

MOSCOW-WEST DISPUTES FOR GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

In this gloomy atomic era, the German issue was at the center of international relations. The decisions of the Yalta Conference began to appear more clearly at the end of 1947. The Germans were starting to get used to the idea of living in their own country. No one could cross the western area in Soviet areas. Germany was divided again, as it had been for centuries. The German problem has started early on the European continent. Geopolitically, Germany is in the center of Europe. There are crossed all the trade routes of the continent. Being in such a strategic position, the German nation had always been too strong for Europe. When this nation was weakened, the continent was in danger. Then, what was to be done with Germany? Should it be held strong or divided? The dilemma of Western powers was great. The country that most desperately wanted Germany to be divided was France. England and the United States of America were hesitant. Divided, Germany was no longer a threat to anyone, but an united Germany could put the world on fire. A second "Hitler" would be an international disaster. In the era that we have taken into consideration, every option regarding Germany was multiplied by zero.

Keywords: Germany, division, western area, strategic position.

INTRODUCTION

A united Germany in the hands of Stalin or the West would mean complete victory of one party and absolute defeat of the other. None of the winners of the war wanted such a thing. Even under the ruins, Germany was again important. To deal with it, the winners chose the safest route. The Soviet leader, Stalin, had the most contradictory ambitions in regard to the German problem. From recently published documents and memos from Soviet officials, it is clearly seen that Stalin did not want the Germany division. His plan was to have a united, non-communist, at least friendly (at the same time) united government. The Western allies did not even intend to lend a free hand to Stalin throughout Germany. A Communist Germany would have been a disaster for Europe. In Stalin's obstruction, in order to establish his hegemony in Germany, he first influenced the latter's mistakes. His first decision to settle a large part of German territory under Polish rule was more severe.

If eastern Prussia and Silesia had to fall under Soviet influence, then it would be a matter of time for the whole of Germany to be under Stalin's area. When the Soviet leader gave these territories to Poland, then he would be in a much more favorable position to negotiate Germany's future. He had no intention of establishing a free-will government in Germany. Then, why, should Western allies necessarily give this triumph to Stalin? Stalin without realizing it, was paying the price of losing a huge part of Germany to secure Poland and, consequently, the Soviet from possible future German aggressions. Perhaps freely, Stalin chose security instead of influence. The decision to expand as far west as Poland, as in the case of the Balkans, reflected the deep gap in the Soviet leader's geopolitical strategy. For this reason, feeling more secure, he asked Ulbricht when he would be ready to unite his area with

the westerners and take control of the country. With this decision, Stalin took a great risk. He feared a strong alliance between Western Europe and the United States. If that happened, Germany will recover and for him this was not the least hope to align with this alliance that would include the reclaimed Europe. But with their weak diplomacy, Stalin and Molotov made exactly what they were most afraid of.

Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov made more mistakes that he could handle. He blew up a range of opportunities to extend Soviet influence throughout Germany. His most serious mistake was when he rejected Burns and Marshall's proposal for an agreement of the four occupying powers to stop any kind of rearmament of Germany. He was just clenching his teeth at any kind of American proposal, and that was one way to please Stalin, but not to reach a lucrative deal. Stalin and Molotov demanded more guarantees than any Western foreign minister could offer. When Molotov told Burns that 'Germany should have an anti-fascist government', he added that he would not sign any agreements until this became a reality. With anti-fascist government, Molotov had mentioned a communist government. In the moment when Burns was leaving from the Council of Foreign Ministers to leave the place to the Marshal, he did not sadly tell Molotov that he regretted that no agreement had been reached and that the blame for this was on the Soviet foreign minister.

METHODOLOGY

The great problem in observation is not to be fooled or to read into other people's actions or beliefs ideas of one's own, but to compare records of historical events and the activities surrounding them. The analysis of this historical data may help explain current and future events. The historical investigations allow to know and to reflect on a phenomenon, considering emphasizing the concepts and aims at understanding the relations of the History with the Time, with the memory or with the Space. In this sense, two important structures need to be dominated by those who are interested in this type of historical studies. This is the theory and methodology of history.

SOVIET AND WESTERN DILEMMAS

When Molotov left as foreign minister after Stalin's death, it was stated that his intention was to extend as far as possible the Soviet borders to the west. If the Soviet foreign minister had really mentioned this, it would have been impossible for him to do so. Even Stalin's generals stationed in Germany helped to divide Germany. They rejected any of Klei's proposals to merge one or two areas. According to Sokolovsky, if this were allowed, Ulbricht's position as the country's next chief would be jeopardized. Perhaps Stalin's biggest mistake was when he chose Walter Ulbricht as his man to lead Germany. Ulbricht could not even reach half of what Stalin demanded. He could only control the Soviet area, but Stalin could do so without him as there was Zhukov and Sokolovsky.

Stalin needed a man to extend his influence outside the Soviet occupation zone. Ulbricht was not even close to Stalin goal, even with his actions, and doing so, he has added the enemies of the Soviet Union. But what Stalin did not know was that Ulbricht was desperately seeking the Germany division.

He acted in such a way that Stalin could not prevent it. Ulbricht's philosophy was: "*Better a bird in the hand than two birds in bushes*". Stalin's policy in Germany influenced in the future of Europe for 45 years. At the end of the year 1947, two and a half years after the great

victory over Nazism, Stalin did not win. Like Alexander the Great in 1814, Stalin had staked a great military victory with incompetent diplomacy. Molotov has his part of guilt, but it was Stalin part to decide.

Of all the Western leaders, Charles de Gaulle was the only one who consistently demanded that Germany must be divided. He and Bido could not separate Ruhr and Saar from the German trunk as they wished, France wanted Germany. With skillful diplomacy, De Gaulle made it possible for France and Germany to have absolute veto over any decision on Germany and for Germany. Although he did not agree with Anglo-American policies in Germany, he still had to obey that in this way Germany would be kept weak. More capable than De Gaulle was George Bido. He had understood differently from his boss, that by joining the French occupation zone with the Anglo-American zone, Germany would remain divided. In this way Bido had changed the French attitude without changing the strategy of France. As early as 1946, he had realized that Council could not reach the great deal with Stalin on Europe by excluding France.

The only way to stop Soviet influence in the West would be to formalize Germany's division between the West and the East, and at any cost of American presence in this area of Europe. From their part, the British had drafted a plan to keep Americans on the continent at all costs long before the Americans did that. Just like De Gulle, who demanded a divided Germany because he feared the Germans, Bevin wanted a divided Germany because he feared the Soviets. The political system to be built in Western Europe would be around France and England with the American presence in a divided Germany.

US President Harry Truman had no policy for Germany when he took power. But Truman had the ability to listen to his advisers. Like Bevin he obeyed to real-policies to accept and demand a divided Germany that was the safest solution to confront Stalin. Burns' clashes with Molotov in 1946 and 1947, finally convinced Truman that an agreement could not be reached with Stalin. Under such circumstances, it would be impossible for US troops to withdraw from Europe. As soon as Truman decided to link up with London and maintain American troops in Europe, he finally had a clear idea of what the politics of Germany would be. He had to abandon the Morgento plan and rebuild Germany's western zone. Molotov rightly appreciated this time that Truman has abandoned Roosevelt's policy.

Truman on his part, has responded that war has ended and that Stalin could not expect the wartime positions to be even in peacetime. The four conquering powers had drawn up post-war policies of mistaken assessments. They had estimated that their interests would remain the same even after Hitler had been defeated. Time proved the opposite. They hoped that the Germans would remain passive while they occupied their land. On the contrary, the Germans started coming out openly to connect with the West. Seeing German determination, Stalin was forced to ask Western powers to guarantee that a united Germany would not be a problem for the Soviet Union. Even though they had de facto disappeared from the map, Germany could not disappear de jure. The Cold War began because of the German problem and Soviet advancement in 1944-1945 and in fruitless East-West talks in the year 1946.

The partition of Germany did not exist as part of any previous Allied plan, nor was such a plan drawn up, nor in Moscow, Washington, London or Paris. This plan came as a result of disagreements between the winners of World War II. Except for de Gaulle who was consistent in his decision to split Germany, the other three allies, above all of Stalin had not even mentioned such a plan. Bevin chose to defend Western Europe and to keep it engaged

on the American continent. Truman acknowledged to prevent Soviet domination in Germany and throughout Europe. Stalin chose him because Molotov was unable to negotiate a deal that would give him real influence in Germany and perhaps throughout Europe. The four winning powers did not agree on how to keep Germany united, nor on how to divide it. They made separate decisions about separation and did what they did. The great truth is that no one asked the Germans about their fate. The armies that had entered in Germany to win, remained as the invading force. They remained there even to oppose one another, this time not for Germany's fault.

BERLIN BLOCKADE

West's dispute with Moscow prompted British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin to invite Western officials (foreign ministers) in February 1948 for a meeting in London. To be sure that other European countries would accept Germany's economic recovery, Bevin invited the ambassadors of Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, France and United States. He urged them to work to establish a West German state incorporated within the Euro-American alliance system. As the trauma of the German invasions was still intense in all four European countries, Bevin divided the conference into two sessions held on 23 February - 6 March and 20 April - 7 June 1948.

Western ambassadors had a common goal, but they posed many questions. In the end, everyone agreed that German economic recovery would serve Europe's economic recovery. French Minister George Bido said he was in principle in agreement with the British proposal, but France said he still needed protection against Germany.

The French minister's speech was also supported by Benelux officials. Among other things, Bido added that he would not allow the Ruhr area to be included in the new German state. Even Germany should not be allowed to be included in the Marshall Plan (US economic aid to Western European countries) and London, Paris and Washington should have under control the economic situation in Saarland. London and Washington accepted the French proposals. After careful deliberation, they agreed that the Marshall Plan would include the western areas of Germany.

The most heated discussion at this meeting was how to build the next German government. The French continued to insist on the right of France to associate areas under French occupation with their country's economy. After long hours in the discussions, they knew they couldn't do it. After much discussion, the Western countries agreed to accept the creation of a West German government with independent institutions.

When the London conference ended its first session, Stalin being out of touch, decided to provoke the West in its most vulnerable part of Germany, Berlin. He ordered Marshal Sokolovski and his political adviser Vladimir Semyonov to tighten controls on the streets of Berlin. Stalin had long mentioned such action, and London has clarified the action. From his part Molotov asked to gather foreign ministers of Eastern European countries to request a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of World War II-winning countries. Stalin agreed.

Soviet leadership, ordered Sokolovsky to denounce the London meeting for Germany. Sokolovski denounced it, saying that Western powers had made unilateral decisions without consulting the Soviet Union. The situation got even worse when Walter Ulbricht announced

in the press that "the day when Western forces would leave western Berlin by force was not far off". On March 31, 1948, Sokolovski blocked all military trains traveling from the west to Berlin until Soviet inspectors were allowed to inspect the wagons one at a time. The following day, on April 1, 1948, he ordered that no train should depart from Berlin without the explicit command of the Soviet Command.

US General Lucius Clay found himself in a paradoxical position. He himself had not adopted the decisions of the London meeting because he preferred a united Germany rather than a divided one. But he would not accept any restriction of American authority in Berlin or anywhere else in Germany. He rejected the Soviet demand for train inspections. Clay agreed to give to the Soviets full passenger list, but Sokolovski declined. No allied train would move to Berlin anymore. General Clay was confronting not only Soviet pressure but also the silence of his superiors, which in other words translates to hesitation. Secretary of State George Marshall did not wish for crisis in Berlin. He had agreed with Bevin's proposals to divide Germany, but was not ready to accept the consequences of this action. Even the US military was reluctant. Minister of War Kenneth Royall questioned Clay's decision to reject Sokolovski's request. He demanded compromise. He even proposed to evacuate all Americans from Berlin. Clay strongly opposed it and said that, would not allow even an American family to leave.

Even the brave American general added that if the Americans left, all the Berliners would be morally down and Berlin would fall into the hands of the Soviets. With the fall of Berlin, it would be a matter of time for the whole of Germany to become Soviet.

Clay decided to challenge Soviet intentions by sending a train to the Soviet area of Berlin. The Soviets stopped the train. Clay was convinced that he had something to do with the Soviets. An American garrison was left blocked because it had to pass through the Soviet area to Berlin to supply it. Clay became convinced that there was work to be done with the Soviets. An American garrison was left blocked because it had to pass through the Soviet area to Berlin to supply it. Clay decided to supply his soldiers with air. Sokolovski would not be foolish enough to shoot down American planes. US - Soviet "grits" had just started. Stalin had ordered a mini blockade and considered it a success to increase his pressure. He believed he had touched the weakest point of the West. Walter Ulbricht urged Stalin to continue with this tactic to permanently alienate the West from Berlin. On March 26, 1948, Germany would be closer to the Soviet Union if the Westerners would leave Berlin. Stalin agreed and Sokolovski was instructed to start working to include all of Berlin in the Soviet zone. Western allies were alerted as the Soviets could block Berlin. Information about such an opportunity had been gathered since January 1948 when two drunken Soviet officers in the alley declared that the day when Berlin would be blocked was not far off. Clay and his subordinates had no reason to distrust him after the coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, turning the country into a satellite of the Soviet Union. Throughout the spring of 1948, tensions between the West and the Soviets increased. The Soviets went so far as to seize goods from train wagons. The situation became unbearable. On June 7, 1948, the six-nation conference convened in London drafted the relevant plan for Germany with the following points:

1. *The western areas of occupation in Germany would be fully included in the Marshall Plan.*
2. *An international control authority would enable the Ruhr area to be included in the Marshall Plan.*

3. *Immediate action would be taken to coordinate economic policies in the three western areas.*
4. *The German Government would have the federal form of government in all three western areas.*
5. *France, Great Britain and the United States of America would not completely withdraw their troops from Europe until peace was no longer threatened.*

FINANCIAL REFORM IN THE GERMAN WEST AREA

The London Declaration shocked Stalin. This meant that Western allies would remain in Germany. On June 10, 1948, the Soviets attempted to detach American locomotives from train wagons. On June 11, 1948, they stopped traffic between the West and Berlin for two days. On June 12, they stopped traffic on the big bridge for "fixing" the facility. In this way they wanted to separate the Berlin economy from that of the West. Stalin and the West seemed to be preparing for a clash. The Soviet leader had just ignored the rights of the West in Berlin. In London, Westerners had ignored Stalin's rights in their areas. Now he would challenge their rights on his part. They had all violated each other's rights. On June 18, 1948, the Western occupation authorities made a wise move to revitalize the German economy. They declared monetary reform, but did not extend it to Berlin. The reform was based on the new German Deutsche Mark and was not limited to the old Reichmark. The exchange rate would be one to ten. Western powers thought new currency would put an end to inflation and black market. At the same time, civil authorities in the western areas of Germany, under the leadership of Ludwig Erhard threw away many economic restrictions imposed since Nazi times. Even that Clay initially did not support Erhard's reforms, finally he did it. The western areas would have their own independent economy.

CONCLUSIONS

Monetary reform gave Sokolovsky the chance he was waiting for, the blockade. On June 23, 1948, Sokolovski and the Soviet occupation authorities made their monetary reform by applying it not only in their area but throughout Berlin. Western authorities did not stop him on the condition that they have their own voice of control. Alternatively they put the D-mark under the control of the four. The West allowed two coins to race in Berlin. On June 24, 1948, the Soviets cut off communication routes between West Berlin and the West areas. They put the blame on technical difficulties. From their side westerners cut off electricity from the west with which the east was supplied. Also, by sea the western blockade became effective.

Seeing Western determination, the Soviets, under Molotov's leadership, called an extraordinary conference in Warsaw of Eastern European countries in exchange for a meeting in London. The requests that were submitted were:

1. *Continuation of the cooperation of the four powers for the demilitarization of Germany.*
2. *Control of the four powers over the Ruhr province and its heavy industry.*
3. *An agreement between the four powers for an interim democratic and peaceful government for the whole of Germany, made up of representatives of democratic organizations and German political parties.*

4. *A peace treaty with Germany in accordance with the decisions of the Potsdam conference where all occupying forces had to be withdrawn from Germany after one year of signing the treaty.*
5. *Fulfillment of reparations.*

The Warsaw Declaration expressed Stalin's willingness to seek as much as possible. The categorical tone of the claims gave the impression that Stalin and Ulbricht were in strong positions. They could squeeze West Berlin by pressuring German public opinion that it was the Western powers that wanted the country division.

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