's fall from power and the European ambivalence
37 shown by the subsequent Labour government. (Möckli, 2009)
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3 Belgian and Dutch anxiety about too exclusive a Franco-German
4 relationship had been an important factor in their original decision to propose a
5 six country EEC. (Serra, 1989) It also resurfaced periodically during the 1960s
6 and was one factor behind both countries' enthusiasm to see Britain enter the
7 Community. (Dumoulin, 1999; Harryvan, 2009) The Italians meanwhile have
8 also always been ambivalent about overly close Franco-German collaboration
9 within the EEC, fearing that their exclusion from this could relegate them to a
10 European second division. (Varsori, 2010) In both the 1960s and again in the late
11 1980s they tried experimenting with a Rome-London axis designed to counter-
12 balance the links between Bonn and Paris, only to run up against a strong British
13 sense that Italy was not a worthy partner in terms of status. (Ludlow, 2009)

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22 Despite such periodic outbursts of anxiety, however, a great deal of the
23 resentment towards the Franco-German partnership that might have been
24 expected on the part of other member states was stilled by a widespread
25 awareness of the historical importance of this awkward Franco-German
26 embrace. (de Schoutheete, 1990) It was true of course that for the Italians and
27 the Benelux countries at least, such acceptance was also motivated by self-
28 interest and by the realisation that the European Community was most likely to
29 be able to advance in the direction that both the Italians and the Benelux leaders
30 wanted, if France and Germany were close rather than at loggerheads. But extra
31 potency and poignancy was added to these calculations, by the awareness of the
32 symbolic importance of this very public spectacle of reconciliation, and by
33 consciousness that Franco-German unity was not something that had always
34 been possible to take for granted. Given the centrality of Franco-German
35 cooperation – and joint Franco-German plans – for the whole history of the
36 European relance of the latter half of the 1980s, anything that lubricated this
37 bilateral relationship and made it more acceptable to France and Germany's
38 other partners within the EC, was also something of importance to the wider
39 process of integration. Anthony Eden's pithy comment that 'on balance I had
40 rather see France and Germany in a confused but close embrace, than at arm's
41 length' made in 1952, would have applied to many subsequent European
42 statesmen across the latter half of the Twentieth Century. (Bullen and Pelly, 1986,
43 pp. 846–847)

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Containing German unification

The third reminder of the enduring relevance of Europe as a peace mechanism arrived at the very end of the decade with the potential crisis generated by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rapid move to German unification, and the end of the Cold War. The historiography of these events remains very superpower centred, despite a welcome push over the last decade or so to reassert a degree of West European agency – German of course, but not just German – to the end of the Cold War story. (Bozo et al., 2008) But even this last still tends to focus more on the actions and reactions of individual Western European states, rather than on the European Community story of 1989 to 1990.

It is true of course that one could interpret the 1989 interaction between Germany and its partners in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall as an illustration of how the integration process had not succeeded in embedding trust or mutual toleration between EC member states. After all, the emphasis in Helmut Kohl's recollections of the European Community level diplomacy of late 1989 is placed on the ungenerous and frankly suspicious reactions that the German Chancellor received from his European partners. As he puts it rather plaintively in his memoirs, when confronted with the reactions not just of Thatcher, but of the Italian Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti, the Dutch leader Ruud Lubbers, and even Mitterrand, he could not believe that these were the same people with whom he had been interacting in a friendly fashion for the last two decades. (Kohl, 2004, p. 1015) The Strasbourg Council meeting of December 1989, held in the immediate aftermath of Kohl's ten point plan, is likewise described by the German leader as the most unpleasant European meeting he had ever attended, an occasion where he felt himself in the dock assailed by many of his erstwhile partners for his failure to consult, and accused of pushing towards unity in a reckless, even dangerous, fashion. (Kohl, 2004, p. 1011)

It is not necessarily wise, however, to take these German lamentations entirely at face value. Instead, it is worth reflecting briefly on how profound a shock the events of 1989 were to the balance of 1980s Western Europe, and how potentially dangerous the situation could be seen to be. Perhaps the clearest indication of this sense of dancing close to the edge of a precipice was the sudden

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3 proliferation, in both public commentary and private political exchanges of
4 alarming parallels between the transformation of Germany underway and
5 various earlier and darker dates in Germany's history. François Mitterrand is
6 reported to have compared the situation to 1913, for instance, in a tête-à-tête
7 conversation with Thatcher ((Salmon et al., 2009, pp. 215–9), whereas the
8 *Kanzleramt* were particularly incensed by an opinion piece in *The Times* entitled
9 'Beware the Reich Resurgent'.(Schwarz, 2012, p. 557) Equally symptomatic
10 were the frequent allusions back to the Rapallo Treaty of 1922 and the implied
11 fear that a Germany once freed from its Cold War shackles might again become a
12 major threat to European peace. (Salmon et al., 2009, p. 68)

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15 In the light of such alarmist talk, what is surprising is not the somewhat
16 bruising exchanges between Kohl and his fellow European leaders in Strasbourg.
17 Rather it is the fact that these verbal outbursts were not allowed seriously to
18 disrupt either intra-European relations or the ongoing process of ever-greater
19 integration. Thus the short-term outcomes of Strasbourg were a grudging but
20 real endorsement of unification, provided it happened peacefully, and the start of
21 Community level efforts to prepare the EC for a transformation of its relationship
22 with eastern Germany. The European Commission was thus asked to begin to re-
23 visit the trade relationship with the GDR, an effort that would quickly become
24 the discussion of a *de facto* enlargement of the European union to include the
25 territory and citizens of the German Democratic Republic. (Conclusions of the
26 Presidency, European Council, Strasbourg, 8 and 9 December 1989) The months
27 after Strasbourg – if not the summit itself – meanwhile saw the rapid realisation
28 on the part of virtually all Western European leaders (with the solitary exception
29 of Thatcher) that the best way to cope with an enlarged Germany in their midst,
30 was a stronger and more integrated Europe to contain it. By the time that Kohl
31 and Mitterrand met again at Latché, the French President's house in the country,
32 in early 1990, both were in full agreement, for instance, that unification was to
33 be welcomed, but that progress towards German unity needed to be
34 accompanied by a rapid acceleration of the integration process also. (Küsters
35 and Hofmann, 1998, pp. 682–90)

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38 When confronted, in other words, with a genuinely powerful external
39 shock – and one that could easily have reawakened all sorts of tensions and
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3 demons that had been lying quiescent for the previous decades – the reaction of
4 Germany's European neighbours was profoundly shaped first by the opportunity
5 to air their misgivings and anxieties in a multilateral forum where Kohl and
6 Genscher could attempt to sooth their fears, however uncomfortable and
7 disconcerting for the two German leaders this experience proved. And second
8 and more importantly by the pre-existence of a flourishing integration process
9 that was quickly identified as the best possible collective response to Europe's
10 new challenge. (Ludlow, 2017)

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17 European integration thus proved its usefulness as a mechanism for
18 dousing potential internal tensions and played a highly significant role in
19 enabling the rest of Europe peacefully and rapidly to accept and to come to terms
20 with a huge increase in the potential power and weight of Germany. This is
21 made all the more remarkable by the many indications that Germany's European
22 partners were already anxious about the country's growing economic dominance
23 and centrality to the system even before the Wall came down. Much of the
24 debate about monetary integration for instance was fixated on the alarming
25 dominance of the *Deutsche Mark*.(Dyson, 1994) Such anxieties made still more
26 worrying the increase in German wealth and power that unification seemed
27 likely to bring, to say nothing of the greater geopolitical freedom that the Federal
28 Republic would enjoy once freed from the limitations imposed upon it by its
29 position as a divided, front line state in the Cold War.

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What should astonish about the European diplomacy of 1989 to 1990 is
not therefore that Kohl and Genscher had to put up with a certain amount of
anxiety and disquiet on the part of their fellow leaders. Rather, it is that this
anxiety faded so quickly and that the pre-existing pattern of intensifying
collaboration reasserted itself so vigorously. To take this line is not of course to
assert that, in the absence of the integration process, Europe would have been
plunged into outright war in 1989. This is much too far-reaching a counter-
factual speculation and one that totally ignores the multiple other factors that
helped make Europe much less of a tinder-box in 1989 than it had been in 1913
or 1939. These complementary stabilising factors include NATO and the US
security guarantee, the profound alteration in attitudes towards the use force in
most European societies and first and foremost in West Germany itself, and the

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3 example of acquiescence in peaceful change being remarkably and surprisingly
4 set by Gorbachev and most of his counterparts in the Eastern Bloc.(Savranskaya,
5 2008) But the fact that integration was not the only factor helping Europe ride
6 out so smoothly what in another time and era could easily have been a
7 profoundly disturbing external shock, should not blind us to the important role
8 in calming potential fears played by the European Community structures and by
9 the possibility that they offered of binding the new Germany solidly into an ever
10 more unified Western Europe.

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13 In the early Cold War, so-called *Westbindung*, was a process where
14 Germany's leaders sought to bind themselves to the West so as to protect
15 themselves from being drawn Eastwards and into some unstable intermediate
16 position between the Blocs. Tying the fragile new Federal Republic to the West
17 through structures of multilateral cooperation was Chancellor Adenauer's
18 preferred means to ensure that neither his allies could sell West Germany out,
19 concluding some sort of deal with the Soviet Union, nor his successors
20 compromise the FRG's Western alignment in the pursuit of rapid reunification.
21 (Granieri, 2004) As the Cold War came to its end, the same concept was
22 reinvented as a process that Germany's partners – and Germany's own
23 government - used to bind the newly free country into the Western system and
24 to prevent its new found power destabilising the whole continent. Integration
25 was as central to the *Westbindung* strategy in 1989-90 as it had been in the
26 1950s.

27 28 29 **Exporting democracy**

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31 One of the features of the European Community in the course of the 1970s had
32 been its gradual, and almost accidental, discovery that it could play a role as a
33 promoter of democracy in its near abroad. (De Angelis and Karamouzi, 2016)
34 This was not a function that the Community structures had been designed for.
35 Nor had there initially been unanimous agreement amongst European leaders
36 that the leverage gained over neighbouring states through the EEC's powers of
37 economic attraction should be used conditionally, with the benefits of closer
38 links or even full membership restricted to those states that were democratic. In
39 the early 1960s both the French and German leaderships had seemed ready to
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3 establish closer ties with Franco's Spain, although the idea had been forcibly
4 criticised by the European Parliament and rejected by some left-of-centre
5 politicians. (Anaya, 2002) But in the course of the subsequent years, messily and
6 unevenly, a strong consensus had gradually developed that a degree of
7 democratic conditionality could and should be employed by the European
8 Community, with the promise of full membership restricted to those states that
9 had fully operational democratic systems. By the late 1970s, the whole process
10 of membership negotiation underway with Greece, Spain and Portugal, all three
11 of which had only recently emerged from authoritarian rule, was regarded by
12 both the Community institutions and the member state governments as a vital
13 means of strengthening the young democracies and preventing them sliding back
14 into dictatorship. As Roy Jenkins, the Commission President, said to the Council
15 of Ministers in October 1977:

25 I speak first of our attitudes towards enlargement.... As you know the
26 Commission believes that any reply which we might give to the candidate
27 countries [Greece, Spain and Portugal] which rejected their applications,
28 even implicitly or indirectly, would not be acceptable. A straight refusal
29 would be a severe blow to the fragile democratic regimes which have
30 emerged with the open encouragement of the Community and which are
31 already to some extent dependent on us. Moreover any reply which,
32 while pretending to be positive, tied the opening of the negotiations to
33 complete solutions to problems which have long perplexed the
34 Community would constitute a tacit refusal and would be so interpreted
35 by the applicant countries. [Jenkins' statement to the Council, 18.10.1977,
36 Tickell Papers, All Souls College, Oxford, File 7]
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40 Responding positively to the Greek, Spanish and Portuguese membership
41 requests was thus a geopolitical imperative, a means not just of consolidating the
42 three young Southern European democracies, but also of strengthening Western
43 Europe's security.

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46 In order fully to appreciate the security dimension of this southern
47 enlargement it is worth recalling just how acute, in the mid-1970s, the crisis of
48 NATO's 'southern flank' was seen as being. With revolution in Portugal, a major
49 crisis in Greece, and Franco on his death-bed in Spain, Henry Kissinger, the US
50 Secretary of State had spoken in blood-curdling manner about both NATO and
51 the European Community beginning to 'unravel' and about the huge dangers that
52 would arise were communist parties to come to power in any of these vulnerable
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3 states. (Del Pero, 2009, p. 23) The United States, moreover, was in a poor
4 position to respond, since it was widely discredited in the eyes of the Greek,
5 Portuguese and Spanish populations for having been too close and too friendly to
6 the previous authoritarian regimes. One of the first actions of the new
7 Karamanlis government in Athens following the fall of the colonels' regime, for
8 instance, was to bow to the huge levels of popular anti-American sentiment and
9 to withdraw the country from NATO's integrated military command.

10 (Karamouzi, 2014, pp. 18–20) In such circumstances, European engagement,
11 initially led by civil society and non-governmental actors, but rapidly followed by
12 governmental overtures and the promise of closer links to the European
13 Community, filled a real strategic void. (Muñoz Sánchez, 2016) Indeed, there is
14 strong evidence that the United States' government encouraged the Europeans to
15 play this stabilising role. (Karamouzi, 2011) Thus in its own eyes, in the eyes of
16 the political elites within Greece, Spain and Portugal, and in the eyes of the
17 Western superpower, the European Community's opening to southern Europe
18 had become a key element in strengthening democracy, prosperity and western
19 alignment in the whole region.

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21 This role as promoter of stability and democracy in southern Europe had
22 extended into the early 1980s. Greece, it was true, had been admitted as a
23 member state in 1981, although its western alignment still looked fragile,
24 especially once the eccentric regime of Andreas Papandreou came to power. The
25 first few years of Greece's Community experience were a testing time, for both
26 Athens and the other EC member states, as the PASOK government, elected on a
27 Eurosceptic platform, sought to renegotiate in all but name the conditions and
28 terms of its European involvement, and to challenge multiple other features of
29 Western status quo. But with the benefit of hindsight, EC membership arguably
30 helped keep Greece firmly anchored to the West, despite its government's
31 periodically alarming rhetoric and populist tendencies. (Clogg, 1993) And Spain
32 too still required a strong European anchor in the first part of the decade. In
33 February 1981 there was an abortive military coup in Madrid; and the following
34 year the regime overcame another major test with a general election that
35 brought the socialists to power. In both cases, the main roots of the regime's
36 resilience were domestic. (Preston, 2001) The ongoing desire to follow the
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3 Greeks into the European Community, however, also played a stabilising role.
4 Spain and Portugal, it was true, were being made to wait longer for EC accession
5 than almost certainly should have been the case, largely because of the stance
6 towards enlargement taken by France. (Trouvé, 2008) But neither country ever
7 seriously wavered in their determination to join, giving each a clear external
8 reference point and goal during the frustrating and difficult years between 1980
9 and the unblocking of the membership talks in 1984.

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11 By the latter half of the decade Spain, Portugal and Greece were all inside
12 the EC and in the case of the two former countries beginning to prosper
13 economically, thanks in part to the influx of European investment and funding.
14 The southern flank crisis seemed entirely resolved. But unnoticed by most
15 observers at the time, a new set of European neighbours were beginning to be
16 deeply affected by the European Community's success – this time, the states of
17 Central and Eastern Europe. How this happened is still something that we know
18 too little about. A big research project is just starting up in Florence to
19 investigate the interaction between the European Community and both
20 governments and dissidents in the last two decades of communist Eastern
21 Europe.

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23 ([http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/HistoryAndCivilization/Research](http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/HistoryAndCivilization/ResearchAndTeaching/ResearchProjects/PanEur1970s.aspx)
24 [AndTeaching/ResearchProjects/PanEur1970s.aspx](http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/HistoryAndCivilization/ResearchAndTeaching/ResearchProjects/PanEur1970s.aspx)) But it is already clear that
25 the increased interaction between the two halves of the European continent that
26 had been one of the great gains of détente, played a significant role in weakening
27 the socialist regimes and contributing to their eventual downfall. Even more
28 than had been the case with southern Europe there was much that was
29 unplanned and accidental about the Community's engagement with Eastern
30 Europe. Nobody in Brussels seems to have set out with the intention of
31 undermining the Communist bloc. (Romano and Romero, 2014) And as with
32 southern Europe much of what the Community did was merely following a trail
33 of engagement blazed by non-governmental actors and by the member state
34 governments. (Cerami, 2010) Multilateral diplomacy is too slow and
35 cumbersome to take a policy lead in so sensitive an area. But by the latter half of
36 the 1980s, if not earlier, there were multiple varieties of contact between the
37 Community institutions and the Eastern bloc. Indeed, in June 1988 the EC and
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3 CMEA signed an umbrella agreement; the following year, the Soviet Union
4 appointed its first (and only) ambassador to the European Community. (Hanson,
5 1990, p. 61) More importantly, the easier flow of information across the Iron
6 Curtain ensured that both the communist governments and their internal
7 opponents were well aware of the contrast between the largely stagnant
8 economies of Eastern Europe and the economic boom being enjoyed by the
9 European Community. Exactly how such knowledge affected the events of 1989-
10 90, is largely still to determine. But the rapidity with which the post-Communist
11 governments turned their gaze towards the multilateral structures of the
12 Western half of the continent and made the attainment of EC, and soon EU,
13 membership one of the key priorities of their transition processes tells its own
14 story. Also significant is the rapidity with which the EC began directing money
15 towards the Eastern European states. The PHARE programme, the first of
16 several schemes designed to channel money towards the transition countries,
17 pre-dates the fall of the Berlin Wall albeit only by a few months. (Financial
18 Times, 1.8.1989) Similarly, the European Commission had been asked by the G7
19 to oversee the allocation of aid to Eastern Europe as early as July 1989, a step
20 which may well have had much to do with the US governmental hope that the
21 main burden of assistance would be shouldered by the Europeans rather than by
22 themselves, but which also acknowledged the rapid emergence of the EC as an
23 actor in its own right in the Cold War endgame. (Hutchings, 1997, p. 69) While
24 the European Community did not set out to undermine the Eastern Bloc, its
25 existence and very evident success almost certainly had some impact on the
26 collapse of the Communist regimes, and its gravitational pull undoubtedly
27 exercised a profound influence upon the policy choices made by the new post-
28 Communist regimes. (Mastny, 2008)

29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 **Conclusions**

50 On closer inspection, therefore, the 1980s are not a decade when the association
51 between European integration and peace became an irrelevance in an ever more
52 economically driven and motivated Europe. Instead, a powerful vein of idealism
53 about Europe's political purpose remained, feeding into multiple abortive
54 attempts to restart the integration process in the early years of the decade before
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3 combining with economic factors to produce the successful relaunch from 1985
4 onwards. Political idealism and the belief that European integration was a
5 means to distance Europe from its own bloody past, also served to justify in both
6 the eyes of the protagonists and those of their partners the most potent bilateral
7 relationship in the 1980s Community, namely that between Germany and
8 France. Without France and German cooperating as they did, and without this
9 cooperation being allowed, even welcomed, by the other EC member states, the
10 internal development of the European Community during this period would have
11 been very different indeed.

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18 The Community, furthermore, continued to be a contributor to internal
19 and external security during the 1980s. The former was best illustrated by the
20 way in which the EC became not only a forum within which Germany was able to
21 reassure its European partners over what was happening in the months leading
22 up to German unification, but also, more importantly, a mechanism the
23 strengthening of which became Western Europe's collective answer to the
24 potential problems raised by a larger Germany in its midst. For Kohl and many
25 of his counterparts, more Germany could best be contained by more Europe. It
26 was therefore important that the unification story took place against the
27 backdrop of a flourishing integration process, and that the plans were already
28 largely in place for a large-scale acceleration of the integration process. The
29 Maastricht Treaty was not just a product of German unification or the wider
30 geopolitical earthquake of 1989-1990. Indeed, a strong case can be made that
31 Western Europe was on a trajectory leading to something very much along the
32 lines of the eventual Treaty on European Union even before the Berlin Wall came
33 down. (Ludlow, 2013) But the speed with which Germany was reunited might
34 well have been considerably more disruptive to Europe's internal balance and
35 stability had the integration process not offered both the German government
36 itself and the majority of its European partners a ready-made and exciting
37 instrument with which to respond. Maastricht *became* Europe's collective
38 response to 1989-90, even if its longer-term origins have little to do with either
39 German unification or the end of the Cold War.

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56 As far as the Community's role in exporting security is concerned, the
57 1980s saw a shift in focus from Southern to Eastern Europe. As the decade
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3 began, attention was still directed towards Greece, Spain and Portugal, where
4 democratic rule remained fragile. The Community's capacity to help the two
5 Iberian countries had admittedly been limited by the delays to membership
6 imposed by the French. But for so long as the goal remained possible – and the
7 French were careful never to oppose the medium-term ambition of enlargement
8 even while doing their utmost to stop it occurring in the short-term – the EC
9 retained a valuable degree of leverage. Once Spain and Portugal did belatedly
10 join in 1986, moreover, they were able to benefit at once from both the return of
11 generalised economic prosperity to Western Europe, and from a surge forwards
12 of the integration process. That one of the central pillars of this was a major
13 increase in the sums of money that the EC was able to redistribute towards its
14 poorer members helped matters still more. Spain and Portugal both became
15 major recipients of the structural funds that began to flow in the late 1980s. By
16 this time, though, the countries of Eastern Europe also were feeling the effects of
17 booming Community next door. Quite how important a factor this would turn
18 out to be in the fall of the communist regimes is something that needs to be
19 investigated historically in much more detail. But what is beyond dispute is the
20 power of attraction that the Community exerted over the new democratic
21 regimes as soon as the communists were ousted from power. The trajectory of
22 much of Central and Eastern Europe through the 1990s and beyond, was hence
23 deeply influenced by the coincidence of timing between the fall of communism
24 and the highpoint of the integration process's fortunes. The urge to 'return to
25 Europe' as the slogan put it was always likely to be felt as soon as Poland,
26 Czechoslovakia and all the other countries threw off communist rule, but it was
27 felt that much more strongly because Western Europe was flourishing
28 economically and seemed headed rapidly towards greater integration. The
29 urgency of gaining access to the EC/EU rose accordingly. And this in turn gave
30 the Community/Union enormous scope to influence the direction and manner of
31 the transition processes across the region. The transformation of Central and
32 Eastern Europe is primarily a story associated with the 1990s and the first years
33 of the 21st century. But even before the 1980s had come to an end, it was already
34 becoming more likely that change would occur and that the European
35 Community would be closely involved with this change.
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