



**Aspen Institute
Statesman-Humanist Award
presented to
Chancellor Willy Brandt
of the Federal Republic of Germany**

28 September 1973

**R. O. Anderson Chairman
J. E. Slater President**

**Aspen Institute for
Humanistic Studies**

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In recognition of his lifelong commitment to the principles of human freedom, his personal demonstration of the contribution a sovereign individual can make in society, his service as a builder of international peace, and his distinguished career as statesman and humanist.

Text of the Award

Speech by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Willy Brandt; Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Aspen, Colorado, on September 28, 1973

First of all I should like to thank you for the great honour you have conferred on me and also for the opportunity to be here with you and, at least for a few hours to breathe the mountain air. In German this expression has two meanings: It describes the cool clear climate of the mountains, but it is also used, especially in academic circles, for the intellectual atmosphere of a company or a discussion.

Up here one takes a detached view of things. This helps to distinguish the important from the trivial: A requirement which a "Zoon Politicon"—the political animal—is bound to obey if he wants also to be considered a homo sapiens by such an illustrious gathering. It is indeed necessary to pause now and then for an hour and to ask oneself: What is the value of your work? What is it good for? What use is it? What is its purpose? What is the essence? I shall attempt an answer: Politics should help men to live with one another in peace and dignity. That is the task, at once so simple and so hard. For now follow the conditions, which it is child's play to describe, but the work of Sisyphos to put into practice: Men must be helped to keep the peace. That is the first thing.

Peace between countries and peoples seems within the bounds of the possible; this we may, if our efforts are successful, be able to organize. This and nothing else is our endeavour; human reason has gone some way towards meeting that challenge—perhaps because of the threat of self-destruction to our civilization.

There will—if our hopes, our discipline and our work are rewarded—be no great war. The principle of renunciation of force, which is the cornerstone of my country's policy, may, if our wisdom does not fail, prevail as the guideline for the conduct of nations.

But the world is still full of violence. Wars are still being waged: They may be called minor wars, conventional wars, wars of liberation, civil wars or—even worse—pacification campaigns; but these are all euphemisms for tragedies which differ from the great wars only in the quantity, but not in the terrible quality of the killing and dying. It seems that men cannot live in peace with their fellow-men as long as their passions, inflamed by poverty, need, hunger, injustice or the ambition of irresponsible leaders, break through the barriers of reason.

Thus the second major task must be to ensure that kind of justice which reason dictates—and which itself begets reason. This is again the work of Sisyphos. I speak here of the justice that makes us willing to share our daily bread—in our developed world the bread of affluence, of which our technological civilization produces surpluses, which never seem to be enough. No man is ready to share his bread and his prosperity unless urged by the will to solidarity. Solidarity is decisive. It lies behind the words with which I summed up my government's programme: We want to be a people of good neighbours within and without.

These are the conditions for human coexistence with our fellow-men: Renunciation of force, justice, solidarity, good neighbourliness. These are also the four conditions for the freedom we need to develop as individual human beings: freedom not at the

expense of others, but freedom for the benefit of others. It is the only one to deserve the name.

That is why it is our right, indeed our duty, to care—even beyond borders and frontiers—about the freedom of others. This is not interference. For our own freedom suffers when the freedom of others is infringed. Our human dignity is offended when we must allow human dignity to be violated. Our solidarity is compromised when we tolerate with indifference the suffering of others.

These words are meant as a plea, a quiet plea, made in more than one direction, and meant for more than one address. Vociferousness does not add to moral firmness. Indignations, anger, protest—especially from a safe haven—do not necessarily testify to readiness to share in the suffering of others. They are not necessarily proof of solidarity.

I make no demands here of the powerful whom it is impossible anyway to bend to our will. Rather, I plead for understanding that it is difficult to be a good neighbour when fear reigns in one's neighbour's house; that it is hard to talk of peace and cooperation when tongues are silenced in one's neighbour's house; that it is hard to have faith in reason when, in one's neighbour's house, the freedom of the spirit, the source of all reason, is crushed by mistrust. And let me add that it is hard to secure respect for the desire to renounce, when one's neighbours spurn this principle by favouring force.

I may be regarded as old-fashioned, but my experience has shown that integrity is the criterion for all good politics. It needs, in general, no hue and cry. This alone can be translated into credibility. Only this can be the basis for lasting convictions. This is all expressed with beautiful clarity in the following words: "To self be true and true to

others . . .".

This was written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and I found it quoted in the bicentennial convocation document in June/July 1949 which marked the start of the work leading to the foundation of this institute. I found Thornton Wilder and Thomas Mann, Herbert Hoover and Heinrich Brüning, Bruno Walter and George Shuster among the names, which, along with many others during those summer weeks in the fourth year after the war, gave stature to the first great and free meeting of the German mind with the minds of the world.

In symposia, discussions and lectures I read, they tried to interpret Goethe's wisdom in terms of "the problem of ethics and morality confronting nations and their peoples . . . following Hiroshima." The great Goethe lecture was given by Albert Schweitzer. His name set the measure of integrity.

Here in Aspen they chose the most difficult, yet the best way to renew the links between German Europeanism and America, that had for so many long and dark years been sorely tried.

This undertaking could not be unprejudiced. Integrity is prejudiced. It is bound to be. Sometimes I am afraid of that innocence which refuses to acknowledge our experience. Albert Camus wrote: "The man who professes total innocence, will end in a final chaos of guilt." That is what we learned to fear.

These words of Camus are from his Sisyphos essay; the message of the mystical martyr is: innocent or guilty, you never give up. And so we, after the darkening of the world, dared to make a new start.

The links between our two countries, which grow closer from year to year, made us almost forget that

an ocean still separates us. It now takes only hours to cross this ocean, but now and again I still ask myself whether this telescoping of space and time does not also lure us into grand illusions. We feel ourselves to be neighbours, and we are neighbours. Between us there is that exemplary honesty which I consider to be the basis of any firm friendship.

Nevertheless, from time to time, doubts arise whether we really know each other. What do we

know about each other? How intimately and how profoundly have we experienced one another?

Millions of your young people have, since 1945, lived for months or for years on German soil. Although, I admit, in barracks, I have been told—and I have observed it myself—that they took home friendly impressions, that their eyes became a little sentimental and dreamy when they spoke of the Rhine countryside, the little old towns with their



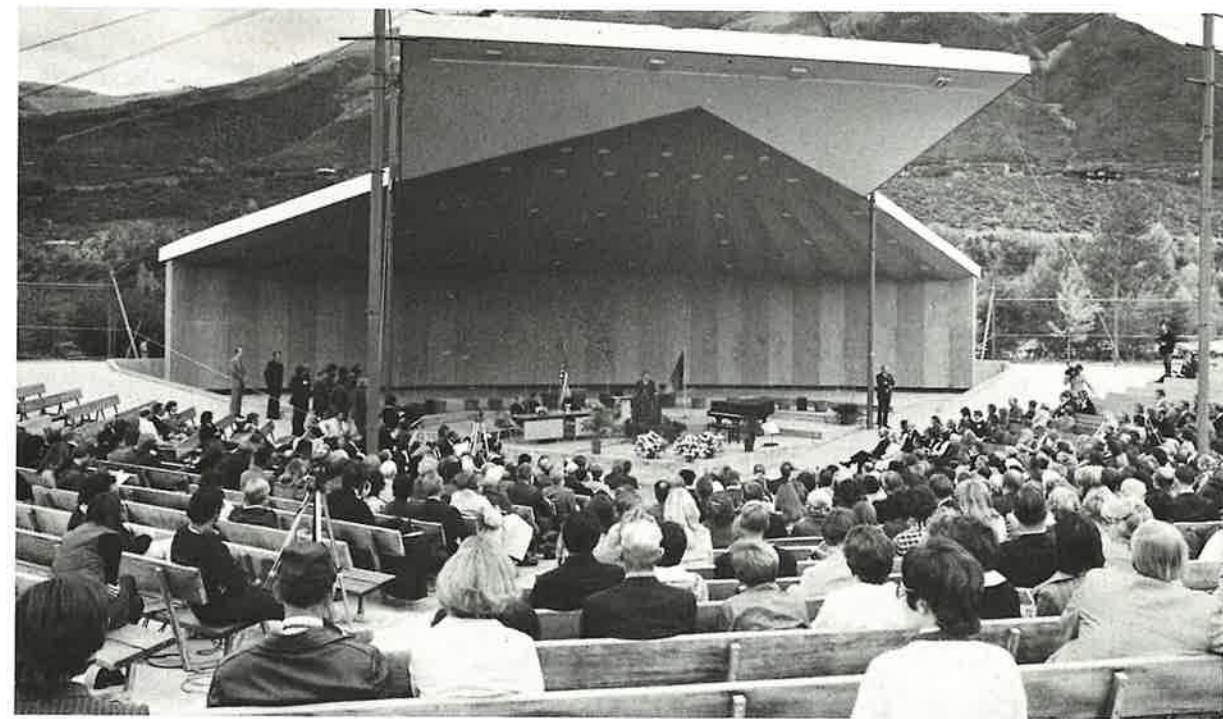
Chancellor Brandt and Robert O. Anderson, Chairman of the Aspen Institute, at the presentation ceremony.

towers and gables, of wine and of country festivals. This is all very nice but from here it is only a step to the irritating, if usually well-intentioned clichés.

Clichés do have an element of truth, but sometimes they may bar access to other nations. The October Festival cliché says as much or as little about my country as the Rodeo cliché does about

yours. It strikes me as rather sad that hundreds of thousands of times we have missed opportunities for more intense encounters—apart from the amusing and transient little flirts, and the more serious of the many thousand marriages.

German tourism to this country is still rather weak. This may change, but our everyday civilization, in



Invited guests listen as the Chancellor accepts the award at the outdoor ceremony.

terms of clothing, traffic, food, housework and industrial production has grown ever closer to yours. Much of our daily life has been moulded by America. Radio, television and movies live from American imports.

English is starting, if I am not wrong, to be something like a second working language, and that alone deserves the name of an educational revolution, for it leaves deep traces in the consciousness. I feel this is a good thing, although I should like to remind our people quietly, but urgently, not to cut ourselves off from the language of our neighbours—the French—for theirs will be one of the main languages of our future political home, the European Union.

The exchange of information was never before so rapid, so intense, so comprehensive. Satellites confront us with "dramatic events" an ocean away from us almost the instant they take place. But only with the dramatic, the sensational—hardly ever with scenes of daily life—pictures of the undramatic normality, which makes up our lives.

Despite the perhaps inevitable, almost ritual flow of standard scenes and stereotypes, the opportunity to share in the life of others by means of information, was never greater. We read American newspapers, magazines and books. We see the newest and best of American films. We are informed of the discoveries and achievements of American science. Almost nothing which concerns the other, so it seems, remains hidden from us. But still I cannot bring myself to the optimistic conclusion that we are as near each other as we should be. My hesitation is related to the question whether quantity can be equated with quality of information.

My colleagues have given me a few figures which



In addition to the formal award, the Chancellor was presented with the gift of a Stetson hat by Robert O. Anderson, as a "symbol of the West." Joseph E. Slater, President of the Institute, looks on.

show that each way only a few thousand people have the chance to study in the partner's country. Exchanges in the fifties were livelier, although more one-sided. The Fulbright Agreement, as we all know, proved especially meritorious.

It is not a sign of ingratitude if I am forced to a third "but": Was it enough? Is it enough? Some feel that a new alienation is growing between the continents. I am not sure whether this is so. If it were true, the causes must be sought in a com-

plicated network of psychological experiences.

The European consciousness which is slowly forming should not be held responsible for this; on the contrary, it makes us free for meetings between partners. We should consider, rather, whether we have not for too long been content with agreement in fields where it was quite easy and simple to find common ground.

Fairness and generosity by the victor to the defeated soon made it possible for a not entirely unselfish friendship to develop. The threat facing us both led us into political and military co-operation which was right and necessary. The danger hanging over both of us perhaps relieved us of the obligation to reflect upon ourselves as profoundly as we should have done. Economic exchange was, as always, guided by self-explanatory interests which were therefore hardly likely to provide the challenge to reach a deeper understanding.

We have, if I am right, never or hardly ever, got beyond the superficial. We have never or hardly ever, dug deeper into those more difficult layers where patience and effort are required to build a friendship. One must, I was told by a friend who lived a long time in your country, respect that which is different for its difference. Only in this way can one learn to love it.

But what does a young German just out of High School know of the history of America? Hardly more than nothing. He has heard of Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy, perhaps of Benjamin Franklin, Jefferson and Monroe (because of the Doctrine). But he knows more or less nothing of the sources and origins of the civilization in which he daily takes part.

Is the situation any better the other way round?

Luther, Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler, perhaps Konrad Adenauer—that is probably about the average man's knowledge of the history of the country which more than 300,000 young Americans stand ready with their German comrades to defend.

This is not enough, neither here nor there. We shall have to think of something, do something, if all the good will and the idealistic effort of the past two and a half decades is not to go to waste. Now is the time to dig deep and solid foundations for our friendship. For now we are beginning to take the measure of the new realities. Today we no longer see just the natural identity of interests; we are beginning to understand that the commitments governing the thinking and action of a world power are different from those of its allies; that for these allies new commitments are evolving in the process towards unification, which the world power can share only to a limited extent.

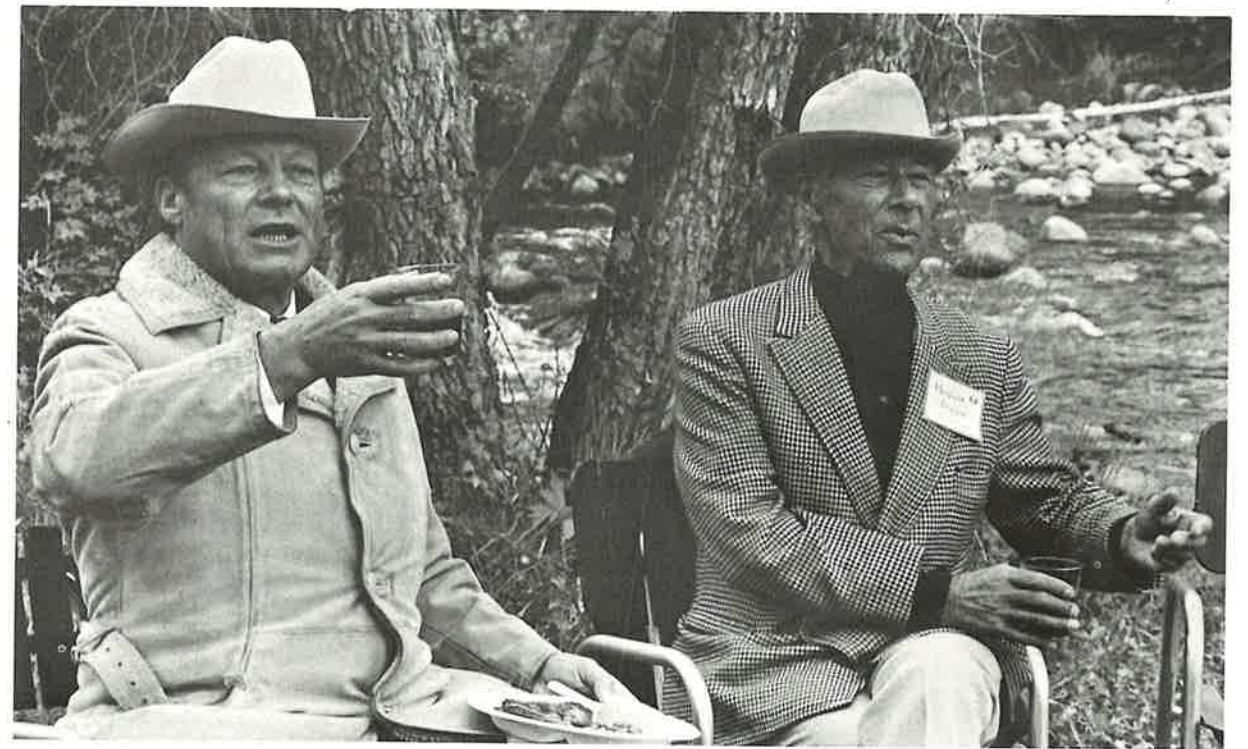
There is nothing wrong in this. I see here no reason for mistrust, for anxious scenting of dangers, caution or even resignation. If—and this "if" is all important—we have the courage and the strength to maintain the solidarity of good neighbours also in the face of the new realities.

This means that we shall have to devote time and effort to each other. We must get to know each other better. Still more: we must learn to live with each other. More young Europeans must have the opportunity of exploring the social landscape of America, of discovering America's outlook on life, of becoming familiar with its history, and the process must be reciprocal. In this we cannot put our faith in governments alone. The coffers of state are always empty (or they are full and must unfortu-

nately remain so) and parliaments and their committees are usually tight-fisted. It is industry's task to draw up its own programmes. It is the task of the unions, the church, and also, more than in the past, the universities, and of course the foundations

which are already doing magnificent work.

In this, the Aspen Institute sets an outstanding example. My friends both here and in Berlin have asked me to mention today that this Institute plans to set up an international meeting-centre in Berlin.



The Chancellor talks with Herbert Bayer, Bauhaus artist, Aspen Institute Trustee and Fellow, at a picnic on the Institute's grounds, at the confluence of the Castle Creek and Roaring Fork Rivers.

The choice of this city is no coincidence: For us it is the apex and touchstone of the new relationship between East and West. In Berlin, as here, figures of spiritual and intellectual authority will discuss together with young people from all sections of society the tasks of peace and social well-being. International and European problems will have a special place in "Aspen-Berlin."

This is happy news for a former Mayor of Berlin. It is encouraging news for a Federal Chancellor. I should like to assure the Board of Trustees how much my government appreciates this decision. Ernst Reuter who died twenty years ago, would have seen the confidence he set in our friendship with America confirmed by "Aspen-Berlin."

The Aspen Institute has thus demonstrated what wisdom and initiative can achieve. In this I see my remarks at the beginning of my speech confirmed: Up at this height things appear in their true perspective. Here the foundations for good neighbourliness were laid.

Finally, I should like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. President, the Board of Trustees, ladies and gentlemen. I am moved by this honour with which you have presented me. I am prompted at this moment to greet the fatherly friend, the only one before me to receive this honour: Jean Monnet, the master-builder of the Europe in which we seek our future and partnership with America.

Thank you.

