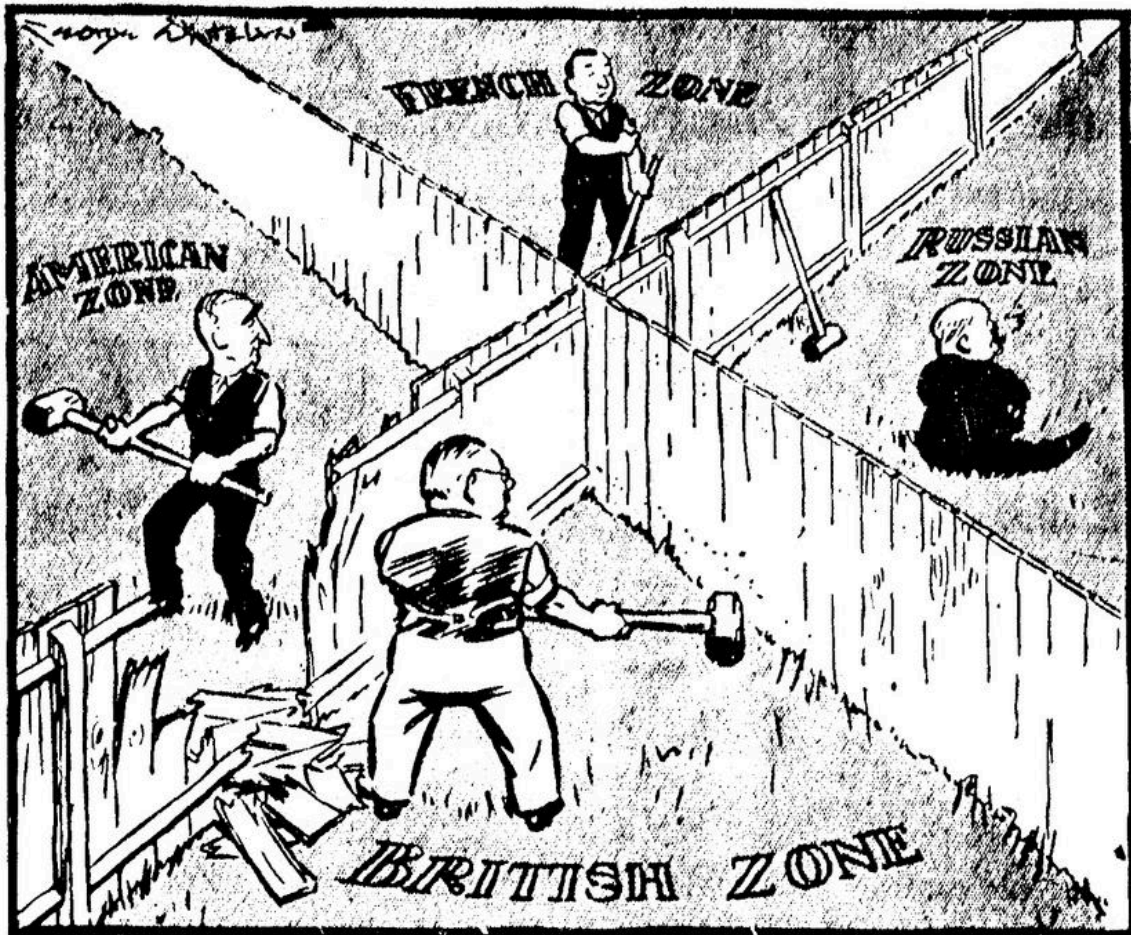


## Post-war Germany and the birth of a bipolar world: why Germany became the principal theatre of the early Cold War

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*Diese Karikatur bringt der „Daily Herald“ mit der Unterschrift:  
Zweie sind schon ein Verein — doch viere würden besser sein.*

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## **Preface**

Dear reader,

This thesis presents the result of four (actually five) years of studying at the Erasmus University. Looking back, it is almost impossible to describe this period in words. Therefore, I will not try to do so. What I would like to do is thank Mr. Lak for his support and very useful help and express my hope that this thesis may be the crown on these five excellent years at the university. I will never forget the time I had in Rotterdam.

Rotterdam, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2017

G.N.H.M. Wegter

Source of image on front page: <http://www.cvce.eu/de/project/franco-german-duo/timeline>  
(22-11-2016)

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why the Cold War remains relevant

‘People forget that the Cold War very nearly got hot on more than one occasion.’<sup>1</sup> Scottish historian Niall Ferguson spoke these words during an interview that was published on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2016 in *The Moscow Times*. In this interview, Ferguson was asked about the current developments in global politics and his views on the future. As a reaction, Ferguson brought the reader back to the Cold War era. According to Ferguson, the power structure has shifted throughout the years. Right after the liberation of Europe in the Second World War, the two major powers that were left were the United States and the Soviet Union. In modern times, the United States still exists, but the Soviet Union has disappeared. Russia has now (re)taken its place. Since the Second World War both powers have striven for power in the international sphere. However the motives for this desire for power have changed throughout the years, the competition between the two states has remained. This competitiveness has shaped the world. This shaping began right after the Second World War, when a new conflict arose: the Cold War. As a result of this conflict, the world would become divided in a capitalist Western and a communist Eastern bloc.<sup>2</sup>

After the Second World War, the Allied armies had liberated all of Europe and had occupied former Germany. First at Yalta and later at Potsdam, during several peace talks, a policy for the future of Germany and Europe was formulated. The most important question that had to be answered was the so-called ‘German Question’. What had to be done with this country and its people, that had waged war on Europe for over five years and that had committed crimes so terrible, the world is still shocked by them? The answer of the Allies was to divide Germany among them. However, during these talks and after the occupation of Germany, several differences of opinion on all kinds of levels soon became apparent. The struggle and tension, to which these different opinions would lead, would result in a conflict called the Cold War. This conflict would lead to a bipolar world, in which the United States and the Soviet Union tried to extend their influence in the world through different manners. The first scene where the shape of the Cold War was becoming clear was Germany. After its

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<sup>1</sup> Des Brown, ‘Niall Ferguson on Brexit, Russia, and the Age of Unpredictability’, *The Moscow Times*, 7 April 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Judt, T., *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945* (London 2005) 1-22.

defeat, Germany was divided into four zones of occupation. Each occupier set up his zone according to his own ideological wishes and interests.<sup>3</sup>

As said, the world nowadays is still influenced by the United States and Russia. However, new states have become participants in the struggle for power. In the case of the European Union, the once destroyed Germany is now powerful again and one of the leading forces under the governance of Angela Merkel. In the eyes of Ferguson, the origins of the current struggle for world power, together with Brexit and the Russian support for populist parties all over Europe, are all to be traced back to the Cold War. On the relation between current international problems and the Cold War much debate among historians remains, however. Especially the role of Germany as the main aggressor in the first decades of the twentieth century is remarkable, when comparing that to the role the Germans have taken during the past years. This makes the Cold War an ever-relevant topic to study.<sup>4</sup>

In order to understand how the world became divided in two blocs, the case of post-war Germany has to be thoroughly researched. Germany was the first scene where the American and Soviet ideologies became directly opposed to one another and where the results on society for both ideologies were visible. Eventually, this difference in ideology led to the division of Germany into two different states: the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic. The inter-Allied cooperation was not capable of unifying Germany; the differences were too big to overcome.<sup>5</sup> A quote from one of many reports of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) describes the importance of the German Question very clearly: ‘in Germany the conduct of the occupying powers has been conditioned not only by their common interest in preventing a recurrence of the events of 1919-1939, but also by their own pressing economic needs, by ideological conflict, and by world-wide tension between East and West. Germany is the principal theatre of this contest: there the stakes are highest’<sup>6</sup>.

The question of the German division is still being thoroughly researched. The question if the split was inevitable, why Germany was so important that the Allies all wanted to keep hold on their zone of occupation, and how that affected the Cold War, are questions very relevant to study. Historians that study the Cold War and the German Question disagree on several topics. Since there still is archive material that has not been researched and new

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<sup>3</sup> Judt, *Postwar*, 26-41.

<sup>4</sup> Des Brown, ‘Niall Ferguson on Brexit, Russia, and the Age of Unpredictability’, *The Moscow Times*, 7 April 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Judt, *Postwar*, 32-48.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Review Of The Soviet, British, And French Programs With Respect To Germany’ (April 1947), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0036*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 2.

materials are still being discovered, discussion remains. This thesis focuses on one of those frequently debated questions. The new aspect of this thesis is that it takes into account the role that the CIA played in portraying the Soviet Union in several of their reports. As will be made clear later on, the interpretation of CIA officials and informants of Soviet actions shaped the image of the Soviets in the eyes of the American government. This shaped the American attitude towards the Soviets and affected the Cold War. This new aspect of research will provide better understanding of American actions and motives, because these actions were very much shaped by the perception of the other in the case of the Soviets.

## **1.2 Research questions and composition of research**

Due to the fact that there are several aspects to the Cold War and the German Question that influence the answer to the main question of this thesis, the sub-questions of this thesis are theme-based. This means there is no chronological approach that builds the sub-questions and chapters. However, within the proposed chapters, the themes are discussed chronologically. For this research this makes the most sense, because the stories of the Cold War and the German Question touch upon all kinds of topics and do not form one narrative. The method that is used for this thesis is one of qualitative analysis of both primary and secondary sources. The main research question of this thesis is: ‘Why did Germany become the focal point of the Cold War and how did that affect the division of the country into two different states?’

This first chapter introduces the topic to the reader and explains why the Cold War and the German Question are still relevant. Because the Cold War has been thoroughly researched, the relevance of a new study of the topic has to be explained. Studying the character of the CIA Reports will shine new light on American actions and motives, since the American understanding of the Soviet Union was mainly based on these reports.

The second chapter shines light on the historical debates of both the Cold War and the German Question. What has already been written on these topics? Where do the historiographical gaps emerge? In which historiographical approach does this thesis fit, if any?

After the historiographical background of this thesis is explained, the third chapter presents the ideological history and background of the United States and Russia. Together with an overview of historical diplomatic relations between the two powers before the Second

World War, this chapter aims at showing the tensions that were already there before discussion arose during the Potsdam talks. The goal of the third chapter is to show that difficulties between the United States and (former) Russia were nothing new.

The fourth chapter will consider these historical tensions and deals with two major events in Cold War history: the Yalta and Potsdam talks. The treaties agreed upon during these talks were vital to later inter-allied cooperation. What was agreed upon during these talks? How did the Allies had to cope with the German Question? What was to be done about Nazism? What consequences did the agreements have for Germany?

After the content of the Potsdam agreements has been made clear, the fifth chapter will look at the difficulties within these agreements. Which agreements were not fulfilled? Where did the weaknesses lie in the agreements? Why did Germany not become economically unified after the agreements? These questions are important to discuss, since goal of the Potsdam treaty was to provide for a clear Allied post-war policy. The country eventually became separated, which makes the failure of the treaty important to study.

One of the reasons of the failure of the Potsdam treaty was the power that was given to the Allied commanders of each zone. The Allied Control Council that had to provide for a shared policy for Germany, was only able to do so if all commanders of the zones agreed. This meant that each commander had his own veto. On top of that, the commanders were also able to set up their zone according to their own ideological wishes and policy. It is therefore important to look at how the commanders set up their own zones. This meant that from the beginning on, the zones would become very different. What happened within the zones? How was political order restored? Which parties were popular in the zones and how did these parties rule the zones? How big were the differences between the zones? And how did these differences eventually affect the German separation?

Chapter seven focuses on the motives and interests that were the basis of American and Soviet conduct in Germany. From where did the events in the zones emerge? What vision did the Americans have on the future and how did the CIA reports affect their image of the Soviets? How did the Soviets view the future? What were the motives of both powers that eventually led to the division of Germany into two states?

Finally, chapter eight will sum up all the conclusions drawn from the sub-questions and will provide an overarching answer to the main research question.

## Chapter 2. Literature report

### 2.1 Introduction

To understand what the current historical debate on early Cold War history in Germany is about, a historiography on the debate has to be written. As will be made clear from this historiography, there are several different approaches in studying the Cold War. This historiography gives attention to the several different approaches that have been used throughout the years, from the traditional Cold War approach to Cold War conceptualism. After an update on the current historical debate on the Cold War, this historiography shines a light on the historical debate on Germany between 1945 and 1949. What causes do historians give for the separation of the two Germanies? How are these two states researched and what is the current debate about?

### 2.2 Cold War

On October 19, 1945, George Orwell wrote an article in the *Tribune* titled: 'You and the Atomic Bomb'. In this article, Orwell used the term Cold War for one of the first times in history.<sup>7</sup> With the introduction of that term, Orwell accidentally opened a completely new subject of historical research, which is still relevant for today's historian. But what did Orwell mean with the term? The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had shocked the world. Orwell was shocked too and decided to write an article about it. He had already noticed the destruction of the weapons of his day had caused during the war, but the atomic bombs were worse than anything the world had ever seen before. Orwell warned for the effects the bombs would have on the world: 'For forty or fifty years past, Mr. H. G. Wells and others have been warning us that man is in danger of destroying himself with his own weapons, leaving the ants or some other gregarious species to take over. Anyone who has seen the ruined cities of Germany will find this notion at least thinkable.'<sup>8</sup> Orwell therefore warned the world for the effects the ever more powerful weapons had already had on the world during the Second World War. At the end of his article, he announced a new world system, in which the atomic bomb was a means of destruction now able to be used when one or another state misbehaved. The danger of the atomic bomb was, according to Orwell, that

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<sup>7</sup> George Orwell, 'You and the Atomic Bomb', *Tribune*, October 19, 1945.

<sup>8</sup> George Orwell, 'You and the Atomic Bomb', *Tribune*, October 19, 1945.



states that possessed it became unconquerable. This, according to Orwell, brought all the countries neighbouring the unconquerable state in a state of “cold war”.<sup>9</sup>

Journalist Walter Lippmann took up the term “Cold War” in 1947 when he tried to explain through a series of articles how the alliance during the Second World War between the United States and the Soviet Union had come to an end. Also, Lippmann tried to explain the policy of containment of the Truman administration by reacting to the article ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’ written by a certain ‘X’. Lippmann did not agree to certain claims made in the article, even though the article was considered important by the Americans and had shaped their foreign policy.<sup>10</sup> Later on, it became clear that it had been George F. Kennan, director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, who had written the article.<sup>11</sup> There have been various approaches in studying the split of the Allies. Lippmann was one of the first scholars to study the American foreign policy in the context of a Cold War. After Lippmann’s study, many studies followed. The historians that have studied the Cold War give several reasons for the failure of post-war cooperation. Even so, there are certain approaches in which historians try to fit their work.<sup>12</sup>

The first approach that became popular in studying the Cold War is the traditionalist or orthodox approach. The article of Kennan had been very important for the Cold War traditionalists.<sup>13</sup> Two of the most important scholars for this approach have been Herbert Feis and William McNeill. This approach is based on two assumptions. First, that the United States had no other interests than to encourage international cooperation and harmony.<sup>14</sup> Second, that Soviet behaviour in Eastern Europe had aggressive and expansionist features.<sup>15</sup> In the traditionalist view, the theory of Realism is also considered important. Traditionalists stress the importance of the disappearance of the common German enemy for the breakdown of the alliance. This disappearance created a power vacuum, in which the Americans and Soviets naturally had to jump in.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> George Orwell, ‘You and the Atomic Bomb’, *Tribune*, October 19, 1945.

<sup>10</sup> Lippmann, W., *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York 1947) 7-25.

<sup>11</sup> X (Kennan, G.F.), ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’, *Foreign Affairs. An American Quarterly Review* 25 (New York 1947) 566-582.

<sup>12</sup> Westad, O.A., ‘The Cold War and the international history of the twentieth century’, in M. Leffler and O.A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> White, T. J., ‘Cold War Historiography: New Evidence Behind Traditional Typographies’, in *International Social Science Review* 75 (2000) 35-46.

<sup>14</sup> McNeil, W.H., *America, Britain and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-46* (London 1953) 652.

<sup>15</sup> Feis, H., *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York 1970) 43.

<sup>16</sup> Louis Halle, *The Cold War as History* (New York 1967) xiii.

McNeil, *America, Britain and Russia*, 580.

The end of the cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Western states had by the 1950s led to the idea that not only the Soviet Union and its expansionist communist ideology were to be blamed for the emergence of the Cold War. The Soviet Union as well as the United States and its Western allies imposed their will and their political ideas on Europe. The Allies did this by dividing Germany into four zones that were each ruled by one of the Allies, which they could set up along their ideological interests and desires. When the Cold War expanded to the Third World in the 1960s, Western historians became more and more critical towards the American behaviour in the conflict, especially because of the war in Vietnam. The historians Hogan and Horowitz argued that the economic needs and interests of the United States were the driving forces behind the American foreign policy. The anti-imperialist approach used by these historians became known as the revisionist approach. The way in which the United States acted in the Third World was seen as unnecessary, even criminal at some time. In the view of the revisionists, the United States were primarily seen as expansionist and the Soviet Union was merely seen as responding to American aggression.<sup>17</sup>

The revisionist view became popular among historians in Europe and the United States. However, before the end of the Cold War, a new approach became popular among historians: post-revisionism. This approach acknowledged certain aspects of the revisionist view, but not all of them. According to post-revisionists like Thomas G. Paterson, the United States as well as the Soviet Union were equally responsible for the Cold War and were both to blame for the conflict.<sup>18</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, also a post-revisionist, accused both United States and the Soviet Union of being responsible for the conflict, but introduced another interesting aspect of Cold War causes. In his book *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* Gaddis also presented a new view on who caused the Cold War: he brought to light the relationship of American president Harry S. Truman with the Soviets.<sup>19</sup>

This was a particularly new approach of studying the causes of the Cold War, since the United States and the Soviet Union were regarded as groups of people all together responsible for the conflict. With Gaddis' new views on the origins of the Cold War, the role of individual actors became more and more apparent. In his later book *We Now Know, Rethinking Cold War History*, Gaddis expanded his views on individual actors. The paranoid character of Josef

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<sup>17</sup> Hager, R., 'Walter LaFeber: America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945–2006', *Democracy and Security* 8 (2012) 108-113.

Lafeber, W., *America, Russia, and the Cold War* (New York 1980) 1-8.

<sup>18</sup> Mrozek, D.J., 'Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War by Thomas G. Paterson', *The Business History Review* 48 (1974) 571-573.

<sup>19</sup> Gaddis, J. L., *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York 1968) 198-243.

Stalin and the way in which he wanted the world around him to be, got an important role in researching the early years of the Cold War conflict.<sup>20</sup> Gaddis opened the eyes of other historians on the subject of human agency in Cold War events. Because of this aspect of his point of view, his post-revisionist view went back to the classical approach of Cold War history to a certain degree. But however famous for being seen as one of the most important books on the Cold War, Gaddis was not free from criticism. Because Gaddis not only focused attention on Stalin's personality, but also on communism and ideology in general, he actually did the same as historians did when they started researching the Cold War. Gaddis' views and work had in that sense been not as new as one might think. The historian Melvyn P. Leffler points out that post-revisionism now also focuses on ideas, culture, values and language. Furthermore, race and gender have become more important. These aspects of Cold War history have become more apparent, because they can provide insight in why the one power is considered powerful and the other weak. They also explain the domestic stance of the contenders towards war, peace and power.<sup>21</sup>

The revisionist and post-revisionist approaches drastically changed the historical debate on the Cold War, because they made Western historians 'turn their backs' on the United States. The American campaign in Vietnam was seen as a turning point in this respect, because of its aggressiveness, ruthlessness, and large number of deaths. However, the war in Vietnam had not been the first military conflict between the communists and capitalists. During the Korea Wars that existed between 1950 and 1953, both parties were opposed to each other as well. Historians do not view the war in Korea as important for a shift in Cold War history, because North Korea had started the war by attacking the South. Who and why the conflict in Vietnam started, was not as clear as the case of the war in Korea.<sup>22</sup>

The futility of the war in Vietnam was very important to American domestic stance towards their foreign policy. This led to new views on Cold War history and encouraged scholars of all kinds to take a critical attitude towards the way the United States behaved internationally. When in the 1970s the theory of Realism became popular in explaining the way in which both the United States and the Soviet Union acted, that approach also became popular when studying Cold War history. In the Realist approach the clashes between the Soviet Union and the United States were mainly seen as clashes of interests of both superpowers. The Cold War was, according to historians that used the Realist approach, now

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<sup>20</sup> Gaddis, J. L., *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford 1997) 11-25.

<sup>21</sup> Leffler, M., 'The Cold War: What Do "We Now Know"?', *The American Historical Review* 104 (1999) 501-524.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 505-506.

more a clash between two superpowers striving for strategic security. Therefore, the Cold War became a conflict that moved towards a 'balance of power': the strategic arms race eventually led to a stable and predictable relationship between the two superpowers.<sup>23</sup>

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the Cold War came to an abrupt end for its contemporaries. Nowadays, historians state that the end of the conflict had been approaching for years. Considering the theory of Realism was historically very popular when studying the Cold War. But after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, 'the balance of power' collapsed as a result. The end of the Cold War as a conflict led historians to look at it as a distinct period of history that had a (not so) clear beginning and end. This encouraged all kinds of new research in the years after 1991 and led to a more international and multidisciplinary approach to the study of Cold War history. The key concept of the Realist approach, power, now only was taken into account as *an* element of research, not anymore as *the* element of research. As stated earlier, this led to a new multidisciplinary form of Cold War history writing focused on the role of ideas, ideologies, and culture. This resulted in studies that had different outcomes because they focused on different subjects.<sup>24</sup>

Another approach of studying the Cold War emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. This approach, called Cold War 'conceptualism', came from the idea that each group involved in the conflict had its own sets of ideas and concepts, which legitimized and defined it. Through focusing on ideologies and patterns of thought, Cold War conceptualists distinguish all kinds of international and transnational 'imagined' communities.<sup>25</sup> Through the study of these communities, conceptualists are able to focus on generational experience as well. This is seen by them as much more important than the several 'grand events' to which they tend to reduce the Cold War. This means that the conceptualists see the Cold War just as one of the events of the twentieth century, while they see decolonization and Asian economic resurgence as more important subjects to study.<sup>26</sup>

Given the uncertainties that still surround the study of the origins and consequences of the Cold War, there will undoubtedly emerge new perspectives and approaches. Outside Europe and North America for example, the Cold War is often studied as part of an Europeanization of the world, after the European countries first had taken control of the globe

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<sup>23</sup> Romero, F., 'Cold War historiography at the crossroads', *Journal of Cold War History* 14 (2014) 692-700.

<sup>24</sup> Westad, 'The Cold War and the international history of the twentieth century', 6.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities. Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1991) 1-8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

forcibly.<sup>27</sup> The twenty-first century has opened the study of the Cold War also to all other kinds of fields of research. Examples of these new fields are the views of Chinese historians, the emergence of the importance of the public opinion, and the importance of the CIA and espionage in general. This last new field will also be an important feature of this thesis, since it will look at several CIA Reports on the Soviet Union. This thesis will focus on how these reports shaped the American image of the Soviets and will analyse these reports in order to provide a new perspective on the end of post-war cooperation.

### 2.3 The German Question

The occupation of Germany after the Second World War has been thoroughly researched. The Allied cooperation in this respect started with the Conference in Casablanca in January 1943, where Churchill and Roosevelt agreed upon a forced ‘unconditional surrender’. The inter-Allied cooperation ended in 1948, when the Soviet commander left the Allied Control Council. The method, in which historians have studied the German Question, has often been based on the study of certain aspects of the interests of the various occupying powers. As is the case with Cold War history writing, there remain several different approaches in the study of the German Question. However, they are not grouped in schools of thought.<sup>28</sup>

When the Second World War came to an end in 1945, large parts of Germany were destroyed and the morale of its inhabitants was terrible. The fear of the savage Soviets that came in from the East and the disillusioned feeling Germans had after the collapse of their Nazi state, paralyzed Germany as a state. Historians call this *Stunde Null* or Zero Hour. Germany had to revive along a different path than that it had done after the First World War. On top of that, the country had to be denazified and re-educated along lines the Allies agreed upon. Richard Bessel is one of those historians that focused on the status of post-war Germany and gives explanations for the way in which the Allies were able to seize power without much resistance in their zones.<sup>29</sup> Konrad Jarausch also focuses on the position of Germany in the post-war world and emphasizes the immense challenges the Germans had after the war. He pays attention to the role of ideas in the twentieth century and states that it were these ideas that made *Stunde Null* a disillusioning moment for the Germans. The Allied powers had an immense challenge to overcome when considering policy for post-war

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Lewkowicz, N., *The German Question and the International Order, 1943-48* (Kent 2010) 6.

<sup>29</sup> Brian Ladd, ‘Reaping the Whirlwind’, *New York Times*, August 19, 2009.

Germany. Not only because of German crimes, but also because of German destroyed morale.<sup>30</sup>

There are historians like Eisenberg that argue that the decision to divide Germany into two states was essentially American. When President Truman had to follow up President Roosevelt after he died, he and his administration overlooked certain aspects of the Potsdam Treaty. The stance of the Americans and their commander in their zone of occupation, General Lucius D. Clay, towards paying reparations to the Soviet Union should have been different. Because the Americans did not always pay these reparations as was agreed upon and they limited the decartelisation of the German economy in their zone in order to provide their zone with more economic stability, they did not comply with the agreements. On top of that, the way in which the Americans wanted to restore the whole of Western Europe between their own capitalist, anti-communist lines, would also limit the denazification process. Eisenberg essentially argues that a more compliant attitude from the Americans towards Soviet demands could have made successful cooperation possible and could have led to an eventual unification of Germany.<sup>31</sup>

There are also historians that see the German Question as the central element of the Cold War. Trachtenberg is one of those historians and he looks at the German Question from the perspective of the Truman and later administrations. According to Trachtenberg, the resolve of the German Question was crucial to the creation of a stable international order. The eventual policy of containment that the Truman administration waged on the Soviets came from the conceived desire Stalin had to extend the power of the Soviets beyond areas he was already occupying and influencing. Trachtenberg points out in this perspective that the Americans had already accepted Soviet power in Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup>

According to other historians, not only the United States were to be held accountable for the division of Germany. According to McAllister, the fear of Western Europe of a strong revived Germany made the American wish of Western Europe being able to match the Soviet Union impossible to realise. On top of that, Western Europe did not want the American forces to go back to the United States. Because of this, and because of the fact that this led to not being able to solve the German Question, McAllister argues that the rise of a bipolar system was inevitable.<sup>33</sup> The historian Lundestad adds to this view that it indeed mainly were the

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<sup>30</sup> Geoffrey Wheatcroft, ‘‘Out of Ashes’’, by Konrad H. Jarausch’, *The New York Times*, July 30, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Eisenberg, C., *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944-1949* (New York 1996) 493.

<sup>32</sup> Trachtenberg, M., *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton 1999) 7, 13, 35-41.

<sup>33</sup> McAllister, J., *No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943-1954* (Ithaca 2002) 21-37.

Americans that expanded their influence in Europe. However, this was not necessarily an empire that was achieved through coercive means; according to Lundestad, the Americans were invited by the Western European powers to expand their influence. This made the American empire in Europe an 'empire by invitation'. Both McAllister and Lundestad argue that through the rise of a bipolar system, an eventual separation of Germany was inevitable.<sup>34</sup>

Other historians hold the Germans themselves accountable for the division of Germany. Jackson for example, argues that the willingness of Konrad Adenauer and his CDU to enhance the relationship of the Western zones to France, Great Britain and the United States eventually meant that the unification of Germany was cast aside in the short run.<sup>35</sup> Leffler adds to this that the United States did not do much to prevent the division of Germany. In their eyes, an eventual German unification would provide the Soviet Union with an opportunity to expand its influence over Europe. This would prevent Europe from being able to restore itself in a peaceful way.<sup>36</sup>

According to Kennedy-Pipe, Stalin wanted to revive Germany. He did not let ideological difficulty stand in his way of achieving this, because he found his main goal was to secure survival of the Soviet Union in a safe and peaceful world.<sup>37</sup> Naimark goes a bit further in explaining the strategies of the Soviet Union for Germany. According to him, Stalin wanted either a sovietised Eastern zone, a unified Germany ruled by the SED, or a demilitarized neutral Germany. Stalin did not want to negotiate these goals during the occupation of Germany.<sup>38</sup>

Although the United States and the Soviet Union are mainly viewed as the major factors in the breaking out of the Cold War, Deighton also gives the British policy towards Germany an important place in the debate. According to Deighton, the British had a very anti-communist view and were not eager to cooperate with the Soviets. However, they publicly acted as the defender of the four-power cooperation. On top of that, they did everything they could in order to create an anti-Soviet bloc that would prevent the Soviets from obtaining influence in Germany. Besides the importance of Great Britain, Deighton also considers the

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<sup>34</sup> Lundestad, G., 'Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952', *Journal of Peace Research* 23 (1986) 263-276.

<sup>35</sup> Jackson, P., *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (Michigan 2006) 112-114.

<sup>36</sup> Leffler, M., 'The Struggle for Germany and the Origins of the Cold War', *German Historical Institute* (Washington 1996) 76.

<sup>37</sup> Kennedy-Pipe, C., *Stalin's Cold War: Soviet Strategies in Europe, 1943 to 1956* (Manchester 1995) 192.

<sup>38</sup> Naimark, N., *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge 1995) 466.

inability of the Allies to agree upon a shared policy towards Germany as the main reason for the breakdown of inter-Allied cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

This thesis does not fit in one of the schools of thought of the Cold War or the German Question. It tries to formulate its own views on the way in which the German Question eventually led to the division of Germany. In that respect, the worldviews of the Americans and the Soviets were important, their ambition for Europe, and the way in which the cooperation was set up. The Potsdam Agreements and the character of the Allied Control Council were all very important to show the cooperation eventually came to an end, and this thesis tries to show just that. As mentioned earlier, this thesis will consider the role of CIA reports in American policymaking and will try to show how these CIA reports were also of importance to the German Question, the way in which the CIA portrayed Allied movements, and the way in which the failure of inter-Allied cooperation led to the division of Germany.

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<sup>39</sup> Deighton, A., *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford 1990) 233-234.



## Chapter 3. History and ideology of America and Russia

### 3.1 Introduction

‘Both America and Russia were universalist powers, believing that they possessed social systems that would benefit from world exposure’.<sup>40</sup> This statement by historian Martin McCauley describes one of the reasons why the United States and the Soviet Union both tried to extend and expand their influence over the rest of the world after the Second World War. After the Second World War, Europe and the rest of the world anxiously waited on what would follow. The question of how former Nazi Germany was to be treated and which shape post-war policy had to take, were themes that would be discussed during peace talks between the Allied powers that were held during and after the war. After the war, a new conflict started between the Western and Eastern powers: the Cold War. In later chapters, the nature and course of this conflict will be further explained and examined. This chapter, however, intends to shine light on the history of and between the two major actors in the later Cold War: the United States and the Soviet Union. It is often assumed by revisionist historians that the Cold War presented itself as the new struggle the world had to deal with after the Second World War, but was that the case? Or was the Cold War based on earlier tensions between East and West that were already there before the War? And when looking at their diplomatic history, was the breaking out of the Cold War inevitable? These questions are important to consider if we want to explain and understand the division of Germany into two different states under Western and Eastern influence. The role of the ideologies of the two powers, as well as the diplomatic history between the two powers, has to be considered in this perspective. The research question that this chapter tries to answer is: ‘Why and how did American-Russian history and ideology affect their later relationship?’

### 3.2 Early American-Russian international relations

One of the most important writers on Cold War history in general is Walter Lafeber. In his book *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006* he states that the Cold War started as early as the nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> The United States and the Russian Empire were ‘two

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<sup>40</sup> McCauley, M., *Russia, America and the Cold War, 1949-1991* (New York 2008) xi.

<sup>41</sup> Lafeber, W., *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006* (New York 2006) 1.

sharply differing nations<sup>42</sup>. Even before the rise of communism in Russia, there were several differences between the United States and Russia.

The United States was institutionally decentralized. The country was federally governed and the several states in which it was divided were able to do so in a considerable autonomous way. Businessmen were also considered a vital part of life in the United States. They were honoured and the way in which they made trade and the spread of American products over the world possible, was considered as contributing to American prosperity. American businesses were moving across oceans to make trade possible and they considered capitalism and free trade important to world order.<sup>43</sup> These ideas and views originated in the philosophy of John Locke, and ruled American political ideas from the 1770s onwards.

Not only according to McCauley, but also to David Reynolds, a British historian that has studied the United States, liberty 'is the core American belief'<sup>44</sup> and had to be defended and spread across the world in order to make free trade possible. On top of that, secure property rights were considered vital to these liberal rights. Furthermore, the Bill of Rights that was formulated after the American Civil War included freedom of speech and religion and a right to bear arms. Therefore, in order to maintain liberty among its people, the United States had a system of rule of law. However, it was important to restrict the power of the American government as much as possible, so liberty had the chance to rule and make prosperity for every American possible. The motive to limit the influence of the state as much as possible lay in the way the British tyrant government had acted towards their American colony before the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This had to be prevented in the future.<sup>45</sup>

Whereas the state system of the United States was decentralized in the nineteenth century, the Russian Empire was strongly centralized. Its ruler, the tsar, had seized all power and was able to rule like an emperor. An army of bureaucrats, who were implementing policy through a top-down approach, governed tsarist Russia. This enforced order was the primary factor that preserved the nation and its coercive methods were often cruel to the Russian people.<sup>46</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, diplomatic relationships between the United States and Russia were bad. Russia tried to extend its influence over the Chinese Manchuria region, while the United States supported Japan in order to contain Russian influence in the

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<sup>42</sup> *Idem*, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Lafeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, 2-3.

<sup>44</sup> McCauley, *Russia, America and the Cold War*, 5-6.

<sup>45</sup> Reynolds, D., *America, Empire of Liberty: A New History of the United States* (London 2009) 70-95.

<sup>46</sup> Lafeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, 2-3.

region and leave it open to free trade. This struggle led to tension between tsarist Russia on the one hand and the United States and Japan on the other.<sup>47</sup> However, these tensions never led to direct military confrontations between Russia and the United States.

Even though the Manchuria-region remained of interest to both parties, the First World War changed the diplomatic relationship between the countries. During the First World War, the position of the tsar and the Russian nobility became very vulnerable. The tensions that were felt within the Russian army soon led to tensions within the Russian society. These difficulties eventually would lead to the abdication of tsar Nicholas II. A Russian revolutionist, Vladimir Iljitsj Uljanov or Vladimir Lenin, together with his Bolshevik movement, made use of this power vacuum and declared a communist state in Petrograd, the city of the tsar, in 1917. This state, which was founded on the basis of Marxist ideology, would try to make an end to the ever-lasting difficulties the Russian workers and farmers experienced under the reign of the tsar as well as with the Russian nobility and the wealthy landowners. Not only Russia experienced difficult times during the First World War; also other parts of the world also went through a very tough period. The war had started in 1914 and affected Africa, Europe and Asia. In these conflicts the United States, as well as Russia, Great Britain, France, and Germany played key roles. The new Bolshevik government wanted to make peace with the Central Powers during the peace talks at Brest-Litovsk in 1918. These talks would have no result, but after Germany threatened Russia through a possible siege of Petrograd, the Russians accepted the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Because of the Treaty, Russia lost a lot of regions that it would not get back until after the Second World War. After the Russian Revolution, in 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union was founded.<sup>48</sup>

### **3.3 The aftermath of the Russian Revolution**

The history of neither the Soviet Union nor the United States during the First World War will be mentioned here, since it would be too big and comprehensive to remain relevant to the research question of this chapter. What will be examined, is the difference in ideology and the diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union and the United States before and after the foundation

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<sup>47</sup> May, E., 'The Far Eastern Policy of the United States in the Period of the Russo-Japanese War: A Russian View', *The American Historical Review*, 62 (1957) 345-349.

<sup>48</sup> Campbell, K. and Trenton, R., *Russian Revolution. The Fall of the Tsars and the Rise of Communism* (New York 2015) 75-79.  
McMeekin, S., *The Russian Origins of the First World War* (London 2011) 214-244.

of the Soviet Union. Because Lenin had decided to stop fighting for a while, the fighting on the Western front intensified. Also, the Bolsheviks refused to acknowledge Russia's foreign debts. As a result, the British and French sought to install a government in Russia that would be willing to fight, instead of looking for peace like the Bolsheviks did. President Wilson did not regard American intervention in governments abroad desirable. However, in his eyes Russia was unwillingly forced into communism. On top of that, since President Wilson saw communism as suppressing the natural rights of democracy and self-determination, the United States started to lend money to the Allies, who supplied the White Army that was led by General Kaledin. In the eyes of the Americans and the Allies, a military dictatorship was better than a communist government. The American and Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War therefore served two goals: firstly, to restore the Eastern front and secondly, to restore democracy and self-determination in Russia. Since the Allies were not able to put General Kaledin in place, the Americans decided to send an army to Siberia in September 1918.<sup>49</sup>

Because the American military force that was sent to Siberia was not big and powerful enough to have a firm stance against the Bolsheviks, the help of Czechoslovakian and White Russian forces did not have the desired effect. This meant that the Americans were not able to reach their desired goal to overthrow the Bolshevik government. Even so, because the Bolsheviks defeated the small American army, it gave them a cheap victory out of which the confidence of the Bolsheviks grew. This strengthened their belief in their cause and made the grip they had on Russia and its society firmer than ever. The mutual distrust between the Soviets and the Americans increased because of this failed intervention. The impact of this failure on American-Russian relations was that severe, that in a speech in 1959 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev even referred to it as 'the most unpleasant thing that ever occurred between our two countries'<sup>50 51</sup>.

After the peace talks in Versailles in 1919, the Western powers had tried to isolate the Soviets by creating buffer states, for example in Bulgaria. After the foundation of the Soviet Union, however, some parts that had been separated from the Union after the Brest-Litovsk Treaty were brought under Soviet rule again. An example of this was Ukraine. In 1924 Lenin died. That year, Josef Vissarionovitsj Djoegasvili, a fanatic Bolshevik who would later be

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<sup>49</sup> Hapner, S., 'Woodrow Wilson's Ideological War: American Intervention in Russia, 1918-1920', *Journal of Excellence in Integrated Writing Courses at Wright State 2* (2015) 1-13.

<sup>50</sup> Khrushchev as quoted by Foglesong in Foglesong, D., *America's Secret War against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917-1920* (Chapel Hill 1995) 7.

<sup>51</sup> Hapner, 'Woodrow Wilson's Ideological War', 10-15.

known under the name of Stalin, succeeded him. It was a rough period in which Stalin took over power as General Secretary of the Party. It took him a long time to increase his power up to the level he would later become notorious for.<sup>52</sup> After the Civil War and several other party difficulties, Stalin enhanced his power by announcing five-year plans in 1928. By then, Stalin ruled supremely.<sup>53</sup>

It was not until 1933 that the United States would formally recognise the Soviet Union. The eventual recognition of the Soviet Union had proven to be very tough. Stalin had requested American military assistance in 1931, when the Japanese army rampaged through Manchuria. President Roosevelt did not respond to the Soviet request. Furthermore, in the years 1932 and 1933, because of collectivisation of agricultural production, the Great Famine killed several millions of Ukrainians and Russians.<sup>54</sup> In 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations and three years later, the first of the three Moscow Purges started, through which Stalin destroyed not only his political enemies, but also everyone else that was suspected. One of the reasons Roosevelt did not offer Stalin a helping hand were the bloody purges Stalin undertook against his political enemies. Because of this, in the eyes of the Americans, communism became ‘the God who failed’.<sup>55</sup> In later years, Western public opinion worsened as a result of the non-aggression pact the Soviet Union signed with Nazi Germany in August 1939. This pact, known as the Molotov-Von Ribbentrop-pact, stunned the Americans. The invasion of Finland by the Soviets that followed the pact, once more confirmed the American idea that Stalin brutalized his neighbours. When Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22 1941 through the activation of Operation Barbarossa, the American opinion on the Soviets remained unchanged. However, by that time, the Americans saw in the Nazis the bigger threat.<sup>56</sup>

The newly formed Soviet Union had in its short life already experienced a civil war and several party struggles. This had made the communists strict as to what the course of the newly founded communist state had to be. Critique was not taken lightly and was dangerous to express. Not only political difficulties affected the Soviet Union. Several famines in the 1920s took the lives of millions of people. This forced the Soviets to accept foreign aid in order to keep their people fed, but this also meant that matters had to be performed differently in the future. Stalin tried to modernize the Soviet economy rapidly, but understood that for the

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<sup>52</sup> Kuromiya, H., *Stalin* (New York 2013) 50-73.

<sup>53</sup> Lafeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, 4-6.

<sup>54</sup> Snyder, T., *Bloedlanden, Europa tussen Hitler en Stalin* (Amsterdam 2011) 49-73.

<sup>55</sup> Lafeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, 6.

<sup>56</sup> *Idem*, 6-7.

production of food a different path had to be chosen. Stalin installed several workers in places that, before the revolution, were occupied by rich landowners. This meant that even though the country was communist, for the production of food, some power was given to certain party members all over the country, in order to keep its civilians fed. With this system, Stalin eventually would enhance and expand his influence and power, since the party members that managed the big farms were under direct control of the Kremlin. In 1928 Stalin announced his Five Year Plans. A year later, the Great Depression would strike the capitalist world, which made the faith of the Soviets in their cause much stronger.<sup>57</sup> This depression would affect the United States, the biggest rival of the Soviet Union, heavily and would shape later international diplomacy.

### **3.4 Woodrow Wilson and the shaping of American ideology**

The division of Germany and the start of the Cold War not just happened because of the problems and tensions that had existed between what first was Russia and later the Soviet Union and the United States. Even before that, the international relations between the United States and tsarist Russia had proven to be painfully difficult. The end of the Second World War did not necessarily imply that the post-war world order had to be bipolar with a capitalist West and communist East. One of the crucial factors in this was the role of ideology. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the ideologies of both the United States and the Soviet Union were very different, and were both suitable to be applied to countries all over the world. The universalist character of both of these ideologies was an important factor in that perspective. It is time to examine these ideologies more closely.<sup>58</sup>

The Founding Fathers of the United States incorporated in their Declaration of Independence the rights to ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’<sup>59</sup>. This meant that every American had the freedom to pursue his or her own happiness. One of the biggest influencers of this formulation during the thirties and forties, which is not always easy to define, was President Thomas Woodrow Wilson. This ‘political scientist-turned-president’ wrote several pieces on international order and national government. One aspect of his writings is important to point out here, since it gives insight as to how early the universality of American international orientation was about helping other states. In the case of the Spanish-American

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<sup>57</sup> Kuromiya, *Stalin*, 56-68.

<sup>58</sup> Engerman, D., ‘Ideology and the origins of the Cold War, 1917-1962’, in M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 20-21.

<sup>59</sup> *Idem*, 20.

War, Wilson wrote about what the island of Cuba should become. Not so much as to when and how the United States had to incorporate it into its own sphere of influence, but much more as to how the Cubans would be able to get onto the path to ‘self-government’ once released from Spanish tyranny. Self-government in the ideas of Wilson was that the Cubans had to create their own state-system and were free to choose whatever system they would prefer. Wilson saw liberal democracy as the highest and most important goal for national government. This also applied to his views on Cuba. However, Wilson not just simply rolled out the carpet for democracy for every society and state in the world. Since states in his age, like for example Cuba or a peasant society as Russia, were not always on the same level of development, they had to be assisted by the international system of states. This international system of states had to be managed by a liberal world order. The division of states into developed and non-developed was, according to Wilson, necessary. To quote Wilson himself, liberal democracy was ‘poison to the infant but tonic to the man.’<sup>60</sup> These ideas also heavily influenced the way in which Wilson wanted to shape the world order after the First World War through the foundation of the League of Nations, a body that, due to the absence of the United States, Germany, and the Soviet Union in it, never would be able to really make a difference.

### **3.5 Roosevelt’s New Deal**

The Great Depression of 1929 caused famine, poverty, and overall misery. Since a lot of Western wealth was built up from capital that came straight from the stock markets in the United States and other states, the political leaders of the time were forced into desperate measures, as was President Roosevelt. The United States reached the highest unemployment rate ever: twenty-five per cent of its population did not have a job. Therefore, when Roosevelt was competing to become the Democratic presidential candidate, he promised ‘a new deal for the American people’.<sup>61</sup> One of the reasons Roosevelt eventually was elected as president was that the American people had faith in him because of this promise. The New Deal-policy that Roosevelt’s administration would use in order to revive the American economy, was not ideologically based on a certain belief or idea. It was a policy that was experimental, contradictory, and pragmatic. Also, it was a policy that was formulated by politicians that all had worked under President Wilson in the twenties. They took on his progressive stance in order to face this terrible crisis. The New Deal never was coherent: it used parts of policies

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<sup>60</sup> Link, A., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton 1994) 218.

<sup>61</sup> Daniels, R., *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Road to the New Deal, 1882-1939* (Chicago 2015) 105.

that former administrations had used to solve problems in the American economy. Due to the experimental character of this way of formulating policies based on American political tradition, a lot of attempts to revive the American economy failed. However, there were a number of policies that were very effective. Even so, it was not until the United States took part in the Second World War that the crisis came to an end. The economy of the United States benefited from the upcoming war-industry. Because of the war-industry, the unemployment rates went down eventually and the Roosevelt administration succeeded in restoring the American economy, for which they had to thank the war. During the period under the administration of President Roosevelt, the role of government became, in contradiction to American historical ideology, more influential. Especially after the United States declared war on Germany, the role of the government became more important as a result of conscription.<sup>62</sup>

### **3.6 Communism in international relations**

The base principles of the United States have, since Wilson formulated them, remained the same. When examining the Soviet Union in the perspective of its emergence and its later actions in the Second World War and the Cold War that followed, the core principles of its main ideology have to be considered. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were the founders of a political ideology that would become known as communism. Marx had experienced the nineteenth century-world himself and he saw capitalism as the ideology of the bourgeoisie. In his perspective, capitalism ensured that the bourgeoisie would be able to suppress the working class. Therefore capitalism relied on exploitation: the bourgeoisie paid the workers the minimal amount of money required to keep them alive, in order to become richer themselves. However, the views of Marx were deterministic in the sense that he saw capitalism as its own gravedigger: at a certain point, the working class would overthrow the ruling class through a revolution. This would lead to a new society, in which the working class was freed from suppression and a new, communist order would dominate society. Crisis would lead to the self-destruction of capitalism. In the case of the Great Depression of 1929, the idea of the Soviets that capitalism would destroy itself was confirmed; however, the revolution that Marx had predicted did not appear to be happening, as had the First World War shown.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Daniels, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 131-158.

<sup>63</sup> Engerman, 'Ideology and the origins of the Cold War', 22-24.



Marxist thinking not only strongly influenced the way in which the Soviet society was shaped, but also the way in which statesmen like Lenin and after him Stalin perceived the international system of states. In the case of the United States for example, the Soviets saw the Declaration of Independence with its possible pursuit of happiness merely as some bourgeois statement that a bourgeois society used to legitimize its rule over the working class. Besides, Marxists saw revolutions as the locomotives of history. This meant that change was only possible through revolution. Lenin later would add that this change would also be possible through supporting communist parties abroad through institutions like the Comintern, the international communist movement. The implication of this for Soviet international relations was that revolutions in other states or in other places were not encouraged, but once they occurred as well, they would be supported. This universal view of the world made it possible for the Soviet Union to let foreign relations take their own shape, which meant that Soviet leaders would deal with other nations' revolutionary forces. This was in line with Stalin's wishes, who above all desired security and peace.<sup>64</sup>

### **3.7 Conclusion**

American-Russian difficulties after the Second World War were nothing new. They already had existed in the nineteenth century and they remained influential during the twentieth century. During and after the Russian Revolution of 1917, the United States became opposed towards the Soviet Union. This opposition escalated when the Americans sent military forces to Siberia in 1918. However, they were not able to overthrow the Bolshevik government. After the Russian Revolution, Lenin took over power in the newly formed Bolshevik state. The ideological ideas, upon which the new communist society would be based, came from Marxist thinking. The working class that had been suppressed for ages, now finally had taken the opportunity to overthrow the Russian nobility and to forcibly establish a communist state. This affected the way in which the Soviet Union would handle international relations, in the sense that it did not want to extend its own influence just to make more people Russian. It focused much more on safety, security, and peace. Other communist revolutionary groups were sometimes supported, but not publicly.

The case of the United States is very different from that of the Soviet case. Liberty, free trade, and the pursuit of happiness ruled the minds of American politicians. American actions on the international level were heavily shaped by the idea that if a society was

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<sup>64</sup> *Idem*, 23-27.

developed enough, it would be ready for self-government on the basis of democracy. This meant that the United States tried to influence states in the international sphere to overthrow their colonial rulers and establish a society of their own. The American views on the Soviet Union worsened because of the Great Purges of 1937 and 1938. On top of that, because communism limited personal freedom and Stalin's Five Year Plans prevented free trade, there were other factors that made the United States sceptical of international cooperation with the Soviets, although there had been economic relations between the two powers.

This chapter aimed to answer the following research question: 'Why and how did American-Russian history and ideology affect their later relationship?' When looking at the period before the Second World War, the conflict during which the United States and the Soviet Union were forced into cooperation, the ingredients for tension and differences of opinion on all kinds of matters concerning the international order were already apparent. The main event in which the mutual distrust and bad relationship found their origin was the American intervention in the Russian Civil War. This made the Soviets in later interaction highly suspicious towards the Americans. Furthermore, the ideologies of both powers and the way in which they aimed to shape international trade and freedom, severely affected the discussions that were held during the several peace talks during the Second World War. Also, the struggle for security of the one against the other influenced the way in which international politics would later take shape. Differences of opinion towards solving the German Question during and after the Second World War would impede cooperation between the two. The next chapter will focus on these peace talks, and in particular on what was agreed upon with regard to the German Question.

## Chapter 4. The Yalta and Potsdam Agreements

### 4.1 Introduction

The starting points for post-war inter-Allied cooperation were the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements. These would prove very important to the German Question. The question this chapter aims to answer is: ‘What was agreed upon during the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, and did how that affect Germany?’ This chapter will first examine the meetings held in February 1945 in Yalta. Subsequently, it will look at the conferences that were held in Potsdam between July and August of that year. The Yalta Agreements are some of the most controversial and important agreements of the Second World War, because they formulated a post-war policy for former Nazi Germany. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin signed the statements agreed upon by the three Allied powers and their decisions would eventually lead to the division of Germany into four zones of occupation. But what decisions were made during these talks? What were the plans for Europe after the occupied territories were liberated? And more importantly, what was to become of Germany once the Nazis were defeated? All these questions were posed during peace talks between the Allies in 1945. The fate of Europe lay in the hands of Great Britain and especially the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The implications and underlying motives of the Allies will not be discussed in this chapter, since this chapter will mainly focus on the content of the Treaties. At a later stage, extensive attention will be paid to these motives.

### 4.2 The implications of the Yalta Treaty

‘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.’<sup>65</sup> With this sentence, the first part of the Yalta Agreements ends. It left no doubt regarding the goal of the three Allied powers: total destruction of Nazism in Germany. Even though Germany was not defeated yet, at Yalta the Allies made plans for the occupation and control of Germany after the war. How Germany had to be defeated was not published, because ‘our combined military plans will be made known only as we execute them, but we believe that the very close working partnership among the three staffs [British, American, and Soviet] attained at this Conference will result

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<sup>65</sup> Churchill, W., Roosevelt, F., Stalin, J., ‘Crimea (Yalta) Conference, 1945’ in *Treaties and other international agreements of the United States of America 1776-1949* 3 (Washington D.C. 1976) 1007.

in shortening the war.’<sup>66</sup> The goal of the agreements reached at Yalta in the short term were clear, and so seemed the long-term goals of the agreement. However, the consequences and implications of the Treaties have been debated throughout the years. Indeed, Nazi Germany was defeated in May 1945, and the occupation of Germany started after its defeat. However, that was not the only thing the Allies agreed upon. What about other parts of the Yalta Agreement?

The primary goal of the Yalta Agreement was defeating Nazi Germany and making sure that Nazism and militarism would never again be able to emerge. First and foremost Nazi Germany had to be defeated, but what had to become of the country after its defeat? According to the treaty, the country was to be occupied by the Allies. At first, the country would be divided in three zones of occupation: a Soviet part in the East, an American part in the South, and a British part in the North-West of Germany. France was also given the opportunity to get its zone of occupation in former Nazi Germany, but since its officials weren’t present at the Yalta talks, that was to be decided upon later. Because Germany had not yet been defeated, the course of events had to be predicted and policy had to be based on these predictions. However, the Allies were thoroughly convinced that simultaneous military action would crush Germany’s military forces, so military considerations were dominant during the talks.<sup>67</sup> After the occupation of former German territory, the Germans were held accountable for the damage inflicted on the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and all other countries. After long and difficult negotiations during the Crimean talks, Churchill and Stalin agreed on a total sum of twenty billion dollars of reparation payments to be paid by Germany. Parts of the reparations, \$10 billion to the Soviet Union and \$10 billion to the other Allies, were to be paid in cash, the rest in all kinds of goods. At a later stage in the process, the payment of these reparations would prove to become a bone of content between the Allies.<sup>68</sup>

Another result of the Crimean talks was the organization of the United Nations Conference at San Francisco, which took place on April 25<sup>th</sup> 1945. The goal of the conference was for forty-four states, of which the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and China were the most powerful, to look if working together in order to ‘prevent aggression and to remove the political, economic, and social causes of war through the close and

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<sup>66</sup> Churchill, a.o., ‘Crimea Conference’, 1006-1007.

<sup>67</sup> *Idem*, 1007.

<sup>68</sup> Leffler, M., ‘Adherence to Agreements: Yalta and the Experiences of the Early Cold War’, *International Security* 11 (1986) 104-105.

continuing collaboration of all peace-loving peoples<sup>69</sup> would be possible. Furthermore, the heads of state of the three Allies declared Europe liberated. This meant so much that the Allies would come to the aid of states that had formerly been occupied by Nazi Germany, in order to make it possible for them to use democracy to solve political and economic problems. The consequences of this declaration of liberation of Europe were not clear yet, since the meaning of the formulation in the Yalta Reports was vague.<sup>70</sup> However, there were parts of the Crimean Peace Treaty that had clear implications for the way in which the Allies would act. For example, in the case of Poland, the participants of the Treaty supported the Polish Provisional Government. This government, that was called the 'Lublin Government', was different from the government that had been in exile in London. Churchill and Roosevelt were keen on seeing a government other than the Lublin government in place, because they held the opinion that the Lublin government was no 'broad-based government reflective of Polish public opinion.'<sup>71</sup> However, the borders of Poland had already been discussed during the Teheran Conferences and the question which government to keep in place worried Churchill and Roosevelt. Even though they were treating Stalin as an ally, the Western suspicion towards the communist Soviet Union was strong enough to fight Stalin at a later stage on matters like these.<sup>72</sup>

Besides Poland there was another region in which the United States and the Soviet Union both exposed their interest: Yugoslavia. The Allies recommended Marshal Tito and Dr. Subasic to form a new government that had to declare that the Avnoj (Anti-fascist Assembly of National Liberation) would include members of the last Yugoslav parliament. Besides that, legislature proposed by the Avnoj had to become subject to ratification on a regular basis by an assembly that was supported by some sort of constitution. The implications of these statements were quite clear: the United States fought Stalin in order to extend their influence over Eastern Europe. Even so, the first government of Marshal Tito was communist and pro-Soviet. Tito had tried earlier, in 1941 and 1943, to establish socialist governments against the Axis oppressors. Due to this proof of loyalty to Marxist thinking, Stalin considered Yugoslavia his main Eastern European ally after the Second World War. In the meetings following the Crimean talks, Yugoslavia became an important factor in the division of

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<sup>69</sup> Churchill, a.o., 'Crimea Conference', 1008.

Unkown, 'Yalta and San Francisco', *New York Times*, March 06 1945.

<sup>70</sup> Leffler, 'Adherence to Agreements', 92.

<sup>71</sup> Roberts, G., 'Stalin at the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam Conferences', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9 (2007) 25.

<sup>72</sup> Churchill, a.o., 'Crimea Conference', 1010.

Leffler, 'Adherence to Agreements', 95-98.

Europe, since the Americans started to realize that too many pro-Soviet governments in Eastern Europe were possibly harmful to the newly established peace on the continent.<sup>73</sup>

Although the Yalta Treaty sometimes is perceived as less concrete and being less influential on the relations between the Allies than the results of the Potsdam Talks, it can certainly be stated that it had direct implications for Poland and Yugoslavia. This is because their governments were recognised by the Soviet Union. On top of that, decartelisation of the German economy was discussed. The United States, however, recognised in the case of Poland the government that was in exile in London. Even though the United States would have rather seen this government governing Poland, and a democratic chosen government in Yugoslavia, *a* government was better than *no* government. Even though there was American acceptance of Soviet dominance in the East, after the Yalta Treaty Roosevelt tried to extend American and diminish Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. Historians studying the Cold War often argue that it was because of the ambiguity of Roosevelt's plans concerning Europe, that conflicts emerged over the Yalta Agreements at a later stage. Domestically, all kinds of ideas became popular. One of these was the Morgenthau Plan that would turn Germany into an agricultural state. At first, ideas like these were popular. Later, more sophisticated policies were installed. Since President Roosevelt had not communicated his plans with his successor Harry Truman, the new president had been left in the dark regarding the Yalta Treaty after Roosevelt's death in April 1945. On top of that, Roosevelt had been the favourite partner of Stalin within the Allies. Roosevelt's death caused the talks at the Potsdam Conference to take a significant different course than the talks at the Crimea.<sup>74</sup>

### **4.3 The implications of the Potsdam Treaty**

During the Conference at Yalta, the Second World War was not yet over. German forces had been driven away from Eastern and Western Europe by Allied forces, but in February 1945 Germany had not yet capitulated. Because of simultaneous attacks on Germany by different Allied powers, Berlin eventually capitulated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1945.<sup>75</sup> After its capitulation, talks were held in Potsdam between July and August 1945. These talks later became known as

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<sup>73</sup> Churchill, a.o., 'Crimea Conference', 1011.

Perović, J., 'The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9 (2007) 40-42.

<sup>74</sup> Leffler, 'Adherence to Agreements', 107.

Theoharis, A., 'Roosevelt and Truman on Yalta: the Origins of the Cold War', *Political Science Quarterly* 87 (1972) 212.

<sup>75</sup> Keegan, J., *The Second World War* (London 1989) 436-450.

the Potsdam Conference. At Potsdam, the future of former Nazi Germany was discussed again. It was the goal of the Potsdam Conference to work along the Yalta Treaty. Some elements of the Treaty were undisputed: Germany and its people had to be completely de-Nazified and the German people were to pay reparations to the states and their inhabitants that were harmed throughout the Second World War. The above, together with other elements, was mentioned in the Potsdam Treaty, but there were more conditions the Allies agreed upon.<sup>76</sup>

The Conference at Potsdam started on July 17. The talks were then held between Truman, Stalin and Churchill. Between July 17 and July 25, nine meetings took place. The conference was then paused for two days, because Churchill had to return to Great Britain for the declaration of the results of the British general elections. Because of the results of these elections, it was not Churchill who returned on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, but Prime Minister Clement Attlee came to the talks instead. A new Secretary, Ernest Bevin, replaced the current Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden. The American delegation also changed in comparison to the one that was present during the Crimean Conference. President Roosevelt had died in April 1945, and Harry Truman and James Byrnes replaced him and his Secretary of State Edward Stettinius. For Great Britain, the consequences of these changes were not influential: in an advisory role, Sir Winston Churchill was still involved in British state affairs.<sup>77</sup> For the Americans, however, the consequences of the death of Roosevelt were much more influential. Roosevelt had its own ideas on as to how to interpret the Yalta Treaty, and because he never had discussed them with Truman, Truman had to develop his own ideas on the German Question together with Byrnes.<sup>78</sup>

In the Potsdam Treaty, the establishment of the Council of Foreign Ministers was announced. This meant that the foreign ministers of the four principal powers (Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and France) were present in this Council. The first meeting of the Council was to be held in London before September 1945. The most immediate task of this Council was to draw up peace treaties with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. Moreover, the Council had to examine matters concerning territorial questions, and had to come up with settlements regarding these questions. Although the delegation of France was not present during this meeting, its government was invited to

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<sup>76</sup> Attlee, C., Stalin, J., Truman, H., 'Berlin (Potsdam) Conference, 1945' in *Treaties and other international agreements of the United States of America 1776-1949* 3 (1976) 1225-1227.

<sup>77</sup> Deighton, A., 'Britain and the Cold War, 1945-1955', in M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 112-117.

<sup>78</sup> Leffler, 'Adherence to Agreements', 104-109.

‘adopt this text and to join in establishing the Council.’<sup>79</sup> This also meant that France was assigned a zone of occupation near its own borders in the southwest of former Nazi Germany. The goal of this Council was to make cooperation between the four powers quicker and more efficient. This also meant that the German Question was ready to be dealt with in a firm, two-fold way: the Treaty divided the Question in political and economic principles. The political principles of the Treaty were separated into several conditions. The most important conditions of the question how to deal with Germany, were that it had to be de-Nazified and that the country had to be completely disarmed and demilitarized. Also, the National Socialist Party and all other affiliated organizations and other Nazi societies were declared destroyed. On top of that, the disappearance of the Nazi government had to be followed by decentralization of the political structure, which implied local self-government that had to be restored within Germany and had to be based on democratic principles. The governments of the occupying forces were responsible for their own zone of occupation, but the Treaty suggested they should all respect the newly installed governments and the rights of the German people. The commanders of the four zones of occupation were each granted a seat in the so-called Allied Control Council. The goal of this Council was to provide occupied Germany with a shared policy that would eventually lead to the economic unification of Germany in the long run. The decisions of the Council had to be unanimous. This proved to be problematic, because this meant each commander was granted the right to veto proposals. However, the treatment of German war criminals was also discussed: they should get a trial as soon as possible.<sup>80</sup>

The economic principles of the Treaty were, like the political ones, based on each commander’s own ideas and were to be treated to his own discretion. Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt had agreed upon reparation payments of twenty billion dollars, but the fact that they had not decided how these were to be paid, caused discussion at Potsdam. Because Roosevelt passed away and Churchill was replaced by Attlee, these discussions had to be held by statesmen that were not present at the instalment of the reparation payments. According to Leffler, here the ambiguity of Roosevelt’s words and ideas is to be blamed for this difficulty.<sup>81</sup> The outcome of this discussion was that each power was to extract the reparation payments from its own zone, and if there were not enough capital or other sources to be extracted from the zone, as was the case in the Soviet zone, the other zones would transfer these sources of capital to the zone that was in need of them. Moreover, the factories that

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<sup>79</sup> Attlee, ‘Berlin (Potsdam) Conference’, 1226.

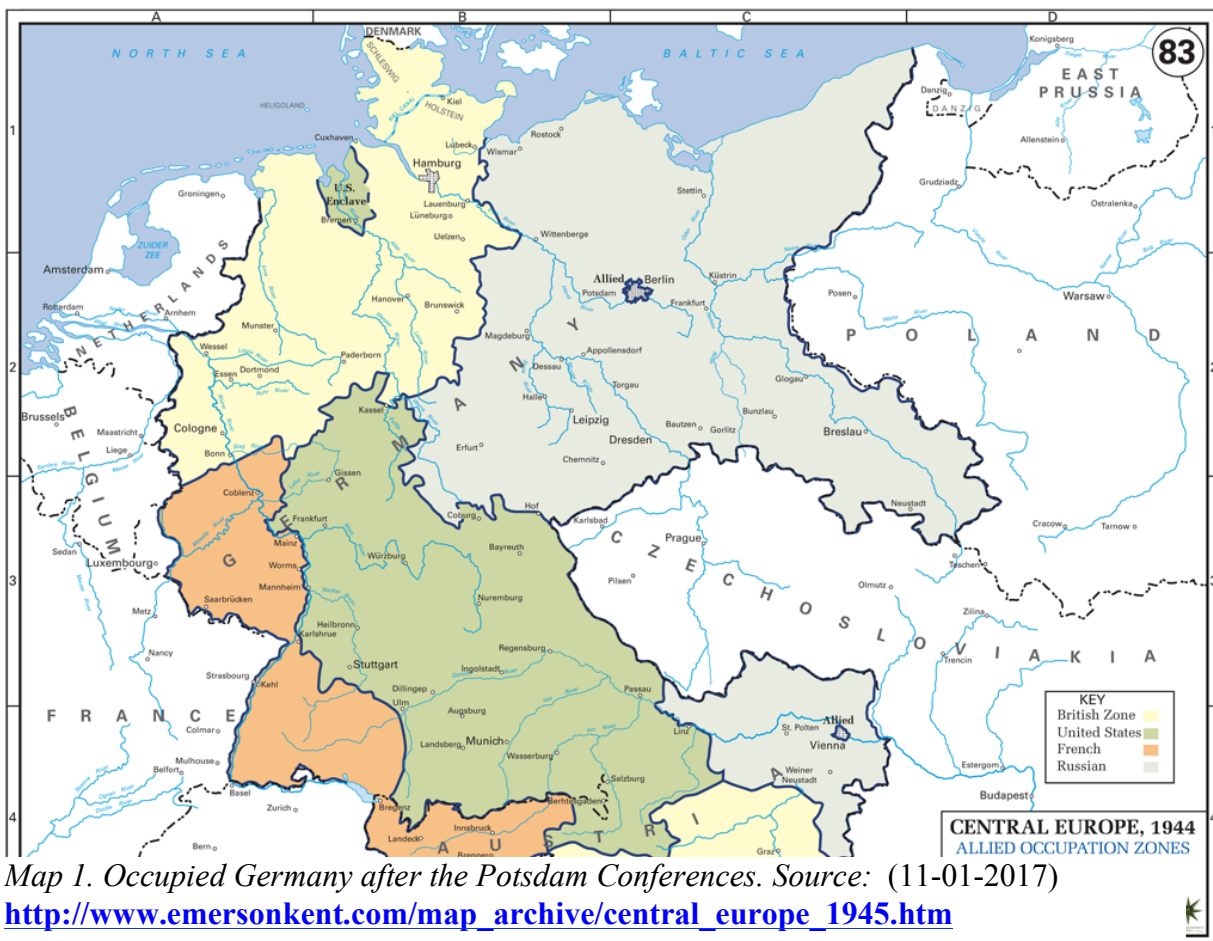
<sup>80</sup> Attlee, ‘Berlin (Potsdam) Conference’, 1227-1228.

<sup>81</sup> Leffler, ‘Adherence to Agreements’, 104.



were contributing to the war economy of the Nazis had to be dismantled. Also, decartelisation of the war economy had to take place. The four occupying forces here too were responsible for their own zones, and were free to treat the economies of the zones as they saw fit, under the condition that they respected the fate of the German people and the fact that Germany had to be economically unified in the long run. The fact that the Allied commanders were able to govern their zones independently and in an autarkic way, would prove very problematic in the long run. Each commander had a veto in the Control Council and was able to act according to his ideas and interests. This made the treatment of Germany as an economic unit impossible.<sup>82</sup>

The Polish question, about what government had to be installed, was also worked out. The three Allies formally recognised the Polish Provisional Government, due to the existence of diplomatic relations with the Polish government by the British and American governments. In fact, Britain and the United States now formally accepted the influence of the Soviets in Eastern Europe. On top of that, the western borders of Poland were officially revised, which



meant that significant parts of the former German territory were added to Poland. That resulted in difficulties, since the Soviet Union already controlled Eastern Germany and had

<sup>82</sup> Attlee, 'Berlin (Potsdam) Conference', 1229-1232.

given the authority over the region to the Poles, who had already begun expelling Germans from the area.<sup>83</sup> Besides the discussion of the German and Polish Questions, the admission of other states in the United Nations was made possible by the Allies, if the states that applied were able and willing to carry out the obligations that the United Nations had established. The states had to be peace loving, and the decision whether they were granted permission was for the Security Council to decide upon.<sup>84</sup>

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The talks that were held at Yalta and were later resumed at Potsdam, had great consequences for post-war Europe. During the Crimean talks, the solution of the German Question was discussed. This chapter sought to answer the sub question: ‘What was agreed upon during the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, and did how that affect Germany?’ Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union decided that after its defeat, the country was to be divided in three zones of occupation: a British, an American, and a Soviet zone. If France was willing to take an own zone under its influence, it would get a zone of occupation as well. Furthermore, the fates of the liberated Poland and Yugoslavia were discussed. Because the United States and Great Britain did not recognise the Polish Lublin government, no agreement was reached on that topic. However, the Yugoslavian regime under Marshal Tito was recognised by all three Allied forces. Also, the Allies decided to organise a conference at which forty-four nations were invited to share their thoughts over a possible implementation of the United Nations. During the Potsdam Conference, a different formation of the Allied delegations was present. This was attributable to the death of President Roosevelt and the British elections. Accordingly, Truman succeeded Roosevelt, and Attlee replaced Churchill. During the Potsdam Conference, Germany was definitively and institutionally divided. Besides that, there were political and economic principles established to which all the Allied forces had to abide. The several German zones of occupation were to be governed as the occupational forces saw fit. The only conditions were that the Potsdam Treaty was not violated and the integrity of the German people was respected. On top of that, the Polish government was officially recognised by the Allies. The Polish borders were revised, but no final agreement existed over these borders, since the Polish region lay in the Soviet zone of occupation.

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<sup>83</sup> Roberts, ‘Stalin at the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam Conferences’, 34.

<sup>84</sup> Attlee, ‘Berlin (Potsdam) Conference’, 1235-1236.

These treaties later would have great influence on the further course of events in Europe and specifically in Germany. However, even though the implications of the treaties were deemed clear, they would later be the source for extensive discussions. Besides, the fact that Germany eventually became divided into two separate states was the proof that the agreements were not capable of overcoming the ideological differences between the Allies. Therefore, the next chapter will show which parts of the agreements were problematic and why the agreements failed to work.

## Chapter 5. Why the Potsdam Agreements did not work

### 5.1 Introduction

‘The carrying out of the Potsdam Agreement has, however, been obstructed by the failure of the Allied Control Council to take the necessary steps to enable the German economy to function as an economic unit.’<sup>85</sup> James F. Byrnes spoke these words during an important speech in Stuttgart on the 6th of September 1946. The Secretary of State of the United States of America by then already recognized that the goals set during the Potsdam talks were not achieved. That was remarkable, since the goals established during the Potsdam talks were to be achieved through the help of this Allied Control Council.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, General Lucius D. Clay, the supreme commander in the American zone, had resented orders of the American government of April 1945 that wanted the German industry to be dismantled and decartelised. However, General Clay had and his staff had noticed that the dismantling of the German industry would not only affect Germany, but also surrounding countries that were dependent of Germany. Also, in the eyes of General Clay, Germany had to be able to feed and pay itself as soon as possible because the occupation of the zone was very expensive. This made the speech of Byrnes very important, because through this speech he actually confirmed his agreement to the policy of General Clay in Germany.<sup>87</sup> In order to study later events that affected the Allied zones of occupation, it is necessary to understand what goals were not achieved and why this was the case. Therefore, this chapter aims to answer the following research question: ‘Why did the Allies fail to comply to the Potsdam Agreements?’ Firstly, this chapter examines the nature of the Allied Control Council and subsequently it focuses on which aspects of the Potsdam Agreements were not achieved and why there were not achieved. Furthermore, this chapter examines the way in which the Central Intelligence Agency portrayed the objectives of the Allies with regard to Germany, in order to make clear why the Allies acted the way they did.

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<sup>85</sup> Byrnes, J., ‘*Stuttgart Speech ("Speech of Hope")*’, September 6th 1946, [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage\\_id=2990](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=2990).

<sup>86</sup> United States, France, Great Britain, Soviet Union, ‘Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany and the Assumption of Supreme Authority with Respect to Germany and Supplementary Statements’, *The American Journal of International Law*, 39 (July 1945) 171-178.

<sup>87</sup> Lak, M., *Because we need them... German-Dutch relations after the occupation: economic inevitability and political acceptance, 1945-1957* (Rotterdam 2011) 86-88.

## 5.2 The birth of the Allied Control Council

Shortly after the German capitulation, the Allied Representatives agreed upon a provisional government that divided the former German states into four zones of occupation. This group of Allied Representatives consisted of the generals Montgomery, Eisenhower, Zhukov, and De Lattre De Tassigny. These Representatives signed 'The Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany' on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1945. This document did not only arrange total surrender of German forces, but also established the Allied Control Council. This Council, which consisted of the commander-in-chief of each zone of occupation, was responsible for the control of entire former Germany. Different themes were discussed within the Council, but the power to decide what policy was to be followed in each specific zone of occupation remained with the commander of that zone.<sup>88</sup> Because the Allies had agreed on the Potsdam Treaty, this did not seem problematic at the start. The first goals of the Allies were denazification, demilitarization, and the re-education of the German people.<sup>89</sup>

Even though these goals were clear, each zone had its own way of dealing with former Nazis. The Soviets arrested around 240 thousand Nazis in their zone of occupation. Of those, ten thousand were convicted and 100 were sentenced to death. Most of the other Nazis were sent to concentration camps that the Soviets put into service again. Of these 240 thousand Nazis, 100 thousand died in these camps.<sup>90</sup> The Soviets used these camps until 1950. Not just Nazis were prisoned in these camps, but also other political enemies were locked up. The Americans and Brits had a different way of dealing with Nazis. In their zones, Germans had to fill out a form with 131 questions about their whereabouts during the Nazi reign. After that, the Germans were divided in four categories and each category was treated differently. What the Americans and British did was setting examples through trials against former Nazi bosses at the Nuremberg trials of 1945 and 1946. Because of the long process that was needed to track the Nazis down, a lot of former Nazis escaped in the British and American zones. Furthermore, the Americans and British needed bureaucrats to fill the gaps in their organisations. Because of the experience of these Nazis, it was necessary to put them to work. This made punishment more complex and less of a priority to the occupying powers.<sup>91</sup>

The example of how the different zones of occupation coped with denazification shows how the commanders were able to treat their own zone of occupation to their

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<sup>88</sup> 'Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany', 177.

<sup>89</sup> Attlee, 'Berlin (Potsdam) Conference', 1226-1229.

<sup>90</sup> Boterman, F., *De Duitse phoenix: de geschiedenis van Duitsland in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 1996) 140.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, 140-142.

discretion. On political, economic, and social fields, the zones were also governed differently. This meant that the zones emerged differently from the start, since each commander wanted to set up his zone according to the ideals and interests of his own country. However this might have been the case, the collective goal of the Allied Control Council was to unify Germany economically as soon as possible. Later events, however, would make this problematic and difficult. The most problematic characteristic of the Control Council was the veto right each commander had, which made the incorporation of one, unified policy, impossible. This veto right emerged from the fact that decision making within the Control Council was only possible if there was unanimous agreement between the commanders. Additionally, the zones were autarkic, which meant that the zones became more different from the start.<sup>92</sup>

### **5.3 The weaknesses of the Control Council**

In its attempt to unify Germany economically, the Allied Control Council was hindered by its own composition. The law that made unanimous agreement obligatory hindered swift and effective policy. This was an internal problem for the Control Council, but it was not the only difficulty the Control Council encountered. The fact that each commander was able to govern his own zone to his own discretion, made each zone different from the others. The different agendas of Great Britain, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union would prove as problematic as the veto right each commander had in the Council. The goals and ideals for Germany were perceived differently in each country.<sup>93</sup>

Great Britain and the United States had liberated Western Europe and were, after a long and expensive campaign, eager to hand parts of the responsibility in their zones of occupation over to the Germans. The process of denazification was in full swing and the desire to economically restore the rest of Europe would become important to the two powers much later. In April 1945, the American government had already ordered a 'Directive to the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Occupation Forces'. With this document, the American government ordered the dismantling and decartelisation of German industry. Furthermore, it ordered the reopening of educational institutions and a new start to German economic and political life, but all under strict control of the American commander of the zone.<sup>94</sup> In addition, domestic campaigns in the United States, for example 'bringing our boys home',

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<sup>92</sup> *Idem*, 137-140.

<sup>93</sup> Szanajda, A., *The Allies and the German Problem, 1941-1949* (New York 2015) 42-47.

<sup>94</sup> Directive to the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Occupation Forces (JCS 1067) (April 1945), [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=2297](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2297). (22-05-2017)

made the already clear desire of General Clay to incorporate more Germans in the government and economy of his zone more essential than ever. These domestic campaigns would motivate American officials to consider an even more swift incorporation of Germans in several governmental and other bodies. However, the need for reducing the costs of the occupation was the most important factor in this.<sup>95</sup>

The presence of American soldiers in Germany was *a* factor, but not *the* factor that made General Clay change his mind. The American government had long foreseen that Nazism was not the only enemy, but communism too was to be feared and fought. This became their top priority in their foreign policy in 1946.<sup>96</sup> In the context of the zones of occupation, this meant that General Clay did not want his zone to fall into poverty, because he believed that poverty could trigger the emergence of communism. Moreover, the Americans had to feed and pay the Germans within their zone. This had to change, because it was too expensive to maintain. Because the Western zones were dependent on the Soviet occupation zone for their food supply, the relationship between the zones had to be good. Also, because the Soviet zone received reparations from the Western zones, the relationship between the powers was to stay on a decent level. On top of that, the Soviet Union was interested in the Ruhr region, since that was the economic core of Germany and Europe and this region was aimed to make the recovery of the German state possible. The motivations for the Americans for their zone were therefore clear: to establish a stable provisional government as soon as possible that consisted of German as well as American officials.<sup>97</sup>

The British in their turn, had learned from the appeasement policy of the late 1930s. Churchill before the conferences of Yalta and Potsdam realised that Germany was of geostrategic and economic importance to Britain and entire Europe. So if Europe was to be restored after the Second World War, it had to be done with help of a renewed Germany that formed one economic unit. Therefore, proper attention had to be paid to the Western zones of occupation, to prevent the same mistakes made in the years before. Because of what British officials experienced in the Soviet Union and the Soviet zone in former Germany, they accepted the threat the Chiefs of Staff had pointed out during the war; communism was a threat, but priority had to be given to Nazism. In accordance with the American foreign policy, British foreign policy had been first and foremost anti-communist before, during, and

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<sup>95</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 137-140.

<sup>96</sup> Lafeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, 28-32.

<sup>97</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 142-145.

after the war.<sup>98</sup> Because of the universalist character that the British saw in Marxism, they feared the way in which the Soviets organised communist parties all over the world, also in Great Britain and other parts of the British Commonwealth. This had to be dealt with, starting in Germany, but eventually this was important for the entire world. Eventually, this change in mind of the British led to British Cold War thinking. This way of thinking involved teaming up with the Americans and later the French, in order to fight the Soviets on international grounds.<sup>99</sup> This will be examined later on in the chapter.

The CIA had closely monitored the developments in the several zones. In a report of the Central Intelligence Group of April 8, 1947, the CIA states that the basic objective of the British was to ‘avert the danger to the United Kingdom inherent in the control of Germany by a strong and aggressive military power, whether through a resurgence of German nationalism or through an extension of the hegemony of the Soviet Union’.<sup>100</sup> This means that in the eyes of the CIA, the British shared the American fear of communism. Furthermore, the report describes the desire of the British to restore Germany as ‘respectable member of the European community, able to support itself’.<sup>101</sup> However, the British did not want Germany to become too powerful, because that would pose the threat of the Germans becoming aggressive again. The British saw a social democratic administration as most favourable and regarded a federal political structure as best fit to their zone, because that would provide the ‘necessary safeguards’ against a ‘concentration of power in hostile hands’. The most immediate and urgent goal, however, was to reduce the burden of the occupation of their zone, because Britain’s financial position had become weak.<sup>102</sup>

#### **5.4 No new Germany wanted**

Now that the main goals of the British and American commanders for their zones have been made clear, it is necessary to examine the goals the French and Soviet commanders had for their zones of occupation. To understand why former Germany eventually became separated into two fundamentally different states, a comparison has to be made between the goals of the commanders of the zones of occupation. The American and British commanders wanted a slight but steady increase in the influence of Germans in the restructuring of their region. The

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<sup>98</sup> Deighton, ‘Britain and the Cold War’, 118.

<sup>99</sup> Deighton, ‘Britain and the Cold War’, 118-121.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Review Of The Soviet, British, And French Programs With Respect To Germany’, 9.

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem, 9.



French and Soviet commanders, however, had very different goals for their zones. First, we take a look at the way the French handled their zone of occupation.

The case of the French zone of occupation is different than that of the zones of the other three Allies. Contrary to Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, France was not present during the peace talks at Yalta and Potsdam. However, they were granted influence in the Allied Control Council and the Council of Foreign Ministers. Moreover, they were granted an own zone of occupation in former Germany. The area of the French bordered France and initially fell under authority of the Americans. This was due to the fact that after its liberation, France did not immediately have a (provisional) government installed. After the resolution of these troubles in France, the French were granted an own zone of occupation in former Germany. Fighting communism was not one of the priorities of the French. They rather focused on getting as much out of their zone in reparations as possible, in order to compensate themselves for the suffering during the Second World War.<sup>103</sup>

According to the CIA report on the Allies, the French were obsessed with Germany and blinded by the aggression Germany had imposed on them throughout history. Furthermore, the French aimed at making Germany as weak as possible, while making France as strong as possible. Also, the French wanted to render the French frontier by obtaining international control over Rhineland. Third, they wanted, in accordance with the Americans and British, to decentralize Germany as much as possible in order to prevent an aggressive German state from revival. Fourth and last, the French wanted a guaranteed receipt of German coal and to strictly limit the amounts of steel available to the German economy.<sup>104</sup>

Besides their desire to receive reparation payments, the French also fantasised about incorporating their zone of occupation into their own country. They even executed preparations to do so.<sup>105</sup> If annexation of their zone was to be made possible, then a definite-fall-apart of former Germany had to take place. This meant that in the Allied Control, France used its veto to block all propositions that would make the unification of Germany on an economic scale possible. Since France had full control over the Saar region, the French wanted to extend their influence as much as possible in this region. They wanted to incorporate Alsace-Lorraine into their own country and continue profiting from the Ruhr

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<sup>103</sup> Trachtenberg, M., 'The de Gaulle Problem', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14 (2012) 81-92.

<sup>104</sup> 'Review Of The Soviet, British, And French Programs With Respect To Germany', 13.

<sup>105</sup> Trachtenberg, 'The de Gaulle Problem', 85-93.

region.<sup>106</sup> Without knowing, they accidentally helped the Soviets setting up their zone the way they wanted.<sup>107</sup>

### **5.5 German communists taking over the East**

The Soviet zone of occupation had a different approach in dealing with the ‘German Question’. The Soviets wanted to establish a communist government in their zone, because such a government would protect their own Soviet Union. In addition, with a communist government, Germany would never threaten the Soviet Union again. Therefore, in April 1945, the Soviet Union had sent three groups of German communists to Berlin, led by Walter Ulbricht, to establish this communist government. As early as May 14<sup>th</sup>, a new city council was established. This was performed in a way the Soviets called ‘democratic’.<sup>108</sup>

However, eight out of sixteen city councillors were communists of the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) and were not perceived as democratic by the other Allies. This was in line with the goals and ideas the Soviets had for Germany. In June 1945, Stalin had put forward one main goal for Germany: sovereignty for the Soviet Union. This meant that the Soviet Union wanted to make the KPD as powerful as possible within their zone of occupation.<sup>109</sup> In the other zones of occupation, the Western KPD’s were also of vital importance. Although Stalin wanted to rule former Germany, he realised that it would be difficult to accomplish this. Therefore, he recognized three options for the Soviet Union: a re-unified Germany under government of the later Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED, a combination of the KPD and the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or SPD), a ‘neutral’ Germany with heavy communist influence, or a communist state within the Soviet zone of occupation. These goals were not compatible with the original goal of the Allied Control Council: unifying Germany on an economic scale. The next chapter focuses on what happened within each zone separately, also on a political basis, but the current chapter focuses on what the different occupants wanted for and with former Germany on a macro level.<sup>110</sup>

At the start of its occupation, the Soviets focus on collectivisation of the several companies that were active within their zone. They also put an end to the rule of landowners in the countryside. The land was divided among farmers, and landowners were not able to

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<sup>106</sup> Szanajda, *The Allies and the German Problem*, 58.

<sup>107</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 142-145.

<sup>108</sup> Ibidem, 143.

<sup>109</sup> Siddiqi, A., ‘Germans in Russia: Cold War, Technology Transfer, and National Identity’, *Science and National Identity* 24 (2009) 121-127.

<sup>110</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 142-145.

influence the government any more. The means of production that were present in the Soviet zone were transported to the Soviet Union in case they were not necessary, where they were put into work. In this way, the Soviets tried to withdraw reparation payments from their zone. Besides the reparations from their own zone, the Soviets had a right to receive reparations out of the British and American zones of occupation, worth the equivalent of ten billion dollars. Because the American and British zones both were dependent on the Soviets for their food supply, this gave the Soviets an advantage over their Allies, but they in turn were dependent on the reparation payments from the other two zones. This made the cooperation between the Allies even more complex, since they needed each other to keep the occupation of the several zones in place. Furthermore, the Soviet zone as well as the other zones, did not always comply to the agreements they made with the American and British zones. The food supply from the Soviet zone often did not arrive in time and moreover, the requested amounts were not delivered.<sup>111</sup>

In the eyes of the CIA, the minimum objective of the Soviets was to neutralize Germany as a potential hostile neighbour. The maximum objective of the Soviets was to establish an anti-fascist centralized government in Germany, in order to reduce it to a satellite state. Priority, however, was given to the pressing economic matters that concerned the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Furthermore, the Soviets tried to find means of production that supported their programs of industrial and scientific development. Other than in the case of the British and the French, the Soviets, according to the CIA, clearly had to be treated differently. The way in which the CIA portrayed Soviet action, suggested much more expansionist desire than existed in reality. Stalin's wish to rule Germany completely was present, although he never wanted to incorporate that rule by force.<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, in August 1946, the CIA had already reported several developments to President Truman that pointed towards Soviet military action becoming more likely.<sup>113</sup>

## **5.6 Birth of the Bizone**

By April 1946, both the British and American commanders had noticed that economic unification of Germany would be difficult, but was still a distinct possibility. Furthermore, it was necessary for them to make sure that Germany was able to pay and feed its civilians.

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<sup>111</sup> *Idem*, 145-147.

<sup>112</sup> 'Review Of The Soviet, British, And French Programs With Respect To Germany', 4.

<sup>113</sup> 'Near-Term Soviet Military Action', (August 1946), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0002*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1 page.

Therefore, they suggested that the economic borders of the several occupation zones had to disappear. Within the Allied Control Council they suggested that the several zones should make unification possible through active cooperation. However, the Americans and British officials suggested economic unification on several occasions, but the French and Soviet commanders did not want to cooperate. The Americans and British then decided to move on without the other two zones. This led to the instalment of the Bizone on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947. The Bizone was an economic unity out of the former American and British zones of occupation. Through this Bizone, the American and British wanted to strengthen their grip on the Control Council. Moreover, because of the Soviet Union's foreign policy in Eastern Europe, as well as Turkey and Greece becoming more aggressive and dangerous, the Americans changed their foreign policy. The West, and not only Germany, had to be protected and defended from communism. The policy that aimed to accomplish these goals was called the Truman Doctrine. This doctrine, introduced in March 1947, included economic and financial support for states that were influenced by outside pressure or armed minorities, to make sure that their independence and sovereignty was secured. In effect, this was the American attempt to declare cold war on the Soviet Union, since the Soviets tried to influence Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Poland.<sup>114</sup> The Truman Doctrine was a universal policy that would make a fight against communism possible on a global scale.<sup>115</sup>

Problems attributable to mutual distrust and different ideologies became painfully apparent during the first years after the Second World War. The Americans and British cooperated through the establishment of the Bizone, but the French and Soviets still acted solely in order to reach their own goals. The Allied Control Council, that had to ensure Germany and Europe had a reboot after the Second World War, eventually became too divided and was not in the position to work together and ensure better future for all. The Americans and British aimed at reviving Germany as soon as possible, while the French were looking at possibilities that would enable them to incorporate their zone of occupation into their country's territory. The Soviets, in their turn, had already sent out groups of fierce and convinced communists that had to establish a Berlin city council as soon as possible. They all had their own agendas which made cooperation very difficult, if not impossible.

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<sup>114</sup> Roberts, G., 'Moscow's Cold War on the Periphery: Soviet Policy in Greece, Iran, and Turkey, 1943-8', *Journal of Contemporary History* 46 (2011) 58-71.

<sup>115</sup> Szanajda, *The Allies and the German Problem*, 71-72.

## 5.7 Conclusion

This chapter sought to answer the question: ‘Why did the Allies fail to comply with the Potsdam Agreements?’ As we have seen, due to the domestic policy and ideals of the several occupants of the German zones, it was (nearly) impossible for the Allied Control Council to lead the several zones of occupation through one shared policy. The differing agendas and the not always clean and clear policy of the several occupants, made the following up of the Potsdam Agreements impossible. The character of the Allied Control Council, in which each of the commanders had a veto, made policy making even more difficult. The mutual distrust and the fight against communism waged by the Western powers, made the difference and distance between the several Allies even bigger. If the character of the Control Council would have been different, the several Allies would have been bound by certain conditions, and would have been checked by an overarching body, matters may had turned out different. Often it is argued that the division of Germany was inevitable, and looking at the difficult diplomatic history of the Americans and the Soviets, it is understandable why historians hold this opinion. However, the CIA played a significant role in interpreting and judging movements of the other Allies, and incorrectly thought to recognise expansionist drifts in Soviet actions, which led to a fiercer American stance towards the Soviets.

Each occupant held his responsibility in the Control Council, but did not always fulfil this responsibility. Therefore, it is necessary examine the events that took place during the occupation within these zones of occupation. The revival of political and economic life took a different course in each zone. This was vital to the differences that emerged during the occupation, on a political and later institutional scale. Therefore, the next chapter tries to shape a picture of what happened within the zones. Subsequently, the last chapter of this thesis aims to describe how the Cold War influenced the eventual German separation.

## Chapter 6. How life restarted

### 6.1 Introduction

‘When everybody else thinks it is the end, we have to begin.’<sup>116</sup> This is one of the famous quotes of Konrad Adenauer, in Germany known as ‘Der Alte’. Adenauer was the first chancellor of the German Federal Republic. This quote resembles his mentality, because after its defeat, Nazi Germany’s end had come. Its defeat was total and fascism had lost. The former Nazi state became divided into four zones of occupation, for which each of the occupiers had its own goals and targets. These targets became clear throughout the years. Although the commanders of each of the zones had a seat in the Allied Control Council, the primary goal of the Council, being the unification of Germany on an economic basis, did not take place. The failure of the Control Council was mainly attributable to the fact that the Council did not have any form of coercive means: each commander had a veto. This meant that a collective policy would be too difficult to realise. Therefore, each of the commanders set up his zone of occupation according to the wishes and ideology of his own country. This meant that as from the start of the division, the zones became more different. To understand why and how Germany eventually was separated into two different states, it is necessary to understand what happened within the several zones of occupation. Political life was re-established during these years and the way this happened was relevant to the eventual division in 1949. Therefore, the question that this chapter aims to answer is: ‘What happened within the Allied zones during the occupation of Germany?’

### 6.2 Restoration of political life in Eastern zones

As seen in the previous chapter, the Soviets had sent German communists to the nearly defeated Germany at the end of April 1945. These groups were under control of the Soviet Union and were able to establish a city council for Berlin within days after the German surrender. Germany’s sovereignty came to an end on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1945. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of that month, the Soviet zone came under the control of the *Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland* (SMAD). On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, the SMAD would announce ‘Law nr. 2’. This law made it possible for the Germans living in the Soviet zone to establish their own political party, under authority of the SMAD. A day after the introduction of this law the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) and four days later the Sozialdemokratische

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<sup>116</sup> Adenauer, K., <http://www.kas.de/brandenburg/de/publications/43861/> (accessed 12-6-2017).

Partei Deutschlands (SPD) were re-established. Later, four more parties would follow in the Soviet zone. Both the KPD and SDP were also re-established in the Western zones of occupation. However, it was difficult for the parties to decide together what kind of policy had to be established. Although political parties were allowed to be (re-)established, the SMAD put non-communist parties under constant pressure. They did so by manipulating political life. Through prohibitions and to withhold permits, the SMAD tried to undermine the power of non-communists. Within the KPD and especially the group of Walter Ulbricht, unorthodox methods of working together with other parties than the KPD were not allowed. In order to give the KPD more power, the SMAD established the *Antifa-block*. This anti-fascist block consisted of all the political parties in the Soviet zone. This meant that from that moment, the formation of a coalition without the KPD would be impossible. However, the future remained sombre for the communists. In 1945, the communist parties in Austria and Hungary lost the elections. In the American zone of occupation, the KPD only won 3,5% of the votes during the elections of 1946.<sup>117</sup>

The SMAD understood that the KPD had act differently if they wanted to gain power in the Soviet zone. Therefore, the possibilities to work together with the more moderate SPD were examined. The SPD wanted to cooperate with the KPD, but initially refused to combine the two parties. The SMAD influenced SPD-members, and members that were too critical towards the SMAD and KPD were locked away. The first step towards an eventual merger was set during a conference between thirty members of the KPD and thirty members of the SPD, held on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1945. After these meetings, an announcement was made that the parties would start to work together intensively. The final goal was ‘*Verschmelzung*’ or merger. After this news, Kurt Schumacher (SPD West) and Otto Grotewohl (SPD East) met with each other to discuss the path their party had to take. They were not able to agree on the right path to follow and how to treat the communists. Grotewohl was in favour of merging the parties into one new party, while Schumacher remained opposed to that idea. In the case of the SPD, this would eventually lead to a split of the party: Schumacher would lead the Western SPD and Grotewohl the Eastern SPD.<sup>118</sup>

In April 1946, the foundational conference of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) was held. During this conference, the SED was introduced as the new party of the Soviet zone. As a combination of the KPD and SPD, this party would become the

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<sup>117</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 150-154.

Megas, A., *Soviet Foreign Policy Towards East Germany* (Heidelberg 2015) 17-31.

<sup>118</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 148-150.

tool the Soviets would use get complete hold of the political life in their zone. Because the communists had a lot of experience with bureaucracy, they were able to get a firm hold on the SED. Through purges and intimidation, the communists got rid of the remainder of critical former SPD-members. The first real test for the SED was the election in the Soviet zone in October 1946. The stakes were high for the SED. It turned out the party did not win the elections and became the smallest party in Berlin, which the SMAD considered the centre of their zone. The SMAD and the SED realised that through free elections they would never be able to extend their influence in the way they desired. This had several reasons, the main being that the Germans perceived the SED as '*Rüssenpartei*', a Russian political party. This meant that the SMAD had to continue intimidating the opposition and to force the other political parties to live up to the will of the SED. The leaders of the other political parties in the Soviet zone tried to attack the plans of the SED. With every vote, they tried to block ideas suggested by the SED.<sup>119</sup>

To control the 'Block-parties', the SED decided to install the *Volkskongress*-movement. The leaders of the three biggest parties in the Soviet zone were supposed to form this movement. Even so, the leader of the CDU, Jakob Kaiser, refused to take part in this movement. After that, the SMAD decided to take away his position. As a result, Kaiser decided to leave the Soviet zone and joined the CDU in the American zone. After Kaiser left, the SED took a firmer grip on the parties in the *Antifa-block*, and the alignment of civilian organizations with SED policy eventually led to completely ruling out the opposition in the Soviet zone. By the end of 1948, the SED was the dominant power in the Soviet zone.<sup>120</sup>

### **6.3 Restoration of political life in Western zones**

With the opposition ruled out, the path towards the establishment of a separate, communist German state lay open. However, even before the SED became the ruling party in the Soviet zone, there were still attempts of the Allied Control Council to make the several zones work together. One of the moments the Control Council tried to do so, was the Munich Conference of June 1947, when ministers of each of the zones were invited. The subjects that were on the agenda were food supplies, economic policy and refugees. By then the tactics of the SED had already become clear. Even before the conference had started, Walter Ulbricht had already tried to prevent the conference from taking place because he did not want to cooperate with

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<sup>119</sup> *Idem*, 154-155.

<sup>120</sup> *Idem*, 154-155.



the Western zones and wanted to maintain the grip of the communists in the Soviet zone. However, five political leaders of the Soviet zone travelled to Munich to attend the conference. Even so, they were not able to align with the leaders of the other zones what kind of subjects had to be put on the agenda and returned to the Soviet zone before the conference had even started.<sup>121</sup>

As stated above, the SED took measures that ruled out regular forms of opposition. Constant purges and reorganisation of the party were also normal. During the summer of 1948, the party once again was reorganized. The party became more and more set up according to the standards of the Soviet Union. The *'besonderen Deutsche Weg zum Sozialismus'*, the special German road to socialism, was no longer followed. Instead, the way in which the Soviet Union had established its party and state would be the path the Soviet zone in Germany had to follow too. In June 1947, the *Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission* (DWK) or German Economic Commission was installed. This commission would focus on Sovietisation of the Soviet zone of occupation. Economic central planning and collectivisation of the economy were subjects that this commission worked on. This commission would later form the basis for the East German state. The Soviet zone became a people's democracy: politics, economic policy and cultural policy were all in the hands of the SED.<sup>122</sup>

In March 1948, the *Volkskongress* chose a *Volksrat* (People's Council). This council had to design a constitution for the Soviet zone. In November 1948, this constitution was published. Even though it was not yet put into use, the preparations made by the authorities showed the ambition of not following the primary goal of the Potsdam Agreements: unification of Germany. When in late September 1949 the German Federal Republic was established, a delegation of the SED left for Moscow to discuss with Stalin how to react to this foundation. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1949 a provisional *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber) was installed after elections were held. The People's Congress accepted the earlier formulated constitution and this eventually led to the foundation of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>123</sup> Through the foundation of this East German state, the fate of Germany had been decided upon. However, in order to answer the research question of this chapter, it is necessary to take a similar look to what happened in the other parts of former Germany.

During the fall of 1945, political activities restarted in the Western zones of occupation. Each of the politicians that wanted to establish his or her own political party had

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<sup>121</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 155-156.

<sup>122</sup> *Idem*, 155-156.

<sup>123</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 155-156.

to get in touch with the zone commander in order to obtain permission to form a party. The biggest party of the time before the war, the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) and the new Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU) were the first to get allowance to (re-) establish their parties. The leaders of these parties, Kurt Schumacher and Konrad Adenauer, had been very critical towards the Nazi party and the regime. The essential goal of both of the leaders was the eventual unification of Germany. However, in the eyes of these leaders, that unification had to be without the communists. In the eyes of the SPD and CDU, the communists were just as bad as the Nazis. This would later be problematic in possible cooperation between the same political parties in the Western and Eastern zones, as the example of Schumacher and Grotewohl had already shown. As early as the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1945, Konrad Adenauer became mayor of Cologne. The Americans, who saw him as reliable because of his banishment from German political life during the years of the Third Reich, put him into that position. However, when the division of Germany according to the Potsdam Agreements was put into operation, Cologne fell under British rule. Unfortunately for Adenauer, this meant that the British decided to replace him as the mayor of Cologne.<sup>124</sup>

The way in which the Americans wanted to set the first steps towards unification of Germany, was the unification of the British and American zones of occupation and the establishment of the earlier discussed Bizone, that had already been put in place from January 1947 on. The American minister of Foreign Affairs, James Byrnes, had wanted to establish this Bizone, because he wanted the German people to be able to establish their own government. Initially, the Bizone had not been the actual goal of the Americans. They had suggested that the other occupiers, the French and the Soviets, should have also joined the unification attempt. They refused. The elections that were held in the Western zones in 1946 were won by the CDU. These elections were held in the several different *Länder* (federal states) that were under Western rule.<sup>125</sup> The challenge for the CDU and the government that was put in place in the West was clear: establish as soon as possible a healthy, self-sufficient economy. Because of the fact that Lucius Clay, the commander of the American zone, had already stopped paying reparations to the Soviets, the Americans had to come up with new ways of supplying the population in their zone with food. The winters of 1945-46 and 1946-47 had both been cold, and the people were hungry. Also, the black market was thriving because of the poverty and the currency that was in use, the Reichsmark, was nearly

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<sup>124</sup> *Idem*, 157-160.

<sup>125</sup> Boterman, *De Duitse phoenix*, 161.

worthless. American cigarettes were the most valued form of currency.<sup>126</sup> Because of these problems, in June 1947 the *Wirtschaftsrat* (Economic Council) was established. The goal of this council was to restore the economy in the Western zones of occupation and build a healthy, self-sufficient economy that was no longer dependent from Soviet food supplies. Also, the Bizone got an Executive Council that had to help the Economic Council reach its goals. These were comparable to a form of parliament and government. In these Councils the old and new political parties took place, although the communists were not involved. The establishment of the Bizone came on an important moment. In March 1947, two months after the Bizone had been established, the Truman Doctrine was announced. This Doctrine had the goal to contain communism all over the world. In that sense, it was a coincidence that the Bizone became one of the first concrete examples of how communism had to be fought.<sup>127</sup>

The Americans understood that the success of the Bizone was very dependent on its economic success. Poverty was seen as the basis out of which communism could grow and, since communism had to be contained, so did poverty. Therefore, the new American minister of Foreign Affairs, George Marshall, launched the European Recovery Plan in June 1947. This plan would help democracies all over Europe to repair and recover their economies. Because of the fact that the Americans did not want to be blamed for an eventual end to the cooperation between the Allies, they also offered the Plan to the Soviet Union and other states in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union refused, and Moscow also forbade states that were under Soviet influence to make use of the Plan. The three Western occupation zones in Germany and Berlin received one and a half billion dollars of payments in order to help their economies to recover.<sup>128</sup>

## 6.4 Economic reform

The implications of the Marshall Plan for the eventual German unification were clear: the refusal of the plan from the side of the Soviets made that the character of the economies of both the Western and Eastern zones of occupation became even more different. Because of the famine that was present in the whole of Germany and the need that famine created for the Western zones to be able to govern themselves, made changes in the way the Western Allies treated their zones. Because of the fact that the black market had become too important

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<sup>126</sup> Lak, *Because we need them...*, 45.

<sup>127</sup> Hofland, E., *Het Duitse Wonder. Een kleine geschiedenis van de Bondsrepubliek* (Amsterdam 2015) 20-24.

<sup>128</sup> Hitchcock, W., 'The Marshall Plan and the creation of the West', in M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 154-163.  
Hofland, *Het Duitse Wonder*, 22-23.

throughout the years and the Reichsmark had become nearly worthless, a currency reform was necessary for the Western zones. The new currency had to be hard and strong, because otherwise economic recovery would remain difficult for the Western zones. During the London Six-Power Conference in February 1948, the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg were present. It was at this conference that the Western powers decided that a West German state had to be established and that it had to be included in the Marshall Plan.<sup>129</sup> Also, the West German state had to be included in the Western European economic system in order to benefit the whole of Western Europe. However, one of the most problematic features of West German unification remained the French zone and its policy towards Germany. The French still wanted to incorporate Saarland into their own territory and had, throughout the years, refused several suggestions that made cooperation between the several zones of occupation possible. During the same month as the conference, a communist coup was committed in Czechoslovakia. This made the necessity for the Western powers to cooperate more urgent than ever and under the pressure of the Western powers present at the conference, the French agreed to incorporate their zone into a West German state. They decided to join the Bizone. The three zones had to form a new state that had to be embedded in a European-American system. In March 1948, just one month after the Six-Power Conference, the Soviet representative stepped out of the Allied Control Council. After less than three years, Allied cooperation during the occupation of Germany came to an end.<sup>130</sup>

Parallel to the developments for this West German state, were the reforms for the establishment of the Deutsche Mark, the new currency that the new West German state was to take in use. On June 20<sup>th</sup> the D-mark was set. The Soviets reacted immediately: the D-mark was forbidden in the whole of Berlin and the rest of their zone. Another major action at that time by the Soviets was the blocking of the French, American, and British zones in Berlin. This Berlin Blockade would last until the preparations for a German state and the D-mark were cancelled, the Soviets declared. General Clay refused, however, and decided to supply the Western parts of Berlin by air. Over 277 thousand flights were made to supply the West Berlin population of 2 million between June 1948 and May 1949.<sup>131</sup>

During the Berlin Blockade, the West German authorities installed a parliamentary council of seventy members that was led by Konrad Adenaur of the CDU and Carlo Schmid

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<sup>129</sup> Weissman, A., 'Pivotal Politics-The Marshall Plan: A Turning Point in Foreign Aid and the Struggle for Democracy', *The History Teacher* 47 (2013) 111-120.

<sup>130</sup> Hofland, *Het Duitse Wonder*, 23-25.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*, 22-23.

of the SPD. They were allowed to establish a committee that would form a provisory document that would function as basic law for the new German state. The authorities did not want to name this document a constitution, because as long as the four occupying powers had not agreed on the political future of Germany, the goal of the politics still had to be unification of the whole of Germany.<sup>132</sup> On top of that, the Western Allies did not want to be blamed for an eventual separation of Germany into two states. The provisory document had to be different from the constitution of the Weimar Republic, which had not functioned correctly. After the Bundestag and the Allied commanders had accepted the document, the German Federal Republic was established on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1949. In reaction to this foundation, the German Democratic Republic was established under SED rule on October 7<sup>th</sup> 1949.<sup>133</sup>

## 6.5 Conclusion

When studying the developments that took place in the Allied zones of occupation after the German defeat of 1945, it is apparent that the several zones developed very differently. The differences between the Allies, that were already apparent during the Yalta and Potsdam talks, became ever clearer during the actual occupation of Germany. In the Soviet zones, the communists were helped in order to seize power. The Soviets wanted to make Germany a communist state, to serve its interests and to protect the East of Europe from capitalism. It did so through several means, but the most useful tools for the Soviets were the KPD and later on the SED. The use of ambitious, fanatic communists, and the way in which they were capable of managing bureaucratic institutions helped at first. Later on, blackmailing, the putting under pressure of competitors, and constantly cleansing the party of critical elements, became useful other means for the Soviets to get hold of the SED and later on the whole of the German Democratic Republic. Its refusal of all kinds of cooperation with the other Allies, through for example rejecting the Marshall Plan, made an eventual separation unavoidable in the eyes of the Allies. Their initial ambition of seizing control of the whole of Germany now disappeared, but controlling *a* part of Germany was better than controlling *no* part of Germany.

The restoration of political life in the Western zones of occupation took a completely different course than that of the Eastern zone. Communism was very unpopular and the two biggest parties of the Western zones became the SPD and the CDU. Through cooperating

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<sup>132</sup> Ibidem, 26.

<sup>133</sup> Ibidem, 25-27.

with the American authorities, the Western zones became more autonomous. The establishment of the Bizone was important in this sense, since this was the first step towards a West German state. However, the French ambition to add Saarland to their own territory remained, and it was not until 1948 that the French ceased to resist and decided to join the Bizone. The establishment of the Bundestag and the first provisional formation of basic law would eventually lead to the establishment of the German Federal Republic. An important factor to this establishment was the Marshall Plan that granted Western Europe the necessary economic support. This plan was also proposed to the Soviet Union and Eastern European states, but they all refused to accept it. The Soviet Union did so on its own, while the other states did so under Soviet influence. The economic recovery of the West German state together with the introduction of the Deutsche mark had to grant West Germany the opportunity to restore its economy and make an end to famine and poverty.

The next chapter looks at the question why Germany was so important to the Allies that they had to fight over its destiny. It also looks at the implications the Truman Doctrine and the Cold War had for the German Question, a new major conflict that arose during the post-war years.

## Chapter 7. Why the German Question was central to the Cold War

### 7.1 Introduction

‘This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise. If now there is not a communist government in Paris, the cause of this is Russia has no army that can reach Paris in 1945.’<sup>134</sup> Joseph Stalin is famous for a lot of things and this quote is surely one of them. Stalin spoke these words during a speech in April 1945. Nazi Germany was close to its total defeat and it is interesting to see how Stalin this early already described his view on the world order and political systems of the future. This was exactly how the future of Europe and the rest of the world would look like after the Second World War: constantly being imposed to one or the other ideology and way of life. That had already happened to Europe during the Second World War, but during the period after the war its states became witness to a different kind of war: the Cold War.

During the Yalta and Potsdam talks in 1945, the Allies had shared an interest: making sure that the defeated German state would never again be able to impose an aggressive ideology on the world. Although agreements were reached at Potsdam, the Allies did not trust one another. The British and Americans mistrusted the communist Soviets and the other way round the same applied to the Soviet stance towards the Western Allies. The Americans did not only mistrust the Soviets and their ideology, they also feared it, because they perceived it as expansionist. The assignment of the CIA was to obtain information on the Soviets, and to report this information to the president. The American perception of the Soviets and their actions was heavily influenced by these reports. This perception shaped American actions.

Even before the Second World War, Stalin had already become notorious in the West because of his actions during the several purges within the Communist Party and the ruthlessness with which he had treated his own people. Before the Second World War, Stalin had already been responsible for millions of deaths. On top of that, communism and the way in which it restricted the freedom of its subjects and controlled the economy were damaging factors to the world order in the eyes of the Americans. Free trade, entrepreneurship, wealth, and personal freedom were values that the United States wanted to protect. Although the Allies had agreed on certain terms during the Potsdam talks, they remained each other’s

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<sup>134</sup> Joseph Stalin, as quoted in Djilas, M., *Conversations with Stalin* (London 1963) 63.

enemies, even though the goal of the Potsdam Treaty was a shared one and had to be reached through cooperation.

When acting as occupiers of the German zones, the differences between the different policies of the occupiers became clear. Each of them wanted something else for his zone of occupation. It is necessary to look at the reasons why these occupiers acted in the way they did, to understand what their actions would eventually mean for the Cold War. Also, it is vital to understand why it was so difficult to agree on what had to be done with Germany. Apparently, seizing the power in Germany was considered very important to the Allies. The research question this chapter will try to answer is: ‘What were the underlying goals of the Soviets and Americans through which the German case became so important?’ To understand why and how the Cold War started, not only the agreements and treaties the Allies agreed upon have to be discussed, as is done in the previous chapters. The events inside the several zones of occupation were important to the eventual separation of Germany into two sharply different states. Political developments inside the several zones have been discussed, as have the difficulties the Allied Control Council faced when trying to cooperate mutually.

These factors are of significant importance to the separation of Germany, but they also were important for the shape of the Cold War conflict as a whole. However, these explanations were not the only ones for the rise of a Cold War. The respective domestic strategies and desires of the United States and the Soviet Union, the two major actors in the Cold War, have to be considered as well. Furthermore, the way in which the American government became influenced by reports of the CIA on Soviet movements also is very important to consider in this respect, because the CIA was responsible for obtaining first-hand information on the Soviets. The information came out of the Soviet zone, and out of the Soviet Union itself and was very important for the formulation of American policy regarding the Soviet Union. Why was it that the United States and the Soviet Union desperately wanted to extend their influence in the zones of occupation, so desperate that eventually the country would become divided into two separate states? To understand and formulate an answer to this question, this chapter focuses on the interests both superpowers had when dealing with the German Question. First this chapter focuses on the interests of the United States and how their policy was influenced by reports of the CIA. After that it will analyse the interests of the Soviet Union.



## 7.2 The American vision on the future

When looking at the United States and asking why the country acts in the way it does, the ideological values of the country have to be considered. In the case of the German Question and post-war Europe, the United States wanted to set up the continent according to their ideas. The start of a clear post-war American policy for the whole of Europe first became a point of discussion in December 1941, when the activities of the Council of Foreign Relations merged with the State Department. This led to the establishment of the Advisory Committee of Postwar Foreign Policy. The way that capitalism functioned within the American markets was reason for concern of the government. There needed to be an open door policy for American enterprises to invest and sell their products abroad. Therefore the goal of this committee was clear: making sure that the post-war world order was based on a free world economy in which the United States were the dominant factor. This had to go hand-in-hand with consolidation of American power internationally. Not much was decided on how to make this free world economy possible. However, during the years, important factors were distinguished in order to reach this goal. In early 1942 an intra-divisional committee of the Department of State drew a conclusion after several long meetings: the German industry and its markets were essential to the revival of Europe and the free economy they so desperately thrived. Driven by the pressure of American businessmen, the fear of another economic depression was big, so the revival of the Europe became objective number one.<sup>135</sup>

After the trauma that had come over the United States because of the depression of the thirties, not only American foreign policy changed. The Americans understood that if they wanted to provide for a stable and prosperous future, the international monetary system had to be protected. Several tools in order to protect their desired world economy were discussed and installed during the Bretton-Woods Conference in July 1944. The establishment of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were vital to the stability of this future economy, since they had been absent during the crisis of 1929 and were considered capable of preventing a comparable crisis. Another important question that had to be answered was the way in which the Americans planned to recover all the collapsed (West) European economies. Because of the Second World War, bombs had heavily damaged most industry. On top of that, infrastructure had been destroyed and millions were homeless because of the destructions of the war. Therefore, the Americans had to decide how they wanted the

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<sup>135</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 49-53.

Leffler, M., 'The emergence of an American grand strategy, 1945-1952', in M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 67-75.

European countries to recover. For the Americans the best example of how to recover from a severe crisis had been their own recovery after the Crisis of 1929. The Second World War had saved the New Deal campaign of President Roosevelt. Because of its success, this led to the decision of the American Congress that the way in which the Americans would intervene economically in the future, would be in the same fashion as the New Deal.<sup>136</sup>

As early as January 1946, the U.S. government changed its opinion on decartelisation and de-industrialization of Germany. Even though the German economy had to be downgraded and dismantled until a certain level, American officials thought that there had to be a balance between decartelisation and construction of German industry. Supported by the information the government got from the American officials in their zone of occupation in Germany, they decided not to follow the Potsdam Agreement fully. By March 1946, George Kennan, an American diplomat who worked in Moscow, had observed what the strategy of the Soviets towards their zone of occupation would be. According to Kennan, the Soviets wanted to establish, in line with the Polish and Yugoslavian states, a People's Republic in their zone of occupation. Kennan, therefore, promoted a policy independent from Potsdam, one that would prepare the organisation of a West German state. In accordance to this information, the Americans formulated a plan that would secure their influence in Western Europe, also after they would eventually leave their zone of occupation. This was aimed at maintaining influence and control over the capitalist free trade economy, in which the Americans wanted to be the dominant factor. The result of this plan would be that Europe would be divided in two blocs: one under Western and the other under Soviet control.<sup>137</sup>

Consequently, the American commander of their zone of occupation in Germany, General Clay, decided in May 1946 that the dismantling of the German industry had to be stopped. Under influence of American businessmen, Clay believed that it would be damaging to the whole of Europe to go any further. According to Clay, other Western European countries expected reparation payments out of the American zone, and dismantling the German economy in their zone would also hurt other Western European countries and was not in line with the desires of the American government. The famous speech held by the American Secretary of State of that time, James Byrnes, meant a turning point in American stance towards the recovery of the German economy. He declared that Germany had to be capable of maintaining an average standard of living without assistance. Also, he spoke about

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<sup>136</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 51-55.

Leffler, 'The emergence of an American grand strategy', 74-79.

<sup>137</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 55-59.

how he saw the future of a possible unified Germany. According to Byrnes, Washington would press for the 'maximum possible unification'.<sup>138</sup> This implied that if unification along the lines of the initial Potsdam Treaty would prove impossible, other options had to be considered. This other option was partial unification of Germany. In practice this would mean that the Americans wanted to serve their interests rather than unifying Germany completely. When the later American Secretary of State, George Marshall, announced the European Recovery Plan, the European states had to choose: accept Marshall Help and join the West, or refuse Marshall Help and join the East. In this sense the Marshall Plan served the American goal of establishing a free trade world economy, because even though the Marshall Plan divided the world into two blocs, this division did not imply conflict and was co-existential in nature.<sup>139</sup>

However, the containment policy that President Truman announced in March 1947 was directly aimed at communism and thus towards the Soviet Union. This policy consisted of financial help towards states and societies that were threatened by communism. This was seen as offensive as well as defensive in nature, because it was a direct answer to the Soviet expansion policy. Although, it was directed towards the supposed Soviet expansion, it did not imply direct military actions. The Americans wanted to support the states that were threatened by communism merely financially and they would not be the ones that would undertake military action first. However, this would later on be perceived as one of the first signs of Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>140</sup>

### **7.3 The American war of nerves**

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, American knowledge about the Soviets and their actions, were mainly based on reports they received from the CIA. In order to understand the nature of the Cold War, this thesis argues that the CIA was partly responsible for the American perception of the Soviets and their actions. In a report of August 24, 1946, on 'Near-Term Soviet Military Action', the possibility of short-term Soviet military action was considered.<sup>141</sup> When reading the report, one gets the impression that it is very likely that the

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<sup>138</sup> Restatement of policy on Germany, Stuttgart, 6 September 1946. <http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga4-460906.htm> (visited on 5-6-2017).

<sup>139</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 56-67.

Trachtenberg, M., 'The United States and Eastern Europe in 1945: A Reassessment', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10 (2008) 96-102.

<sup>140</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 63.

<sup>141</sup> 'Near-Term Soviet Military Action', 1.

Soviets will attack the Western zones in Germany and Western states in general. The support that is given for this claim is built up from several aspects. The first of these is the notion that ‘propaganda against the U.S. and the U.K. has reached its highest level of violence since Stalin’s February Speech’.<sup>142</sup> The reasons the CIA gave for this notion, was the fact that the Americans had abandoned the policy of President Roosevelt. The Soviets saw ‘military adventurers’ as guiding the American policy to ‘world domination through atomic diplomacy’. On top of that, American officials that worked at their embassy in Moscow observed that there was no more hope for friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Western powers. In the eyes of the Soviets, this was because there now was a battle between the true democracy of the Soviets against Western reactionary powers.<sup>143</sup>

After the Second World War, the CIA produced all kinds of memos and reports for President Truman and his staff. Another report on the likelihood of Soviet military action followed in September 1946<sup>144</sup> and updates on Soviet objectives in seizing key German industries were sent to the president in October 1946.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, an analysis of the meaning a speech of the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, to the American cause was also sent in October 1946<sup>146</sup>, together with an update on Soviet capabilities for the production of weapons.<sup>147</sup> In January 1947 a report on the revised tactics of the Soviet Union in international affairs was sent to the president, in order to formulate a counter-policy against the Soviets.<sup>148</sup> Another interpretation of Soviet foreign policy intentions followed in August 1947.<sup>149</sup> These reports were all directed to the president and his staff. One of the most pressing questions the Americans had, was whether a direct attack of

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<sup>142</sup> Ibidem, 1.

<sup>143</sup> Ibidem, 2-3.

<sup>144</sup> ‘Soviet Military Intention’ (September 1946), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0008*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Soviet Objectives in Seizing Key German Industries’ (October 1946), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0011*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1-2.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Molotov’s Speech’ (October 1946), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0013*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1-3.

<sup>147</sup> ‘Soviet Capabilities for the Development and Production of Certain Types of Weapons and Equipment’ (October 1946), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0016*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1-3.

<sup>148</sup> ‘Revised Soviet Tactics in International Affairs’ (January 1947), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0019*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1-6.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Russian Foreign Policy Intentions’ (August 1947), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976, Reel 0080*, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1-15.

the Soviets against the Western Allies was possible, and reports on these possibilities were written in 1948.<sup>150</sup>

When studying these CIA reports a few things stand out. The first is the way in which the reports are written. All reports paint a picture of the Soviets of being aggressive and prepared to attack the West whenever possible. Each action, speech, military movement or policy change is being interpreted in the reports as pointing towards a probable confrontation between the Soviets and the West. None of these interpretations sees Soviet action and movements as important to domestic Soviet security, or, in the reports on the speeches, as meant to improve domestic morale. When studying so many sources, one gets the feeling that the Americans wanted the Soviets to be bad. Secondly, the CIA informants in the Soviet regions were the first and sometimes only source of information of the Americans. This means that President Truman and his staff often had to base their policy on unreliable sources, that never got hold of the complete story. American policy was therefore very dependent of the interpretation of a certain fact or event. Thirdly, in the CIA reports, informants and agents give their interpretation and opinion on all kinds of events and facts. However, these are very biased in the sense that they always point toward near Soviet military action, even though most reports concluding state that most interpretations are a result of a ‘War of nerves’<sup>151</sup>. All conclusions state something comparable: Soviet actions are likely to happen, however, these interpretations and indications are probably false.

The fact that the Americans reacted to these reports by not complying with certain aspects of the Potsdam Treaty and through the Truman Doctrine is a sign that the president and his staff interpreted these reports as they were written. The fear for the Soviet Union and the nervousness with which the Americans regarded their movements, are signs of the wrong interpretation of Soviet actions. Therefore, this thesis argues that the CIA played a big role in shaping American foreign policy. Because of the already stated lack of information on the Soviet Union, the American government had to base its policy on these scarce sources. Because, as we now know, the Soviets were none at all interested in attacking Western Europe, or even worse, the United States. On the contrary, the Soviet Union was much more directing to a peaceful international sphere, in order to prevent the catastrophic effects of conflicts like the Second World War.

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<sup>150</sup> ‘Threats to the Security of the U.S.’ (September 1948), *CIA Research Reports, The Soviet Union, 1946-1976*, Reel 0385, Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, 1-13.

<sup>151</sup> ‘Near-Term Soviet Military Action’, 3.

#### 7.4 The Soviet vision on the future

Now that the importance of the German Question to the Americans has been explained, it is now necessary to look at the case of the Soviet Union. Together with the United States, the Soviet Union was the only major power left after the Second World War. The main goal of Stalin internationally, was to secure the political foothold and the areas his Red Army had occupied. This meant that the Eastern zone in Germany had to be kept and that the region east of the Elbe also had to be secure. The purpose of the maintenance of this region was ultimately security. The Soviet Union wanted long-term peace in Europe and thought the way to reach that was by protecting themselves through maintaining the occupation of these states. Since the Soviets craved security, the strategic favourable frontiers that the War brought them were actually very beneficial to their goals.<sup>152</sup>

Considering the Americans, the Soviets did not regard them in an aggressive way. The ideologies of both powers were obviously very different and impossible to match with each other. In the case of post-war Germany, the Soviets thought that the Americans were keen on preventing Germany from becoming an economically powerful competitor. In the minds of the Soviets, the Americans wanted bourgeois-democratic regimes for the whole of Western Europe and Germany in particular. On an ideological basis, the Soviets saw that there existed a certain form of hostility from the Americans to the Soviets. Because of their communist ideological beliefs, the Soviets mainly blamed the American ruling class for this, not so much the American people.<sup>153</sup>

Chairman of the Foreign Ministry's commission for the preparation of peace treaties and on post-war order, Maxim Litvinov, saw the later spheres of influence that would become established in Europe as unavoidable. Even with the presence of the United Nations, the two major powers would divide the world in security zones. According to Litvinov, these zones were not established through coercive or violent means: they had to be beneficial both for the smaller powers and for the greater powers.<sup>154</sup> Other Soviet politicians agreed with Litvinov, the United States and the Soviet Union would divide the world among each other. During a speech in November 1944, Stalin declared that inter-Allied cooperation was to prevent new wars and conflicts. Through this statement, Stalin was creating conditions for coexistence

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<sup>152</sup> *Idem*, 68-70.

Pechatnov, V. O., 'The Soviet Union and the world, 1944-1953', in M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 90-95.

<sup>153</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 68-70.

Pechatnov, 'The Soviet Union and the world', 96-101.

<sup>154</sup> Roberts, G., 'Litvinov's Lost Peace, 1941-1946', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4 (2002) 45-50.

after the war. He stated that conflict and every other form of aggression had to be avoided, no matter what.<sup>155</sup>

In April and May 1945, the concrete path the Soviets wanted to take in order to reach the security they so desired, was two-fold. Firstly, they wanted to exclude American influence and consolidate their own in Eastern Europe. Secondly, they wanted to get hold of territory that they could use as leverage against the West. In February 1946, during Stalin's election speech, the dictator condemned the capitalist system and all the states that had such a form of society. Especially in the case of Germany, this became more and more important. The United States and Great Britain were working together in order to establish the later Bizone, while the Soviet Union remained the only major power behind the East. When Truman declared war on communism through the introduction of his Containment Policy, the first response of the Soviets was cautious. When the Marshall Plan was offered to the Soviets and other Eastern European states, Soviet officials were not immediately refusing the proposition. Russian Foreign Minister Molotov, however, realised that if Eastern European states would accept the help from the Americans that would leave the Soviet Union weak in Eastern Europe. Therefore, the Soviets refused the help from the Americans and advised all other Eastern European states to do so too. The refusal of the Soviets of the Marshall Plan was later on perceived as another vital part of the path to a bipolar world.<sup>156</sup> Even though the Soviets set up their zone of occupation to their own ideology and ideas, they were reluctant regarding to the unification of Germany. Other than was portrayed by the Americans, the Soviets did indeed give power to the socialists in their zone of occupation, but they had a so-called 'wait and see'-policy towards an eventual unification of Germany. The Sovietisation of Germany was a kind of test case for the rest of the Eastern European states that were under influence of the Soviet Union. If the German case would be successful, the Soviets would eventually apply that same model of Sovietisation on other states.<sup>157</sup>

If they failed, they would eventually try different tactics in order to reach their goals. Two examples of the way in which the Soviet Union acted when coping with states in which they tried to extend their influence, are the examples of the Greek Civil War and the way in which Yugoslavia did not follow Soviet policy. In the case of the Greek Civil war during the late forties, the Soviets merely supported the communists. They did not send in armed forces

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<sup>155</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 69.

Pechatnov, 'The Soviet Union and the world', 98-103.

<sup>156</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 70-72.

<sup>157</sup> Naimark, N., 'The Sovietization of Eastern Europe, 1944-1953', in M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge 2010) 175-181.

and they did not use other violent coercive means. The case of Greece is actually quite remarkable, because one of the reasons that President Truman presented the American people with the Truman Doctrine had been the fact that the Soviets intervened in the Greek Civil War. In the other example, Stalin threw Yugoslavia out of the Comintern because they did not follow Soviet policy the way Stalin wanted. Although, this was not particularly good for Stalin's reputation, he did not react in an aggressive way and let the Yugoslavians reluctantly take their own path. In this sense, the Soviets were quite reluctant in reacting heavily to certain developments that were not beneficial to them.<sup>158</sup>

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the ways in which the Soviet Union and the United States wanted to set up the world after the Second World War. The question this chapter intended to answer was the following: 'What were the underlying goals of the Soviets and Americans through which the German case became so important?'

The American post-war goals for Europe and the rest of the world were mainly economic. In order to reach their goal of a free world economy, Europe, with a focus on the Western part, had to be revived. In order to reach this goal, the Central European state that had the biggest economic potential, Germany, had to be revived first. The ideas for decartelisation and dismantling of the German industry that had been agreed upon by the Allies in the Potsdam Treaty did not last long. Because of domestic pressures from all kinds of organisations in which businessmen were united and because of ideas that came from Congress, General Clay decided that the dismantling and destruction of the German economy had to be stopped. In order to provide for a minimum level of economic prosperity, there had to become a balance between this dismantling and the construction of a new economy, because without it, Europe would become poor and receptive to communism.

Also, Europe had to be opened to American capital and goods, because capitalism in America did not prosper as it did years before. In order to be able to take up economic activities again, the European countries and economies had to be helped and revived. This was done by copying the way in which the New Deal functioned during the thirties, but now exporting this way of doing abroad. On top of that, the American government presented the

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<sup>158</sup> Lewkowicz, *The German Question*, 71-76.



Truman Doctrine in order to contain communism and later on the Marshall Plan in order to support the European countries financially during their restoration.

These American movements in their policy were heavily influenced by the information they received from the CIA. In its reports, the CIA described the Soviet Union as an aggressive power that constantly threatened the West by its actions. Simple movements were interpreted as potentially pointing towards a military invasion of the Soviets in Western Europe, or even worse, in the United States. The 'war of nerves' to which these reports led, has been very important for the formulation of American policy, since these reports were the only real source of information on Soviet intentions they got hold of during the early years of the Cold War. In this sense, the incorrect interpretation of the CIA led to American foreign policy that was meant to counter an aggressive power. This segregated the Allies even more than they had been during the first few years after the Second World War, which eventually would lead to the complete breakdown of inter-Allied cooperation in 1948.

Being opposed to, and suffering from, American policy, the reason why the Soviets were interested in Germany was because they were looking for ways in order to guarantee long-term peace to themselves. The future of the world was, in the eyes of the Soviets, doomed to be bipolar. This on-going battle between capitalism and communism would not be fought through a military conflict, but through extending the influence of the respective ideologies throughout the regions both of the powers could easily influence.

In Germany, the Soviets wanted to establish a socialist or communist state, in order to protect the East European states Stalin already controlled. On top of that, the Soviets tried to set up their own zone of occupation according to their standards by trying to exert a policy of Sovietisation. In this sense Germany was an experimental case, because if the Soviets succeeded in pursuing their policy of Sovietisation, that policy was fit to copy onto the East European states the Union controlled. Furthermore, the favourable strategic borders the Soviets had obtained during the Second World War, were considered to be maintained throughout the future. A future that had to be peaceful in the eyes of the Soviets.

The role of Germany in the Cold War is a very central one: the former Nazi state was considered of vital importance to both the United States and the Soviet Union and it was here that the policy of both superpowers became concrete and clear. Germany was the principal theatre in which both of the powers could formulate and structure their goals and policies. This would be decisive for the rest of the Cold War.

## **Chapter 8. Conclusion**

This thesis has looked at the developments before, during and after the Second World War among the Allies. Also the developments and events within the zones of occupation of the Allies within former Germany have been studied in order to answer the main research question of this thesis. That question is: ‘Why did Germany become the focal point of the Cold War and how did that affect the division of the country into two different states?’

The United States and the Soviet Union had, from the Russian Revolution onwards, a very difficult relationship. Scholars studying the Cold War have focused on the difficulty of this relationship with regard to the failure of the cooperation between the Americans and the Soviets during the first years after the Second World War, which led to the division of Germany into two different states. Scholars also point at the failure of complying with the Potsdam Treaty as important for the German division. Both states were guilty in this, since they both did not always comply with agreements made between them. Another reason for the German division was the difference in ideology between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both powers regarded each other as dangerous and acted accordingly, in the sense that they tried to prevent the other from extending his influence in the international sphere. Concluding, one can say that the German division eventually became inevitable because of the above-mentioned reasons.

However, when one studies Cold War historiography, that conclusion is nothing new and is mentioned by several historians. This thesis takes that conclusion into account with regard to the German Question, but wants to correct the conclusion many scholars nowadays share. Germany was of potentially vital importance to both the Americans and the Soviets. Both powers tried to influence it as much as possible, and tried to make the Germans share their ideology. What this thesis wants to add to the debate, is the fact that the CIA reports prove that the perception of the Soviets in the eyes of the Americans, have heavily shaped American foreign policy with regard to the Soviet Union. The fact that the CIA itself mentioned the ‘war of nerves’ that was busy after the Second World War, is proof of their consciousness of this difficult situation.

After the Second World War, the focus of the United States still was on Germany and Europe. The war of nerves, that in a sense was the same as the Cold War, shaped the stance the United States took in dealing with the German Question. It was because of the fear of the Soviets and their communist ideology that the Americans at a certain point did not want to cooperate anymore with the Soviets. Domestic pressure of several American officials, who

contributed to the war of nerves, was also an important factor in this. The article of George Kennan is a good example of how the Americans saw the Soviets. This perception of the other made the Cold War as long as it eventually was. The anxiousness when dealing with the Soviets also becomes clear in the countless misinterpretations of Soviet actions. The CIA itself admits in its reports that the interpretations of several actions *maybe* were correct. The best example of how wrong these interpretations could become, was the fact that the CIA and after them the United States as a whole, thought that there was a Soviet expansion policy. Scholars nowadays agree that there had never been a post-war Soviet expansion policy, because Stalin had become afraid for war after the terrible effects the Second World War had on the Soviet Union. He would have liked to see as much communist states around him as possible, but he never had plans to violently force other states in the world to take over his communist ideology.

And this is where this thesis adds a new perspective to the debate; yes, in a sense the German split was inevitable because of the differences between the United States and the Soviet Union and so on, but, these differences and difficulties were heavily influenced by information of the CIA on the Soviet Union that was often wrong. This contributed to the image of the Soviets in the eyes of the Americans and eventually made the birth of two Germanies possible. The war of nerves was based on wrong information and lack of knowledge of the other. Defensive actions of the Soviets were interpreted as offensive actions and made the Americans harsher in their foreign policy.

Why Germany became the focal point of the Cold War is thus clear: Germany was of vital importance to Europe and had a potentially big role in the recovery of the continent. Both the Soviets and the Americans recognised this importance, and tried to gain as much control over Germany as possible. Even though the Allied Control Council was designed to provide for inter-Allied cooperation, it was not powerful enough to prevent the personal agendas of the Americans and the Soviets to affect inter-Allied relations. These agendas were incompatible, and pointed Germany towards a split into two different states. There are countless reasons for the painful cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union, but this thesis adds to these reasons that the image of the other was of vital importance when dealing with matters concerning the international sphere. This image of the other was built on information that was often wrong and this information was in its turn based on interpretations that were wrong too.

This made it very difficult for the Americans to deal with the Soviets, since the information the CIA gave its government, warned for the perceived danger of the Soviet Union.

In further research, the effect of the CIA on American policy has to be more thoroughly researched. The effect of the reports of the KGB on Soviet policy also has to be researched, since this form of information also heavily influenced the image that the Soviets had of the Americans. Espionage has been infamous during the Cold War and the post-war years. Therefore, it is remarkable that in Cold War historiography it plays such a small role. This thesis has intended to make use of the materials on the CIA and to consider them when studying the German Question. It proves that the perception of the other was a very important aspect to the failure of post-war inter-Allied cooperation and the eventual split of Germany into two different states.

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## Images

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