CHAPTER III

THE GERMAN QUESTION: POLICIES
OF THE WAR-TIME ALLIES
1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter attempts have been made to understand and analyze the meaning of the expressed policies, attitudes and intentions of the war-time allies towards Germany and the German Question in their day-to-day conduct during the War. Discussions have consciously been organized in the chronological order of the various international conferences of the Allied Powers that took place during the War and soon thereafter. We shall see subsequently in this chapter that in spite of the fact that there was no long term common goal of the Allied powers in fighting against Hitler during the War they found themselves condemned to be together in face of a formidable German onslaught. As we have seen in the preceding chapter that these powers came to join hands against Hitler only when they failed to win him away from the other either through pursuing the policy of appeasement or signing the bilateral non-aggression pact.

Meanwhile, a sudden appearance of Atomic Bomb with all its destructive potential at the fag end of the War added an entirely new dimension to power politics among the War Allies. Indeed, the whole dynamics of power relations among the victorious allies had undergone a sea change overnight the day President Truman hesitantly confided to Stalin that his country was in possession of an atomic weapon. It has, therefore, been thought to be legitimate to look at the German Question at this juncture from this point of view too.
At the same time a close monitoring of the changing pattern of the Soviet policy towards the German Question has been a major concern of our study in this chapter.

2. BEGINNING OF THE WAR

The Second World War had virtually begun in 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria in the name of saving Asia from Communism. Hitler joined the bandwagon two years later when he overthrew the Weimar Republic on the pretext of saving Germans from Bolshevism. Then it was Italy in 1935 which invaded Ethiopia to save it from both "Bolshevism" and "Barbarism". Apart from these specific individual initiatives Japan and Germany in 1936 signed the Anti-Comintern Agreement to coordinate their fight against, what they propagated as, the expanding menace of Communism. A year later in 1937 Italy too joined the Anti-Comintern Pact. Thus, the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis was complete for "saving the world from Communism"?

The ground work of an imminent war was being quickly laid. The belligerents of the fascist power, particularly Germany, were at their height and they wanted to subjugate smaller East and the Central European states as early as possible. The first major military move in this direction was made by Germany in 1938 when it seized Austria.

Sensing the magnitude of impending dangers, the Soviet Union in April 1938, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, made the final bid to
woo Germany for the non-aggression pact. Hitler authorized the pact to be signed on 23 August 1939. On 1 September 1939, Hitler's mechanized army invaded Poland. Great Britain and France joined the war against Germany two days later. The Second World War began. On 22 June 1941, Hitler's army hurled across the border of the Soviet Union. The Soviets were stunned but quickly resisted and retaliated and became the part of the ongoing war. Japanese war planes bombed Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 without an advance warning with the result that America too was now dragged into the war. Thus, "the fateful decade 1931-1941", lamented the US State Department in its official publication, "began and ended with acts of violence by Japanese".¹

3. COMMON NECESSITY

As the War progressed it was interesting, indeed, to see France, the Great Britain, America and the USSR fighting together against Hitler. In fact, it was a common enemy and common necessity that clubbed them together. Since neither the West was inclined to accept the moral legitimacy for the Soviet system nor the Soviet Union for the West, The war-time alliance was basically a matter of strategic calculations and expediency. The objectives in common were to defeat Hitler.

Interestingly, the outbreak of the World War II had less to do with promoting the cause of liberal democracy as symbolized by America and the

West or safeguarding communism represented by the Soviet Union, though since 1917, it had become customary to consider the conflict between the two sets of mutually antagonistic social systems as the mainspring of international politics. Rather it was, in fact, the extreme kind of nationalism elevated to the level of an official philosophy of state which was one of the most important causes of the World War II. At this historical juncture unfortunately neither the hard line communists nor the liberal democrats on their own were in a position to withstand the onslaught of the extreme nationalists represented mostly by the Nazis.

Therefore, it was rather a historical necessity at this point of time to take such extremists by horns in order to save the mankind from them. It was not a particular ideology but the very existence of the basic human values that were at the stake. In such an eventuality neither the communists nor the liberal democrats could afford the luxury of delving and deliberating in details on ideological lines. Eventually, "it took their strange alliance to accomplish"2 the most immediate task of saving the human civilization from the Nazi onslaught.

Needless to add here, the very texture of the political history of Europe and America was undergoing a significant change at this juncture. The history of Europe and America started coinciding now. War ended in 1945 leaving Germany defeated and divided. America entered into Europe with a bang of atomic weapons signaling the end of the European Age.

Soviet Union too reappeared on the European scene with an enhanced status of one of the two super powers. Henceforth, Soviet Union and America alone were to govern the destinies of much of Europe and the globe for the rest of this eventful century.

4. THE SECOND FRONT

Back into the War Soviet Union was facing monstrous attacks by Germany. Its losses ran into millions. The Soviets were struggling tooth and nail to drive out the Germans from their soil. Throughout 1942 - 1943 Stalin kept on asking the Western allies to open a Second Front and he was upset by the conspicuous delay in this regard on the part of the Western alliance partners. Very soon the Soviets started thinking that "the Anglo-Saxons wanted Hitler and Stalin to bleed one another and fight it out to mutual exhaustion". It was around this time that the propaganda branch of the Soviet Communist Party started telling the people that the West wanted their country to get defeated and incapacitated beyond recognition. An early opening of the Second Front would


4. Sir Frank Roberts, the then American ambassador to the Soviet Union recalls that one of his acquaintances, Ralph Parker, who was at that time *The Times* correspondent in Moscow, confided to him in April 1945, well before the conclusion of the War, that something unpleasant was happening. The Party agitators were going round the factories and enterprises and telling their people: "We the Russians must stop regarding the Americans and the British as our friends and allies. It is pure chance that we fought this war with them on our side against the Germans - it could equally have been the other way round. They are all our enemies."

Quoted in n.3, p.227.

Quite interestingly, George Kennan in the first volume of his Memoirs has expressed suspicion about Mr Parker. He used to consider him to be a
have left Stalin less incapacitated than desired. But all said and done, historians
till date call it a naive expectation on the part of the Soviet leadership.
Nonetheless, the mutual misunderstanding quietly crept in and kept on haunting
throughout the War and thereafter. For instance, Churchill occasionally used to
taunt Stalin in informal conversations over a glass of Vodka, "You should not
forget that only two years ago we were threatened by you and we thought you
were going to join Hitler against us" implying thereby that it did not suit Stalin
to blame the West.

Therefore, Stalin was caught in a real dilemma. He was fighting the West
whom he used to contemptuously designate as the "decadent" imperialist
countries. At the same time he was fighting against a country whom he had
always been underestimating so much so that he showed "his equivocal attitude
toward the destruction of the German Communist party from 1933 through
1936". He committed grievous errors in underestimating Hitler's domestic
power resources, military strength and the ultimate direction of his foreign
policy. It was only in June, 1941, when Stalin was compelled to face Hitler's
army, he could realize the death-defying fighting instinct of the German soldiers
and their deep-rooted contempt for Communism. Only when the Russian
leadership was fully convinced that Germans designate Bolshevism as their
rebellious mortal enemy and they would be basically anti-Russian that they
confirmed Russian sympathizer.

6. Zoltan Michael Szaz, Germany's Eastern Frontiers: The Problem of the
shifted their policy toward Germany to the other extreme. Now they started overestimating the German menace.

Moreover, increasingly the anti-German sentiment of the Western powers, the US in particular, proved to be a favourable trend for the Russian leadership. Stalin was doubly encouraged by the Casablanca Declaration of January 1943 in which Germany was asked to surrender unconditionally. Now Stalin was convinced that the West would not go for a separate peace with Hitler. In fact, this was the fear which had weighed heavily on Stalin's mind right from the day Russia entered into the War. When he found circumstances favourable Stalin geared himself to exploit the highly inflamed anti-German passions running in the US and Britain at that time. He, first of all, wanted to destroy the power resources of his enemy. He "probably assumed that complete destruction of German power by the 'Big Three' combined would secure the emergence of Communism throughout the Continent".  

He, perhaps, thought that a Germany permanently crippled would in the long run pave the way for Russia's undisputed mastery over Europe.

Finding prevalent political trends favourable, Stalin decided to execute his farsighted political plan of Sovietizing Poland. Henceforth, he made Sovietizing Poland as the cornerstone of his war-time policy, destroying Germany as his immediate objective and hegemonizing the Continent as his long term goal. He knew subjugating Poland needed a large scale territorial re-adjustments. The most part of the time of the four-day Tehran Conference was devoted to this purpose alone.

7. Ibid. p.79.
5. TEHRAN CONFERENCE

At the end of four days' (28 November 1943 to 1 December 1943) intense deliberations, the heads of government of the three Allied Powers—J.V. Stalin, Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissar of the U.S.S.R, F.D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America and Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain, declared that "we have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces." This was the first appearance on a common platform of the three dominant personalities of the twentieth century—each one of them having his own set of preconceived designs of the post-war world. They were confronting to coexist. They had their own compulsions as regarding entering into the war and post-war share of the spoils and settlement of the enemy territories. Stalin wanted a permanently disabled Germany—defeated, divided and demoralized and a friendly Poland in the neighbourhood. According to Churchill, Britain entered into the war because it "gave Poland a guarantee." Churchill made this point-blank statement at the Tehran Conference. He was mainly concerned at this Conference for the defeat of the Germans and determination of Soviet Union's post-war western borders. Churchill did concede Russian demand of a friendly Poland as its neighbour, but he wanted Russia to guarantee a strong and independent Poland having right to be friendly to any country on the choice of its own. At the same time, Churchill


9. Ibid. n.8, p.47.
had apprehension of Poland getting assimilated into the Communist bloc by the Russians which he was outrightly opposed to.

On the question of Germany also Churchill was inclined to partition it but not at the cost of the division of Europe. Did "Marshal Stalin prefer a divided Europe?" Churchill emphatically questioned Stalin's intention of communizing Europe under his command and control at the end of the war. He was quite convinced that Soviet Union was to emerge as a formidable power in Europe in the post-war period.

President Roosevelt had come to the Conference with an open mind. He wanted the post-war world to be democratic and peaceful. He was opposed to communizing and hegemonizing both. In other words, he was opposed to Britain dominating West Europe and the Soviet Union doing the same in rest of it. Moreover, Roosevelt's basic impression of Stalin was that of a nationalist mainly concerned with ensuring the national security of the Soviet Union. Sharing this view with the former Ambassador Bullitt just before the Conference Roosevelt said, "I have just a hunch that Stalin doesn't want anything but security for his country and I think that if I give him everything I possibly can and ask nothing from him in return, noblesse oblige, he won't try to annex anything and will work for a world of democracy and peace." Accordingly, Roosevelt tried to convince Churchill to accept the Curzon Line as the eastern frontier of Poland and the Oder River as the western frontier. Roosevelt

10. Ibid., p.49.
appeared to be so much enthusiastic about developing personal rapport with Stalin that he did not oppose him on any major account. Churchill, on his part, was so much apprehensive about the future formidability of the Soviet power in Eastern Europe that he appeared to be trying to bribe Stalin on Polish issue so much so that the exiled Polish Government's warning against Stalin's intentions went unheeded:

".... even though the Soviet Government should, in compensation support Polish claims to some German territories in the west, these new frontiers would make Poland dependent on her eastern neighbour, and enable the Soviet Union to use her as a spring board for extending its domination over Central Europe" 12 and Germany in particular.

Thus, at the Tehran Conference if anything was vividly at display these were the Western compromises and Eastern intransigence. Stalin got every thing he expected from this Conference. It was in fact, Roosevelt's underestimation of Stalin's intentions and Churchill's over estimation of future Soviet role on the Continent in the post-war period that provided Stalin to have a cake walk at Tehran - making the end of the first most critical phase of his effort to begin a settlement in Central Europe in the best interests of the Soviet Union. This was indeed, an 'advantage Stalin'.

Moreover, Stalin had his own valid ground to be delighted a bit more because it was at Tehran that he found the most needed friendship in Roosevelt. Indeed both of them shared a common disliking for Britain's imperialist policies. In fact, "Roosevelt held British imperialism in the deepest suspicion

12. Quoted in Szaz, n.6, p.82.
and was convinced that he could come to a personal understanding with Stalin.\textsuperscript{13}

The next phase of Stalin's political agenda during the thick of the War consisted of the establishment of a pro-Soviet Government in Poland. It was the fanatic nationalism of the Polish people which Stalin always conceived to be the greatest obstacle in future Soviet expansionism. And it was within a month after the Tehran Conference that Stalin achieved a singular success in contriving a Polish communist regime in Moscow though without causing any serious damage to the objectives of the Conference. Interestingly,

"Stalin no longer needed to fear Western intransigence in the Polish Question, for the western powers were more anxious to secure Russia's accession to the future United Nations Organization and to facilitate Russian participation in the Far Eastern conflict than to defend the independence and integrity of the ally in whose defense they had entered the Second World war."\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, 'the show must go on' was the widely held public opinion in Britain as well as in the US in the coming days of Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. Any disturbances in the unity of the Big Three were looked upon unfavourably by the majority of people in the Allied countries which in turn enhanced the bargaining capacity of Stalin at Yalta as well as at Potsdam.


\textsuperscript{14} Quoted in Szaz, n.6., p.87.
6. YALTA CONFERENCE

"Nazi Germany is doomed. The German people will only make the cost of their defeat heavier to themselves by attempting to continue a hopeless resistance." This was what the Big Three concluded at the Yalta Conference held in February 4-11, 1945. They agreed for unconditional surrender of the Nazi Germany. They also agreed on a plan to divide the defeated Germany into three separate occupation zones each one of them having control over the zone of its own. France too was invited to carve out a zone of its own limits of which were to be decided by the Big Three jointly.

As regards reparation, the heads of the three Governments had agreed in principle that the reparations be received in the first place by countries whose sacrifices were greater and who were mainly instrumental in organizing victory over the Germans.

Apart from agreeing on the unconditional surrender of the Germans, the Allied at Yalta made it evidently clear that the destruction of the German militarism and Nazism was their inflexible purpose which they had been fighting for. They expressed their determination in no uncertain terms that they wanted to disarm and disband all German armed forces so that Germany could never again in future be able to disturb peace of Europe and the world. For the Same purpose they also wanted to wipe out "all Nazi militarist influences from the public office and from the cultural and economic life of the German people".

15. Documents, n.8, p.134.
16. Ibid.
of course, without destroying the people of Germany as such. At this conference Churchill said prophetically, "there will be a place one day for Germans in the comity of nations, but only when all traces of Nazism and militarism have been effectively and finally extirpated."\(^{17}\) Therefore, at Yalta, Churchill like Stalin - but unlike Roosevelt - was more concerned about the post-war political situation in Europe than that of fighting single-mindedly the remaining battles against Hitler. Churchill here desperately wanted a concerted plan of action while Roosevelt just wished to play a mediator's role between the Soviets and the British for he remained deeply convinced that it was the British imperialism that was going to be a serious problem in the post-war world and not the Soviet expansionism. He was emphatic: "Of one thing I am certain, Stalin is not an Imperialist."\(^{18}\)

Taking advantage of Roosevelt's conviction that it was the British imperialism that was wicked and not the 'Soviet expansionism' and also his desire of establishing a man-to-man understanding with him, Stalin proposed that President Roosevelt would chair the meeting at Yalta. Churchill supported but keeping in view of the implications of President Roosevelt's statement that "he did not believe that American troops would stay in Europe much more than two years..."\(^{19}\) he insisted that France be granted a seat in Allied Control Council and also a French zone of occupation for "a strong France was vital not only to


\(^{18}\) Treadgold, n.11, p.381.

\(^{19}\) Szaz, n.6, p.88.
Europe but to Great Britain". 20 He wanted to strengthen the position of the West and the UK vis-a-vis Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, it is really interesting to note that at Yalta, Stalin did propose Roosevelt's name for presiding the Conference but he made it more than obvious that it was the Soviet Union which wanted to preside over the political destiny of Poland. Here Churchill and Stalin came face-to-face. Great Britain wanted the London based exiled Polish government to be reinstated whereas the Soviet Union wanted the Moscow based Lublin group to lead Poland. Ultimately Stalin succeeded. Churchill felt obliged to express his anguish:

"No more let us alter
Or falter or Palter.
From Malta to Yalta
From Yalta to Malta". 21

Nonetheless, Churchill was coerced to conform. He was, however, assured that the Polish government would be reorganized on broader democratic basis and through the free and fair elections on the basis of universal franchise and secret ballot. Roosevelt on this point added, perhaps, in lighter vein: "I want the election in Poland to be beyond question, like Caesar's wife." 22

For all said and done, the US government at this juncture was more concerned about Soviet participation in the war against Japan and obtaining Soviet agreement in the establishment of the United Nations than solving

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22. Quoted in Treadgold, n.11, p.395: Caesar's wife was believed to have been pure. President Roosevelt here referred her in purely figurative sense of the term.
Polish Question which, he thought, was a matter for agreement between Poland, the UK, and the USSR.

Stalin did oblige Roosevelt through the top secret Yalta Agreement that the Soviet Union would enter into the war against Japan in two to three months after the surrender of Germany, of course, on three conditions that were to be fulfilled. Roosevelt agreed that the Soviet Union's demands were legitimate and justified and declared that the Soviet claims would be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan was defeated in the ongoing war. Churchill felt compelled to agree for the sake of security of the whole British Empire in the Far East.

Thus, at Yalta, Stalin got everything he wanted, perhaps, more than what he had in mind. In other words, he simply outmanoeuvred President Roosevelt at Yalta. Or perhaps, it would be more precise to say that President Roosevelt allowed himself to be outmanoeuvred. Stalin sat tight and made his demands known to him. Roosevelt complied eagerly. Nevertheless, the Conference was concluded with a solemn pledge and sophisticated diplomatic phraseology:

"... the three Governments will jointly assist the people in Europe where in their judgment conditions require: A. to establish conditions of internal peace; B. to carry out emergency measures for the relief of distressed peoples; C. to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledge to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to

23. The specific three conditions were: (i) the status quo in outer Mongolia was to be preserved; (ii) the former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 to be restored; and (iii) the Kurile islands were to be handed over to the Soviet Union.
the will of the people; and, D. to facilitate where necessary the holding such elections."  

7. POTSDAM CONFERENCE

This conference was the last and the longest summit meeting of the Big Three of the Allied powers which was spread over 13 plenary sessions in 17 days (17 July - 2 August 1945). Germany had collapsed and Europe stood almost divided. The discussions at Potsdam in the given contemporary circumstances centred around Soviet Union's share of Poland and Poland's share of Germany and also the place of Germany and situation of the Soviet Union in the post-war world.

As far as the territorial extent of post-war Germany was concerned the Western powers at the Potsdam Conference wanted to take the German territorial position in 1937 as the starting point. This was opposed by the Soviet Union which wanted to begin with the post-war territorial position of Germany as the basis of debate about the latter's division and its future destiny.

The conflicting viewpoints of the three Big Powers at the Conference were articulated quite interestingly in the following conversation of their leaders: "What", asked Churchill, "is meant by Germany?" "What she has become after the war", said Stalin. "The Germany of 1937", added President Truman.  


Soon hereafter the crack in the relationship between the War Allied started surfacing. No sooner than their common enemy was defeated they began leaping back to their respective class positions. It is reasonable therefore to argue here that the Big Three came to Potsdam guided more by their narrow parochial approach to take away as large a share of German territory as it was possible rather than to work unitedly in the direction of establishing lasting peace in the world. Perhaps, they had reasoned to themselves by now that a long term peace, harmony and friendship between them was an unrealistic proposition because the objectives they pursued were diametrically opposed in nature to each other. The essence of this bitter reality was so succinctly expressed in the following statement of a Soviet citizen: "You want Capitalism and we want Communism."26

By the same logic each one of these powers wanted to become comparatively stronger at the end of the war for they knew that during peace time one is heard only when one speaks from a position of strength. In fact, the utility and relevance of a united military force of the Allied powers was virtually lost the day their common goal of German defeat had been attained. While Germany lost the war, the Allied powers lost their common enemy thereby depriving themselves of the very rationale of their unity and purpose of coming together. As Churchill himself accepted that the very basis of the anti-German alliance was the convergence of mutual interests at a given historical juncture rather than any long term commitment for working together to achieve a common goal

of international peace \textit{and} harmony: "When wolves are about the shepherd must
\textbf{guard} his flock, even if he \textbf{does} not himself care for mutton." \textsuperscript{27}

Therefore, the Allied powers while collectively mobilizing resources and
coordinating strategic \textit{military} offensives and efforts against Hitlerite Germany
and other Axis powers combine, they never abandoned their particular national
interests defined more \textbf{on} mutually antagonistic ideological lines. As Khrushchev
recalled later "each one of us remained on his own class position". \textsuperscript{28} As such,
the Potsdam decision was a calculated compromise facilitating distribution of
power and influence at the end of the war among the participants in the war
against Hitler. Here it seems relevant to quote an anecdote widely in currency
towards the end of the War illustrating the real motive of the Allied powers:
"Roosevelt Churchill and Stalin, sitting in a railway car, were listening to the
click of the rails. Roosevelt thought he heard: 'Give me Berlin.' Churchill:
'Divide it in half'. Stalin: 'The Devil with you both. Germany would be
divided according to work done". \textsuperscript{29} In other words, the Conferees of the
Potsdam Conference addressed themselves mostly to the problems of a post-war
settlement in Europe.

One of the most important agreement reached at the Potsdam Conference
was the establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers representing the five
principal powers-\textit{US}, USSR, UK, France and China- for working out necessary
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\textsuperscript{27} Churchill, n.17, p.399.

\textsuperscript{28} Nikita Khrushchev, \textit{Khrushchev Remembers} (London:Andre Dectsch,

\textsuperscript{29} Frederick C. Barghoorn, "The Soviet Union between War and Cold
War", \textit{The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social

\textbf{82}
ways and means for peaceful settlement of the outstanding territorial questions at the termination of war in Europe. Apart from preparing for a peace settlement for Germany the council of Foreign Ministers was to draw up treaties of peace with Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy and Finland.

In case of Germany the Conferees reiterated their Yalta determination of denazification, demilitarization, decartelization and democratization of the Germans' way of life. The Allies also reiterated that "the German people be given the opportunity to prepare for the eventful reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis". 30

On the issue of reparation the procedures were agreed to be made a bit more specific and practical. It was agreed that the Soviet reparation claims would be met from the zone of Germany occupied by the USSR and from 'appropriate German external assets'. The reparation claims of the US, UK and other countries entitled for reparations were to be met from the Western Zones and from 'appropriate German external assets'. In order to meet the additional Soviet claims of reparations, the Potsdam protocol went on to define in terms of percentages the amount of industrial capital equipment to be removed from the Western Zones of Germany under the Western powers. The determination of the amount to be removed from Western Zones was to be made within six months and such removals were to be completed within two years.

This is worth mentioning here that on the Potsdam protocol papers such arrangements of reparation look quite simple and easy but in practice it was bound to prove difficult and divisive which it did prove subsequently so. The

30. Documents, n.8, p.320.
Soviets were determined to milk the Germany at their disposal dry. The French started insisting that the Western part of Germany be equally imputed which in its view was "an essential condition for the security of Europe and the world".\textsuperscript{31} The subsequent refusal on the part of the US and Britain for allowing the payment of reparations to the USSR from their zones of occupation at the expense of feeding the German people proved to be yet another big blow to the solemn promises of the Potsdam. Thus, the abstruse formula finally agreed at Potsdam regarding reparations proved in the ultimate analysis, divisive and went a long way, in a quite short span of time, towards the ultimate division of Germany and Europe.

Meanwhile, the advent of Atomic Bomb on international scene as a weapon of mass destruction well before the formal end of the World War II introduced altogether a new dimension to the contemporary international politics. It obviously enhanced the bargaining power of the Western alliance partners in dealing with the German Question vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Now the West could afford to antagonize its one of the most formidable alliance partners - the Soviet Union.

8. THE ATOMIC BOMB DIMENSION

The US tested the first ever atomic explosion on 16 July 1945. Churchill was informed about it on the following day. He was in the beginning against the disclosure of this grand new fact to Stalin. The Potsdam Conference began on

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17 July 1945. President Truman expressed his desire before Churchill on 18th of July to tell Stalin about the American possession of atomic bomb. Churchill changed his stand overnight. Now not only he wanted to share this information with the Russians but also he wanted to use it as an instrument of pressure at the negotiations at Potsdam but "a more intricate question was what to tell Stalin". Churchill bit his lips. Truman and Churchill concurred on the point that Stalin had been given his world at Tehran and Yalta and they no longer "needed his aid to conquer Japan." Stalin to them was a spent force now. He won the war but lost the bargaining power. Churchill was of the opinion that "he (Stalin) must be informed of the great New fact which now dominated the scene, but not of any particulars" simply because of the fact that he had been a magnificent partner in the war against the Nazis.

On 24 July, at the end of the days work at Potsdam, Truman casually mentioned to Stalin about the new found weapon of unusual destructive capacity. Stalin on his part apparently hardly showed any special interest in it. He said he was happy to hear of it and casually suggested to make "good use of it against the Japanese". Interestingly, Stalin's display of casual reaction at Truman's disclosure of the new atomic fact made Churchill to erroneously conclude that Stalin had hardly any special knowledge of the vast destructive potential of the atomic bomb and its likely implication in international politics.

33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
After getting back from the Potsdam plenary session of that eventful July 24, Stalin asked Molotov to arrange a personal meeting with Kurchatov\(^{36}\) for speeding up of the work on atomic bomb. As soon as Stalin returned to Moscow he told Kurchatov at a meeting held in the Kremlin - "... the balance has been destroyed. Provide the bomb—it will remove a great danger from us."\(^{37}\) Though Kurchatov asked for five year's time he, in fact, took just four years to accomplish the task. Thus, the first Soviet atomic explosion took place on 29 August 1949.

Nevertheless, the battle line between the USSR and the West, the US in particular, was drawn. The participants of the Potsdam conference left for their respective countries leaving the future of Germany undecided but the political map of the Central Europe largely redrawn.

In fact, at Potsdam the Western diplomacy desperately attempted to dilute Soviet hegemony through various diplomatic manoeuvres. Unfortunately the West had hardly any decisively dependable alternative available to regain control over Central and East Europe except through a war which they could not resort to because they knew their objective of defeating Germany would not have been fulfilled without tremendous support and sacrifice of the Soviet troops. Moreover, the Western alliance countries while fighting against the Nazis hand in hand with the Soviet Union during the War were sufficiently exposed to the real potential of the Soviet Red Army. And now they were convinced that the

\(^{36}\) Kurchatov was appointed Deputy chairman of the Scientific-Technical Council which was at once formed under B.L. Vannikov, the then Minister for Military Supplies.

\(^{37}\) Quoted in Edmonds, n.31, p.
Soviet Union could not be written off militarily. Therefore, the West was a fix. They could neither use their military force to bring about desired changes in the existing situation nor they could reconcile to maintain the status quo. The only safe option left with them was that of resorting to moralistic offensive against the Soviet Union. That they did continue in one form or the other till the Soviet system itself collapsed in 1990.

Nonetheless, "the Western diplomacy throughout 1945 was directed at the achievement of political change in areas under the control of Soviet army." 38

Ironically, the public opinion in the West towards the end of the War was so conveniently molded through diplomatic overtures as well as through mass media that a substantial number of people started believing that" the Russians had treacherously broken their war-time agreements," 39 but the fact was that no agreements as such were ever reached. Of course, there were ample display of generalized formula, solemnized pledge and vaguely declared intentions. In reality, this was what the US wanted and this was what it ultimately received."

More than ever the world was the stage, with the players shifting the scenes madly about." 40

39. Graebner, n.38, p.27.
40. Ibid., p.28.
9. FRANCE SEEKING SECURITY WITH 'GERMANY'

Roosevelt and Stalin decided not to invite de Gaulle to the Yalta conference in February 1945. This was indeed a blatant denial of the legitimate share of credit to the French for victory against the Nazis. It was also in one sense the outright denial of the French interests in Europe. At the Potsdam Conference too the new American President Harry Truman was not much in favour of inviting de Gaulle to participate and deliberate. De Gaulle was outraged and the French sentiments were greatly hurt. At this stage it was Churchill who made a strong plea for the French participation in the post-war peace deliberations. As a result of which France was given the right to a zone of occupation in Germany. Thus was achieved some kind of an equality in the diplomatic negotiations among the four war-time allies on the German Question. De Gaulle, in fact, displayed an exemplary statesmanship in eschewing this diplomatic irritation because the principal aim of French diplomacy at that time "was to avoid the repetition of what had happened after Versailles".\textsuperscript{41} De Gaulle had Marshal Foch's memorandum of November 1918 deeply embedded in his heart. Marshal Folk had declared that the Germans would repeat the events of 1914 if the Rhine were not made frontier under Western military control and command. Though he was ignored at that time his prediction proved to be true subsequently. De Gaulle was conscious of this reality. He was, therefore, determined to detach the Rhineland from Germany and keep it

permanently under French control. He further advocated the internationalization of the Ruhr land as he firmly believed that it was the wealth of the Ruhr which boosted the morale of Nazi warlords to go for war.

At the same time there were those who warned against asking Germany to kneel down too much - a mistake which had already been committed once at Versailles. They wanted France to pursue the foreign policy of 'possible' and avoid making exaggerated demands. "Instead of depriving the Germans of all hope, ways must be opened to enable them to develop freely".42 And France should encourage such development. So, the dominant enlightened French attitude towards Germany after the War was for establishing democracy and social justice rather than pushing Germans further to the walls and creating circumstances congenial for the birth of another Hitler.

Quite understandably, therefore, right towards the end of the War in 1944-45 there were advocates, especially among the French diplomats and military, of a retaliatory peace settlement with the defeated Germany and supporters of reconciliatory approach. Of course, the basic objective of both the approaches was to rule out for good any possibility, even hunch, of a resurgence of a Nazi Germany. If at all they differed, they differed at the choice of options that suited best "to ensure France's security for several generations."43

The advocates of retaliatory French policy towards the defeated Reich sought to make Germany too weak to become a security risk to France once and

42. Ibid.

for all. Thus, the supporters of a punitive policy toward Germany sought answer to the German Question in history in which they saw 'three invasions within seventy years' - "a grim reminder of repeated destruction, systematic exploitation, and intense humiliation" of the French which they were hardly responsible for. "Within the space of a single life time", General de Gaulle painfully recalls, "we have been three times invaded by our neighbours across the Rhine".

The supporters of rapprochement with Germany sought France's security guarantee 'with rather than from Germany'. They were convinced that the French and the Germans could only master their future in Europe when they act hand in hand.

Initially, at the official level, the French leadership did not seem ready for reconciliation but new circumstances created by the Cold War together with domestic economic constraints forced French diplomacy to see reasons in Anglo-American view of systematically controlled reconstruction of the German economy. The westward expansion of the Eastern European Communism put France in perpetual fear of communist take over at home. Thus the main immediate threat was no longer perceived as German, but as Russian.

In fact, the ever growing Soviet influence in East and Central Europe made the French suspicious of Germany drifting East. The French policy


makers had always been preoccupied with the fear of the revival of the 'Rapallo syndrome'. As a matter of fact, the 'Rapallo fantasy' played a very important part in French diplomacy vis-a-vis the German Question. Interestingly indeed, "passion and personal feeling play an important role in French politics, exactly as in Russian ones". 46

In this context this is pertinent to point out that there started developing a simultaneous awareness among a large section of the French that France and Germany might find a common enemy in the Soviet Union. In such a case, Germany could prove to be an essential component of the French security environment and not a threat to it. But such a perception could not sell for long because of the traditional French concern for their territorial security vis-a-vis Germany. Notwithstanding this perception, for quite a long time since the end of the war, the French were caught between the long drawn desire of rendering Germany powerless for all time to come and a new found perception of security through enhanced role of the Western Allies and Franco-German cooperation. Nonetheless right since 1947, France decided to sail along the West solidly in opposing the westward expansion of the Soviet influence.

As such although France was never very keen to see the yesterday's defeated adversary becoming a Continental power once again, the exigencies of the Cold War forced her to face the Soviet Union at the one end and assimilate Germany at the other.

Therefore, France's aggressively negative attitude towards the German problems underwent substantial modification in the changed scenario of the world politics of the post-war period. The growing seriousness of East-West differences and French alignment with West marked the beginning of the end of its attempt to play an independent role in international politics in the post-war period. Now in the face of Anglo-American moves openly soliciting the Germans to win their support against the Soviet Union, the traditionally tough French policy towards Germany now seemed to be unnecessary and, to some extent, self-defeating.

10. FUTURE DEFINED IN TERMS OF PAST

Churchill at the end of the war was primarily concerned for policing the peace and preventing a renewed German aggression. He "looked backward and defined the future in terms of the past".\(^{47}\) He was in a dilemma: how should the victors behave with a vanquished enemy - ruthlessly or magnanimously? Ruthlessness breeds bitterness; bitterness breeds thirst for revenge. Revenge revives enmity. Thus, a dialectical process of reaction and counter-reaction is created. If, however, magnanimity is shown to the vanquished, there is no guarantee also that the enemy would not take advantage of such lenient treatment and get set for one more round of battle. Churchill goes back into the past to come out of this dilemma and discovers "how a mixture of expediency and idealism led the British to demand Germany's disarmament after the end of


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the First World War. Churchill goes further deep into the past and finds it was peace and not democracy that was dictated to Germans at the Treaty of Versailles. This time apart from establishing peace he wanted to make democracy, too, to be attractive to the Germans. He wished to establish political conditions which were to secure the world against any German reversal to dictatorship. Therefore, he called for striving to stimulate habits among the Germans of a representative self-government.

Nonetheless, underlining the unreliability of the 'German spirit' (deutsche seele) Winston Churchill once observed "the Germans either threw themselves at your feet, or at your throat". Thus, the British attitude towards the German Question consisted of two questions: first, how far Germans as a nation were reliable enough to be integrated into the Western community of nations? Secondly, what was the possibility of sustained functioning of the Western-style liberal democracy in the post-war Germany?

Unfortunately the British media's lack of interest in frequently and objectively covering German affairs proved to be a major handicap for the British political elite to get a holistic view about Germany and the German Question.

Nevertheless, the British, by and large, considered the division of Germany not a cause but the consequence of the division of Europe. Therefore, instead of insisting on solving the German Question at the first place the


Germans ought to concentrate on working for the European integration through gradual reconciliation.

Evidently, the evolution of British policy towards the German Question had relatively been in a straight line. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 and the latter was able to withstand the initial massive Nazi blow, Winston Churchill became optimistic about maintaining a long-term association with Stalin. At the end of the war when practical difficulties started coming up in the occupied German territories vis-a-vis Soviet Union, the British policy changed its lane. Instead of moving along, it started side-tracking the Soviet Union and putting the Western part of Germany up against it. When the Cold War between the East and the West intensified particularly after the Berlin blockade in 1948, the British got themselves further distanced from the Soviet Union through merging of the British and American occupied zones into the Bizone, eventually creating the Federal Republic in 1949 and prompting it to be a member of NATO.

Getting soft to Germany so soon was the logical conclusion of the British policy makers who were almost convinced that the division of a great country geographically, economically and politically was a step towards going against the logical development of history. Such a division, thus, could not be sustained for long. Thus said Oliver Harvey in his British foreign office memorandum in May 1946: "In any case, it is most improbable that the Germans will ever accept anything more than a provisional division of their country". 50

50. Quoted in Morgan, n.49, p.89.
Therefore, what exactly the British wanted immediately after the war was the collective supervision of Germany by the war time allies so that the 'Rapallo syndrome' was not repeated by the way of German-Soviet reconciliation in future at the cost of the West. In other words, in no circumstances Germany now should be left with an option to join hands with forces opposed to democracy, peace and human rights even in remote future. For the most people in Britain at the end of the War it was the European answer only that was available for the German Question, i.e., through the Europeanisation of Germany alone.

On the balance, thus the dominant British attitude towards the German Question had been that of continuity and moderation.

11. THE AMERICAN REAL POLITIK

The United States preferred to remain, what was referred to in the Monroe doctrine as, an "anxious and interested spectator"51 in European affairs till the closing end of the Second World War. President Roosevelt had seen the failure of Woodrow Wilson's January 1917 proclamation of "peace without victory" - a preference for negotiated peace. Therefore, he was convinced that Germany must be made to suffer for the trauma the Nazis had unleashed no the world. Germany must be destroyed to make the world safe for democracy. Ironically indeed, Roosevelt, too, this time embarked on a romantic adventure of "partnership for world peace" with Stalin despite the fact that "Roosevelt and his immediate associates had reasonably full information regarding Soviet post-war

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But by 1946, the growing hostility between Moscow and Washington forced American policy makers to change their basic attitude towards the Germans. Instead of punishing Germany Americans started thinking in terms of cooperating with it. Hence they chose to confront the rising adversary and cooperate with a dying one.

Moreover, Germany was defeated and exhausted, Great Britain was war-weary. France had become weak. Soviet Union was discredited. The Nazi anti-Bolshevik propaganda had prepared the ground for anti-Soviet feelings in the minds of almost all Germans. The alleged atrocities of rape and pillage committed by the Red Army upon Germans during war made them irreconcilably hostile towards Soviet Union. Konrad Adenauer, too, was convinced that it was the US alone which could guarantee German security and stability. "Thus Adenauer and Truman, Eisenhower, Acheson, and John Foster Dulles were natural ideological and real politik allies." 53 They were basically aligned with one another to counter the Soviet Union. The more their tension grew with the Soviets the more firm their alliance became.

George Kennan candidly accepted that the US was "basically in competition with the Russians in Germany".54

52. Richard W. Van Alkstyne, "The United States and Russia", in Graebner, n.38, p.27.


started taking German Question seriously. When Kennan saw Europe getting divided into two distinctly separate sphere of influence on a solid ground of ideological exclusiveness, he started getting conscious of "the dangers of a permanent division of the European continent". He knew that the Soviet Union would probably prefer the perpetuation of the division of Germany if it was not united under its command and control. In such a situated he advocated to make best use of the divided Germany than to find a real, stable and sincere solution to the German Question as Germany under Communist command was something Americans were not prepared to digest. George Kennan further observed:

"If an attempt were now made to reunite the Soviet Zone with the rest of Germany, a civil war would ensue worst than that which had taken place in Spain. Neither the USSR nor the Western powers would be able to afford to see their friends defeated. They would, therefore, be forced to intervene. It would be the end of Germany and probably of Western European civilization".

12. THE SOVIET SEARCH FOR SECURITY

General de Gaulle portrays Stalin in the last volume of his "War Memoirs" in the following words "... astute and implacable champion of Russia exhausted by suffering and tyranny but afire with national ambition ... to unite the Slavs, to overcome the Germans to expand in Asia, to gain access to open sea: these were the dreams of Mother Russia, these were the despot's goals".

55. Ibid., p.364.
56. Ibid., p.433.
There were valid reasons for the convergence of dreams of the Mother Russia with those of Stalin's as described above. Russia had been denied warm-water outlets for centuries. It was also denied atomic bomb during the War. It had not only been denied equal status among the family of 'civilized nations' but also been treated as outcaste simply because of its ideology. Russians' fear had been further aggravated when they tried to look deep into their past. They recalled how Hitler was built up against them and how they were denied access to Munich where it was made apparently certain that Hitler would strike against the Soviet Union one day. Also, the Soviet Union could not afford to ignore the Anti-Comintern Pact of Germans, Japan and Italy which no contemporary power of any reckoning had protested against.

Needless to emphasize, the Soviets at this juncture were suffering from an acute sense of insecurity. Insecurity requires continuous reassurances. But there was none to reassure the Soviet Union which always wanted peace. "Lenin knew that his great domestic programme would be deflected if not destroyed by war".\(^\text{58}\) The then Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov's mission for establishing collective security in Europe was an expression of the genuine desire for peace of the Russian people. But then this was an era of Anglo-French policies of Appeasement towards Mussolini and later towards Hitler. Litvinov could not succeed in his mission for obvious reasons. The Hitler-Stalin Non-aggression pact of 1939 followed. Then the World War II, division of Germany and again

\(^{58}\) Quoted in Sayers, n.1, p.417.
search for security, though this time not through collective security but through balance of power.

In fact, Europe had always been the Continent of equilibrium where each nation had to guard its bridges against the enemy of the day. Until quite recently the international politics in Europe meant primarily the mechanism of establishing balance of power.

The US, on the other hand has had an altogether different historical experience. It has been dominating a vast continent right since its birth. Its hegemony in North America had never been challenged. It, perhaps, never knew the application and implication of balance of power until the end of the World War II.

The USSR, on the contrary, had never been in a position to enjoy the American type luxury of 'assured isolationism' because of its geographical location and chronic fear of a combination of all against one.

Viewed in this perspective, the Soviet attitude towards the German Question reflected their unsatiated search for assurance of their security as a nation, a civilization and an ideology. Therefore, given the geographical situation, historical experience and political philosophy, it was but logical for the Soviet Union to insist that any solution of the German Question must take into account the Soviet security interests.

This is, however, not to argue that the territorial security and integrity had been the only overriding consideration in the Soviet policy towards the German Question. In the subsequent chapters we would see that the Soviet policy towards the German Question had not been completely static and
unidimensional. On the contrary one finds a number of distinct shifts. Such shifts did coincide with the changes in leadership. Interestingly, some times even during the tenure of a single leadership as in case of Stalin, one finds a visible change in policy on the German Question. On the whole, in a broader perspective it would not be inappropriate to argue that the, "Russian diplomacy has historically vacillated between close cooperation with Germany and the construction of alliances against Germany".59

To sum up, at the end of the World War I, the leaders of the victorious Allied powers dictated peace to the defeated Germans which could not last even for more than 20 years. By the end of the World War II, they had learnt a number of lessons: don't dictate peace to the defeated Germans; divide them, not for decimation but for assimilation. And the process of assimilation this time started well before the actual end of the War. Roosevelt and Churchill started negotiating the Atlantic Charter a good four months before America actually got into the War. They charted out both the War aims and the post-war visions for which the Soviet government did volunteer its support despite the fact that Soviet war aims and post-war plans remained diametrically opposed to that of the Western alliance partners through out most of the war excepting that the Soviet Union too wanted Germany to be defeated to such an extent that it could invade the Soviet Union never again in foreseeable future. The revival of German resurgence, at the same time, remained the main concern for the Western leaders. Also by the end of the war, it was quite clear that they started feeling

equally insecure from the Soviet Union. By 1945 Stalin, too, put the UK and the US combined on the agenda of potential threats to the USSR. Therefore, "the vision of post-war Germany that was developing in London and Washington was fundamentally inconsistent with Stalin's priorities". 60

Despite the fact that the Big Three made a number of agreements at Yalta but by the time War came to an end in both Europe and the Pacific the parties to the pact started acting inconsistently with the letter and spirit of the Yalta so much so that they started showing their disagreement over the object of the war itself. To Stalin "Security concerns were to take precedence over all other considerations". 61 Churchill was primarily interested in policing the peace in post-war Europe and preventing a renewed German aggression. Roosevelt was mainly concerned with defeating and punishing the aggressor.

In other words Stalin wanted control over Eastern Europe. Churchill wanted to retain British influence in the Mediterranean, the vital link to India. Roosevelt was primarily interested in winning the war. France wanted to settle its long overdue enmity with Germany once and for all. Out of the four war-time allies, it was Stalin who benefited the most. By the time, the other three could realize, "Stalin had conquered more territory in Europe than had any previous Russian ruler". 62 He successfully acquired his predominance in Eastern Europe, sliced the Soviet zone of Germany thus guaranteeing that

60. Holsti, n.47, p.258.

61. Ibid., p.263.


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"Germany would be either Sovietized, 'Finlandized or partitioned'. 63

Nevertheless, in no case the victorious Allied powers wanted Germany to be left alone. Therefore, if at the Versailles Germans were left isolated out of arrogance, at Potsdam they had consciously and calculatively been integrated. And as we have seen the main consideration at the war-time conferences was to maintain at least functional unity among the Allied powers for the successful conclusion of the war and to build up some sort of common approach for dealing with the vanquished Germany.

63. Ibid.