

Australia to Germany
8th to 15th September 2001

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC

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Executive Summary
(Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC)

The benefits to personal and professional development to the delegates of the sixth Australian delegation to the Federal Republic of Germany from 8 to 15 September 2001 were evident from the beginning of our visit to a country undergoing a process of significant change.

Germany, 11 years after reunification, is a nation undergoing massive economic, social and political change. Berlin, the new capital of a united Germany and the home of the German Bundestag, is a city symbolic of Germany's divided past and united future.

The decision in 1991 to move the seat of government from the former capital Bonn to Berlin has not only issued many challenges to the capital but also has provided many opportunities for the city and its people.

Given that Berlin is the centre of government it was appropriate that the delegation spent three full days there, visiting and meeting representatives from the major political foundations, political party leaders and members of the Bundestag.

While there are economic and social differences between Germany and Australia, political differences were less apparent. The issues that face our own political system and parties are similar to those facing the German government and the German political parties. The priorities of the German Government and for political parties generally are health, law and order and unemployment. These are the high order policy issues that were at the core of the Berlin and Hamburg State election campaigns that were in train during our visit.

The two most obvious challenges for the Federal Government are dealing with the rate and extent of change flowing from the unification of West Germany and East Germany and the ongoing policy issues surrounding the European Union.

At the centre of the reunification process is the economic challenge of meeting the enormous infrastructure requirements in East Germany which has resulted in massive pressures on the Government's budget.

The cost of the rebuilding program alone is an indicator of the extent to which the German government is committed to true unification. The Potsdamer Platz is the biggest inner city construction site in Europe, with in excess of 8 billion DM being spent to create the largest service centre in Germany.

The short term costs for the German Government and people of such effort are measured against the opportunities that a strong united Germany will provide in the future and for successive generations.

At the heart of this future is a strong united Germany with a central role in a genuine European Union, with a common market, common currency in the Euro and some common policies.

Although strongly supported by all political parties as a positive development, the EU is not without its critics. There are concerns expressed about the rate of implementation, some describing it as a "snail on speed". Other criticism focuses on the extent to which Germany bears the financial burden of financing the Union and the impact of that on reduced domestic spending.

The Australian Political Exchange Council Delegation to Germany 2001 will remember their exchange for the many wonderful and hospitable people that it met and the fascinating historical sites that it visited in Frankfurt, Berlin and Hamburg. Unfortunately, the visit will also be remembered as the time of the world's worst terrorist attack. At its meeting at 3.00 p.m. on Tuesday 11 September 2001 with Mr Hermann MP for the Alliance 90/The Greens in Room 3 N040 at the Reichstag, Mr Hermann received a telephone call informing him that the World Trade Centre Towers and the Pentagon had been bombed. Later that day on our way to Potsdam, while travelling through parts of the countryside where ruins from the Second World War were still evident, the BBC radio broadcast advised that the USA President had announced that "America was now on a war footing". It was against the backdrop of this world crisis that the remaining three days of our programme was conducted.

As leader of the delegation I would like to thank the Australian Political Exchange Council for its support of the above delegation.

I would also like to compliment the Council on the organisation and coordination of the trip and in particular commend Mr Lyalle Patterson, the Program Officer, and Ms Sue Whisker, who accompanied the delegation, for their outstanding contributions.

Likewise I would like to thank Mr Oliver Vogt, from the Administration of the German Bundestag (Berlin and Hamburg) and Mr. Karl-Hendrik Derksen, from the Administration of the German Bundestag (Frankfurt) for the organization and execution of our program whilst in Germany, particularly given the timing of our visit and unforeseen international events. Consequently, these events required some last minute changes to our scheduled programme.

A feature of this delegation was the preparedness of all delegates to become fully involved in planning visitations and making speeches of thanks and commendation to our many hosts. I would also like to extend my compliments to the other delegates, Mr Andrew Whale, Miss Donna Taylor, Mr Stephen Wade, Mr Gordon Noble and Ms Megan Edwards. Each participated actively and proved to be excellent ambassadors for Australia and a credit to their country. I would also like to thank Stephen Wade and Gordon Noble for their contributions to this report.

The delegation found the exchange to Germany to be an extremely enlightening and informative experience and a very valuable contribution to both our personal and professional development. I congratulate the Australian Political Exchange Council on its 20th anniversary and its contribution to international understanding.

Summary of Visit
(Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC)

Saturday, 8 September 2001

Our day in Frankfurt proved an appropriate start to the remainder of our week in Germany. We arrived mid morning after a very long flight with most of us too numb or excited to feel the jet lag after a 20-hour flight. Our first appointment was an informal lunch in the historic town centre with Mr. Karl-Hendrik Derksen, of the German Bundestag, Secretariat for Parliamentary Friendship Groups.

This was followed by a guided tour of the Paulskirche (St Paul's Church) which is the symbol of democratic freedom and national unity. In 1848, St Paul's Church served as the seat of the first Parliament representing all of Germany which drew up a constitution for a united Germany. The Church is seen as the cradle of German democracy.

As one of the financial centres of the world, Frankfurt is symbolic of Germany's bright economic future given its central position in the newly emerging EU.

Sunday, 9 September 2001

The delegation departed from Frankfurt Train Station en route to Berlin, arriving at Berlin Zoo. Garden Train station by mid afternoon.

A highlight of our first day was a sightseeing tour of Berlin, including remains of the Berlin Wall, Checkpoint Charlie - the only gateway for foreigners between East and West Berlin during the Cold War, Potsdamer Platz, the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin's only remaining city gate. Eleven years after the fall of the wall in 1989, little remains of the wall in spite of its marked effect on the history on this unique city exists. The fall of the wall paved the way for German reunification and the move of the capital from Bonn to Berlin. However, for many thousands of Germans and to the free democratic world it remains a symbol of oppression and aggression.

Monday, 10 September

Meeting with Dr Guido Herz - Head of Office on Foreign Relations of the CDU National Headquarters.

Our discussion with Dr. Guido Herz, Head of the Office on Foreign Relations of the CDU, highlighted the major issues confronting the German government.

According to Dr Herz, health, welfare, the pension system and unemployment are all key issues in the lead up to the next federal parliamentary election due in September or October 2002 and also in the Hamburg and Berlin state elections due in late September 2001. In his view, the construction industry is starting to decline, the industrial relations system is rigid and immigration is a growing problem.

Dr Herz was hopeful of a good outcome in the Hamburg elections but held the view that CDU would lose the Berlin election.

Meeting with Federal Ministry For Domestic Affairs - Mr Korper

Our last meeting of the day was a meeting at the Federal Ministry For Domestic Affairs with Mr Korper, Parliamentary Secretary (SPD), who spoke on the Government's desire to pursue new immigration legislation to cover migrant guest workers and refugees.

Although the Government was keen to introduce a new framework before the election it was unlikely to do so given the sensitivity surrounding the immigration issue. The need for the legislation was driven in part by skill shortages in areas such as information technology

An evening of culture was enjoyed at the Philharmonic Concert Hall where the Arnold Schonberg Trio gave a memorable performance.

Tuesday, 11 September 2001

Guided tour of the Reichstag

A highlight of our visit to Berlin was a guided tour of the Reichstag building which served as the seat of parliament during the Weimar Republic, was reconstructed during the 1960's, renovated by British architect Norman Foster in 1994 and is now the home of the Bundestag. Of particular note was the use of glass which is seen as a symbol of transparency and a departure from the past.

Our tour of the Reichstag was followed by lunch with members of the German-Australian and New Zealand Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Abgeordneten-Restaurant. Herr Hasenfratz, a long time member of the friendship group and SPD parliamentarian, hosted the lunch.

The lunch was attended by eight members of the Bundestag all of whom had a genuine interest and affection for Australia and its people. The delegation was pleasantly surprised by the extent of interest amongst the friendship group members and the fact that a number had already visited Australia with others indicating that they intended to follow their colleagues' example.

The parliamentary dining room provided a perfect setting for the delegation to relax and meet parliamentarians with a genuine interest in Australia, and discuss a range of issues of interest to both countries.

Meeting with Mr Hermann, a member of the Alliance 90/Greens Party

Following lunch we attended a meeting with Mr Hermann, a member of the Alliance 90/Greens Party. He discussed with the delegation a range of environmental issues including power, transport and sustainable population.

The previous week in parliament had proved to be historical with the SPD/Alliance 90/Greens Party having succeeded in passing a law to stop the

production of nuclear energy over the next 20 years. Mr Hermann pointed out that production of other forms of energy such as solar energy, wind, biomass and waste has been a priority for the Government. Delegation members saw first hand evidence of this as wind power generators could be seen during our train trips through the German countryside.

Mr Hermann highlighted problems with transport including lack of compatibility and increasing mobility of employees leading to more and more traffic, which of course leads to more emissions.

A range of measures were introduced to address this issue including encouraging car producers to produce more fuel efficient cars and the introduction of an Eco tax which has led to increased cost of fuel. It is also proposed that the government introduce a road transport tax to finance rail infrastructure improvements.

As a consequence of the terrorist crisis there were some changes to our programme. The first major change was the cancellation of our discussion with members of Bündnis90/Die Grünen during their party festival which was scheduled that evening. This event was cancelled as a mark of respect for the thousands of people who had died as a result of the bombing of the two World Trade Centre buildings, the Pentagon and the fourth plane crash in Pennsylvania.

Wednesday, 12 September

Meeting with Dr Markus Engels, Head of Department on EU at SPD headquarters

The delegation met with Dr Markus Engels, Head of Department on EU at SPD headquarters, with the focus of discussions on the "The future of the EU as viewed by the SPD",

Dr Engels outlined that the European Union consists of 15 member states and aims to establish a common European market with common justice and home affairs provisions.

The European union with its single currency unit will politically and economically create the world's largest single market, increase investment and strengthen European markets.

The second objective is to enlarge the European Union to include eastern European countries, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia etc. On the issue of enlargement there is as yet no consensus as to how far Europe can enlarge.

Dr Engels highlighted that a number of forms of membership of the Union were possible, including weaker forms of membership and special forms of co-operation. However, at this stage it is still an evolutionary process. There is no plan as to what the final make up of the Union might look like as with respect to finalising Europe.

Harmonising social systems will be difficult in the EU but the harmonising of economic and justice policy is a necessity.

Voting power in the EU is very complicated, certain decisions give greater voting rights to Germany but in some matters Germany has the same voting rights as other smaller member states. There must be a balanced approach with respect to the EU voting system, but it is an evolutionary process and as such there will be a need for continuing reform.

Meeting with Ms Iris Gleicke MP - (SPD)

Delegates had the opportunity to meet Ms Iris Gleicke MP, member of the SPD with special responsibility for transport, youth and housing. The delegation was delighted with Ms Gleicke's openness in responding to questions about her entry to the parliament, highlighting a trend towards more young people and women entering the Parliament since 1990.

Ms Gleicke spoke frankly about the political challenge of integrating East and West Germany, highlighting that although it has grown much closer over the last 10 years there were still many problems requiring further attention such as the disparity in unemployment, living standards and opportunities.

Cocktails followed our meeting with Ms Gleicke at the residence of the Australian Ambassador Paul O' Sullivan.

Thursday, 13 September

Meeting with Dr. Dorothee Stapelfeld, Vice President of the Local Parliament

The delegation departed from Berlin Zoolog. Garten Train Station at 10am arriving at Hamburg Train Station at approx. 4.00pm.

The delegation was welcomed by the Vice President of the local Parliament, representing the President, Dr. Dorothee Stapelfeld who had been scheduled to discuss the election campaign. However, the schedule was amended because of the tragic circumstances in America, and the discussion did not take place.

A guided tour of the Town Hall of Hamburg was followed by the delegation in joining with the people of Hamburg in the town square to remember the victims of the American tragedy. At 5.00pm the city of Hamburg stopped, united in grief.

The Major of Hamburg Mr Ortwin Runde in his address to the people spoke out against brash condemnations and called for cooperation against terrorism to bring those responsible to justice, stressing the need to maintain good neighbourly relations.

The Lutheran Bishop of Hamburg, Ms Maria Jepsen, made the point that no religion can ever justify the killing of human beings while Dr Hans-Jochen

Jaschke stated that those who sympathise with these acts could not be tolerated but should be excluded from humanity.

Finally, the American Consul General in Hamburg, Ms Elbow, thanked all for their condolences and offers of aid and reiterated the need for humanity to stand together.

Our day ended with a guided boat tour of the harbour as the campaign rally of the CDU, which had been scheduled, had been cancelled.

Friday, 14 September 2001

Meeting with Ms Anja Hajduk, Parliamentary Director of the Caucus of the Alliance 90/Green party

Our last day in Germany commenced with a meeting with Ms Anja Hajduk, Parliamentary Director of the Caucus of the Alliance 90/Green party in the local Parliament of Hamburg, and Ms Gudrun Zimdahl, member of the Federal State Executive Committee in Hamburg. Both spoke of their respective roles and of some of the achievements of their party.

They pointed out that, although Alliance90/Greens is quite a small party, in Hamburg it has a large influence. It was founded in 1980 with broad spectrum of views from ecological economists to radicals. Equality of gender is an important issue for the Greens, consequently the Party has a 50/50 rule and it is the only party with a female leader. It has been in coalition with SPD in Hamburg since 1997.

Elections in Hamburg held on 23rd September, were expected to return the SPD/Greens coalition. However, the Greens have a very narrow margin and they are unsure whether they could hold government. The major election issues include internal security and related issues such as drugs, police numbers etc

As it eventuated Judge Ronald Schill's party, formed less than a year ago, took nearly 19% of the vote. In combination with heavy losses sustained by the Greens, the SPD's coalition partner, there is the probability that the SPD could lose control of the Hamburg City State for the first time in 44 years.

Meeting with Mr. Herrewulf Brocke - CDU Hamburg

The campaign in Hamburg was interrupted due to the terrorist attacks. However, for the first time in 45 years there is a real chance for change. On several occasions the CDU has been the strongest party in Hamburg, but lacked a coalition partner to be able to form a government.

For months the campaign has focused on local issues. Events in USA could affect the result but it is difficult to predict in which way. Some may wish for no change, however, the CDU is known for conservatism and strength in foreign relations.

The discussion focussed on a range of issues such as campaigning techniques, financing of campaigns and candidates.

Meeting with – Ms Christa Randzio-Plath SPD Member of the European Parliament

The delegations final meeting was with Ms Christa Randzio-Plath SPD Member of the European Parliament, who took the opportunity to outline the SPD 's position which was that military action was not an appropriate response to the terrorist bombings in the USA.

She briefly outlined the process of election to the EU and her responsibility as a member of the European Parliament.

Ms Randzio-Plath also spoke on matters of the EU, highlighting the costs and opportunities for Germany.

The SPD recognizes that EU Agriculture Policy is to the detriment of other nations outside of the EU, and is not sustainable in the long term. The agricultural policy has always been a difficult policy area particularly in German-French relations.

Political Foundations **(Mr Stephen Wade)**

A key part of the delegation's programme focussed on visiting four political foundations, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

A number of characteristics are common to each. They are generously funded by the government but raise money from other sources. Further, the foundations share common broad objectives and performance criteria when reporting back to government on the expenditure of public monies.

Irrespective of the foundation's party associations and ideological leanings none view themselves as having a direct role in the activities of a political party. Foundations provide research on a wide range issues which may be used by a variety of clients including politicians. However, they do not take part in election campaigns. They are essentially issue-based organisations.

Their role is described in terms of "think tanks" which through a range of activities encourage democracy, its processes and institutions, promote political theories, promote democracy internationally and train leaders of the future

Konrad Adenauer Foundation

Our meeting with Frau von Fallois, chief of the head office of the Konrad Adenauer-Foundation provided the delegation with its first exposure to foundations as institutions integral to the political landscape in Germany. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is the think tank foundation of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and is the biggest Christian Democrat Foundation in

Europe. Its budget is approximately 200 million DM per year. The amount of Government funding is commensurate with the size of the foundation.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation

The tasks of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation were explained to the delegation by Mr. Stettin who was of the view that a major role for the foundation was to develop policy and debate for the Social–Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).

The foundation, named after Friedrich Ebert, Germany's first democratically elected president, promotes social democratic values and has strong ties to the German and international trade union movement.

Mr. Stettin discussed the issues of social democracy in Germany and globalisation. In terms of globalisation the dilemma facing Germany is that as Europe's biggest exporter it benefits from globalisation. However, on the other hand globalisation has the potential to erode the high social standards which have been established domestically.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation,

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for liberal policy has its origins in the principles of liberalism. The Foundation's objective is to keep these principles alive, particularly amongst the younger generation.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation was founded in 1958 by the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Theodor Heuss, in honour of Frederick Naumann, a German pastor turned political leader (1860-1919). The Foundation is connected to the Free Democratic Party (FDP) which supports freedom as a principle and holds that it can only be gained through personal responsibility.

The delegation met with Dr Detmar Doering and Almut Thebaud who explained the work of their foundation. It seeks to identify like-minded politicians around the world with its main partners being Liberal Parties, think tanks and professional associations.

Rosa Luxemburg Foundation

Delegates met for discussions with Prof. Dr. Michael Brie and Dr Helmut Ettinger from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. The foundation was named after Rosa Luxemburg, the most important left wing socialist politician in Germany prior to 1918.

Dr Brie explained the origins of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) as the successor of the former Communist Party in East Germany. The PDS managed to get over 5% of the vote in 1998. This was crucial to its future, as parties must win at least 5 per cent of the national vote, or three constituent seats, to gain representation

The PDS is the third largest party in East Germany whereas in West Germany they are virtually non - existent. As such it was Dr Brie's view that a left wing

government, including the PDS, was a likely outcome of the Berlin State election, but in Hamburg a reformation of the current SPD-Green coalition was the likely outcome. Subsequently, this has not proved to be the case. A law and order, anti - immigration politician known locally as "Judge Merciless" delivered an unexpected blow with a strong showing in the Hamburg election.

Dr Helmut Ettinger shared some of his concerns in relation to the EU, including the possibility of a deep social gap emerging between countries in the Union and his belief that Germany is not ready to spend more on the EU, particularly given that much more work and resources were needed in Germany for reunification.

Cherishing the Foundations (Mr Stephen Wade)

German democracy was reconstructed after World War II. Under the oversight of the Allied powers, the political institutions of West Germany included a range of checks and balances to protect Germany from undemocratic forces.

One such network of institutions was the political foundations – the Stiftung. Each political party represented in the Bundestag – the German Parliament – is entitled to establish a foundation with public funds. They each tend to undertake four roles:

- undertake the development of public policy options and promote public policy discourse;
- promote a democratic, pluralistic political culture through community political education;
- provide scholarships which facilitate access to higher education for gifted young people; and
- contribute to promote democracy and development throughout the world.

The 2001 Australian Political Exchange Council delegation was fortunate to be able to visit four stiftungs – those associated with the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats, the Free Democrats and the PDS, the former communists.

As we met with the Stiftung, the delegation was struck by the richness of the model – in each of the foundations, there was a clear passion for democratic development in Germany and overseas. A passion not merely to promote the mechanistic functionality of electoral processes but a passion to foster a democratic and civil society, founded on the conviction that a democracy will only be healthy and secure if it is underpinned by healthy institutions of civil society – families, unions, churches, political foundations and so on.

Development of civil society is not a major focus in Australia. Although it did rate a mention in Martin Krygier's 1997 ABC Boyer Lecture:

"Apart from top-down, vertical links from governments to citizens, partisans of civil society draw attention to, and advocate, horizontal links among citizens themselves and bottom-up connections from citizens to government. They point to salutary consequences of joining, of voluntary associations, of informal institutions, of co-operation, trust, 'social capital', of activities that build up from society rather than trickle down from governments.

Some lay stress on what governments can't do, some on what citizens can. Either way, attention is directed to social networks and socially-generated initiatives, most commonly by contrast to projects initiated by government."

Krygier subsequently favourably quotes Phillip Selznick:

"Personal responsibility is most likely to flourish when there is genuine opportunity to participate in communal life. These conditions require substantial investment by the community and its institutions".

Australia's two main political parties have both shown themselves willing to invest in political ideas. Both have established political foundations – the Menzies Research Centre (Liberal Party of Australia) and the Evatt Foundation (Australian Labor Party). However, both these centres have a narrower focus than the German Stiftung; both are primarily think tanks.

As we face the uncertainties of a world after September 11, the delegation is of the view that one of the best ways to strengthen our "homeland security" would be by strengthening the civil society which undergirds our democracy. Establishing broad political foundations on the German Stiftung model may well be a sound investment in our best defence.

The Future of Europe (Mr Andrew Whale)

The concept of a united Europe seemed a distant reality in the decade after the war when coal and steel producers in France and Germany sat down to negotiate an agreement of co-operation. Yet it was these humble beginnings that led to the establishment of the European Union.

At the turn of the century the challenges that confront Europe are immense. Despite these challenges it is clear that German politicians, whatever their political persuasion, remain committed to the ideal of European integration.

As an internal SPD document states, "European integration is the most important and most successful political project in the history of Europe. It is the foundation for peace, safety and stability among the member states and generates prosperity, growth and employment for Germany and the European Union."

However the contribution that Germany makes to the European Union is a source of emerging debate within the country. One of the key areas of concern is the Common Agricultural Policy. With EUR 9348 million, 23% of the overall budget, France is by far the largest recipient of funding under the Common Agricultural Policy, a funding arrangement which is largely seen within Germany as unsustainable.

The original deal to establish the European Union together was contingent on France being provided with protection for its agricultural industries in return for Germany being granted access to new export markets. This deal was of overall

benefit to Germany after the war as its export industries drove strong economic growth.

There is no doubt however that the generosity of the CAP is of growing frustration to German politicians. Already bearing the substantial costs of German re-unification, Germany is running a substantial budget deficit. The possibility of reform to the CAP appears unlikely in the short term, as one politician noted, it is easy to spend other people's money.

While Germany remains committed to the European Union other European countries have been prepared to put their national interest ahead of ideals. As one German politician commented, every time that Margaret Thatcher stormed out of a room during negotiations, it cost Germany a million marks to bring her and her advisers back in.

The delegation visited the City State of Hamburg, which was about to go the polls. The poll resulted in a new law and order party led by Judge Schill attaining almost 20% of the vote. While the main election campaign issue was crime, the poll nevertheless demonstrated the possibility for new parties with radical agendas.

While the main political parties may remain committed to the ideal of a unified Europe, perhaps the biggest danger for Germany's ongoing support for the European Union may come from the emergence of radical parties.

Germany has played a critical role in the establishment of the European Union, a role that many other European nations may have taken for granted. If Germany were to question its role in Europe then the very foundations of the European Union could be questioned.

A View of the Terrorist Attacks on America from within Germany (Mr Gordon Noble)

It was a quarter to four in the Reichstag when Mr Hermann, a Greens MP stopped talking to answer his mobile phone. On hanging-up he told us that his staff had just told him that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Centre in New York. After a brief moment of stunned silence we continued the meeting for the remaining ten minutes. As we left the Reichstag people were cramming around televisions. On the bus the driver turned the radio onto the BBC World Service and the reality of what had occurred began to dawn on us.

There was a brief suggestion about the future of the trip and whether we should head home. However, it was quickly agreed that it was better to be on ground than in the air. That night we were scheduled to attend a Greens Party Festival at their Headquarters. It was to become the first of numerous cancellations.

Back at the hotel which was close to the centre of Berlin, the lobby was packed with people many of whom were clearly American. A sign at the front entrance indicated that one of the Hotel Bars was showing CNN on the big screen. It wasn't really necessary, as the graphic nature of the pictures needed no English and virtually all of the 30 or so available television stations focused on the carnage in Manhattan and Washington.

Later that the bells rang out across Berlin's from its oldest cathedral, the Giedachtniskirche, which had somehow managed to survive the Russian, British and American bombing raids. Tonight it rang out in mourning with America.

The German Bundestag was in the midst of its busiest week of the year. It was the resumption after the Summer break and it was Budget week. However, the following morning after speeches by the Party Leaders, the sitting week was cancelled.

The following day the Delegation met with Dr Michael Brie of the Rosa Luxembourg-Foundation – the Foundation for the PDS, the former East German Communist Party. Dr Brie discussed how he had been with his Party leader earlier in the day helping to prepare his speech for the Bundestag.

In reference to what he referred to as "acts of barbarism" he said that it was his belief that the destruction of the State was creating the environment for these acts of terrorism. He also stated:

"The most important response to the terrorist attack will be to ask why. Why would people want to do this, what motivates them? If the world does not come up with answers to this question how can they expect to stop these attacks?"

Back on the streets of Berlin a bomb scare had meant the area around the Foreign Ministry was blocked off.

We headed back to the Reichstag. Twenty four hours earlier, the Parliament building was full of politicians, bureaucrats, staffers, media, tourists and the odd Australian Delegation. Today it was all but an empty shell. We were expecting difficulty in getting through security to enter the building however it proved to be no trouble - there was almost nobody inside to protect.

There was however a member of the German Government Iris Gleicke who is the Junior Minister for a range of portfolios including Construction, Housing, Transport and Youth Affairs. She reiterated her leaders declaration that "Today, we are all Americans". She went on to guarantee the Delegation that her Government would ensure our safety. In a very emotional opening to the meeting both Ms Gleicke and Delegation Leader Ljiljana Ravlich exchanged concerns for the need for unity and support between all nations at this time.

In contrast to the words, the following day it was silence that reflected the German people's emotions. The Delegation was arriving at the main railway station in Berlin – one of the busiest in Europe – when at 10.00am the Bells once again sounded and the German people stopped for three minutes. It was an almost surreal sight as cars, buses and people stopped in a place that is based on movement and normally appears as chaos. The Delegation reached Hamburg just in time to participate in the city's commemorative service. The town square, outside the impressive town hall was full of thousands of people, including many of the city's firefighters. Under a German flag flying at half-mast the city's civic and church leaders expressed their support for the American people and stressed the need for peace and social unity.

Hamburg's state of shock was intensified as around us arrests were taking place as the link between some of the terrorists and a student enclave in the outskirts of the north German city was established. This is also heightened the concern for civil unrest and attacks against religious sectors.

This concern flowed through to the local election campaign. Hamburg was only a week away from its 'State' elections. Prior to the terrorist attack law and order was already a major theme. It was pushed to centre stage largely by a former Judge (known colloquially as 'Judge Merciless') who was running independent to the major parties with a very strong platform of justice, criminal punishment and anti-immigration.

All candidates had agreed to suspend the campaign for five days out of respect for the victims of the American tragedy. It was clear however that the major parties were unsure and nervous as to what effect the attacks, and the local links to the terrorism, would have on the election.

The answer came a little over a week later when the final election results will most probably see the end to almost fifty years of Government by the Social Democrat Party as the independent Ronald Schill secured over 19% of the vote and is likely to form a Coalition with the Christian Democrats and the Free Democrats to take power.

Speculation is now rife across Europe that out of the ashes of New York and Washington will rise an extreme German national right-wing movement headed by Ronald Schill that will be along similar lines to the Freedom Party in Austria headed by Jorg Haider.