

GERMAN-SOVIET RELATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my mother, without whose encouragement, it would not have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis tests the proposition that a bipolar distribution of power is more stable than a multipolar distribution. It does this by examining the dynamics of German-Soviet relations during two historical periods: one multipolar, from 1917 to 1939, and one bipolar from 1948 to 1973.

The thesis concludes that three examples of German-Soviet cooperation during the multipolar period--the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Rapallo Treaty, and the Molotov-von Rippentrop Pact--demonstrate that the freedom of movement afforded by a diffuse distribution of power can lead to miscalculation, miscommunication and unintended consequences. Alternatively, efforts in German-Soviet relations during a bipolar period to resolve issues arising from the division of Europe--such as the Stalin Note of 1952, the Second Berlin Crisis 1958-1961, and Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik 1969-1973--demonstrate the tendency within a tight bipolar system to solidify and reaffirm the established balance of power.

GERMAN-SOVIET RELATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the German Democratic Republic broke open the Berlin Wall. The following year, the Soviet Union approved the reunification of Germany as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union had dissolved into fifteen separate states and the Communist Party had relinquished official permanent governing status in each of the former member countries of the Warsaw Pact. These events occurred with amazingly little bloodshed and with surprisingly little enthusiasm by the Soviet bloc's supposedly mortal enemies in NATO.

Only three years prior to these events, Anton DePorte republished his thought-provoking, but eminently reasonable, 1977 essay. In it he maintained that the division of Europe was so stable, and so much in the interest of those with the power to change it, that it would likely last into the next century. DePorte based his thesis on three points. The first was the decline and death of the classical European state system. The second was the transformation of the system, as a result of the Cold War, into a bipolar system, that was essentially extra-European, in that the two poles were the Soviet Union and the United States. The third was

that by 1977 this system was likely to continue as a power relationship independent of a continuance of the Cold War.¹

DePorte acknowledged the value of the classical European state system, which has been credited with assuring the continued existence of the major states for over four centuries through the constant shifting of alliances, which prevented the balance of power from moving permanently in favor of any one state or coalition.² In the end, the system failed, of course. DePorte argued that it was unable to contain the power of Germany after its unification in 1871, and German power finally had to be subdued in World War II by the United States and the Soviet Union.³ The post-1945 system, roughly symmetrical with the United States and the Soviet Union as poles, rested on the division of Germany between the two camps. This division of Germany, and the division of Europe, as a consequence, satisfied the

¹A.W. DePorte, Europe between the Superpowers: The Enduring Balance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. ix.

²DePorte fixes the start of the balance of power system to 1494, when Charles VIII of France invaded Italy. In response, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire also became involved. Ibid., p. 2.

³DePorte credits Alexis de Toqueville with predicting, as early as the 1830s, that the America and Russia were destined one day each to control half the world. However, DePorte argues that De Toqueville only predicted the result (American and Russian ascendancy). It remains DePorte's theme that it was German power, not American or Russian, that caused the end of the European system. Ibid., p. 9.

interests of all the parties that had the power to alter the system.⁴

What can be said, then, of DePorte's thesis given that the Cold War division of Europe came to an end, thereby confounding his prediction? One side of the bipolar arrangement unilaterally abandoned the most recognizable aspects of the system only three years after DePorte confirmed his earlier analysis! One can begin by saying that in most ways DePorte was right; the bipolar division of Europe was remarkably stable. The first half of the 20th century saw two tremendous general European wars that spread to various theaters around the world, but the division of Europe into opposing blocs in 1948 lasted forty years without an inch of territory passing from one to the other. For forty years the Cold War featured arms races, threats, ideological animosity, continuance of superpower rivalry into non-European spheres, every conceivable effort by one side to gain advantage over the other, and the constant fear of thermonuclear war, but the result was a remarkably stable system. At the base of each side's warlike efforts throughout the previous forty years had been the sure knowledge that if either side let down its defenses for even a moment, the other side would instantly realize its much ballyhooed imperialistic designs. Despite this, the bipolar system ended unilaterally and with superpower cooperation. The

⁴Ibid., p. x-xii.

actual events showed how far the protagonists had come to value stability and the mutual recognition of a division that guaranteed peace. DePorte's prediction was far less unimaginable and fantastic than the actual events of the past five years.

The bipolar distribution of power ended, surprisingly, but we can still ask if DePorte was correct to argue that the classical balance of power system failed because it could not contain German power and that the bipolar division of Europe was more stable because it could contain German power? DePorte did not really address the issues of multipolarity or bipolarity as abstract or general concepts but discussed only what actually had occurred in Europe over the previous sixty years. However, the question of the superiority of either the bipolar or multipolar arrangement at reducing the outbreak of war has been discussed intermittently by others during the Cold War period without an agreed conclusion. Michael Haas, for example, undertook an "empirical" examination of multipolar, bipolar and unipolar systems which tested them for longevity, frequency of outbreak of war, and intensity of war. He found that unipolar systems were the most pacific, but were almost obsolete. He found wars to break out less frequently in bipolar systems, but to last longer. Multipolar systems

were said to sport the more frequent wars, involving more violence and more countries than bipolar systems.⁵

Jack Levy conducted a similar examination fifteen years later and also found that the data showed bipolarity to be more stable than multipolarity. Using his improved set of examples, however, he found unipolar systems to be the least stable.⁶ Karl Deutsch and J. David Singer, on the other hand, provided a logical explanation for why bipolarity could be presumed to be less likely than multipolarity to lead to stability:

In such a mobile multipolar world, no government needs to fear a moderate decline in national power as potentially disastrous. It can survive as a second-class power as safely or precariously as it did as a first class one, provided only that it joins in time the appropriate new alliance or alignment. Arms increases by a rival power, which in a bipolar world might pose a fatal threat, might call in a multipolar world for little more than a quick adjustment of alliances.⁷

For a system to be stable, according to their hypothesis, Deutsch and Singer required only that it retain its essential characteristics: that it allow no state to become dominant, that it allow most members of the system to

⁵Michael Haas, "International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity," American Political Science Review, Volume 64, 1970, p. 121.

⁶Jack S. Levy, "The Polarity of the System and International Stability: An Empirical Analysis," Polarity and War: The Changing Structure of International Conflict, Ned Sabrosky, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 58.

⁷Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer, "Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," World Politics, Volume 16, 1964, p. 403.

survive over the life of the system, and that it allow no large scale war to break out.⁸

"The balance of power has been transformed from a multipolar into a bipolar one," lamented Hans J. Morgenthau in 1967, a fan of the classical, multipolar system. "As a result, the flexibility of the balance of power, and, with it, its restraining influence upon the power aspirations of the main protagonists on the international scene have disappeared."⁹ Morgenthau noted, "This reduction in the number of nations that are able to play a major role in international politics has had a deteriorating effect on the operation of the balance of power."¹⁰

One aspect of the classical system Morgenthau felt was missing from the new system was that of the "balancer," a role frequently ascribed to Great Britain in continental European affairs during the 18th and 19th centuries. Even Europe could not play this role between the United States and the Soviet Union in the period after 1945 because it was at once both the battlefield and the prize of victory. "They [European states] are permanently interested in the victory of one or the other side."¹¹

⁸Ibid., p. 390.

⁹Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 336.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 334.

¹¹Ibid., p. 340.

One benefit Morgenthau saw in multipolarity was its complexity, and the obstacle it presented to any one state mastering a given situation. He wrote, "The greater the number of active players, the greater the number of possible combinations and the greater also the uncertainty as to the combinations that will actually oppose each other and as to the role individual players will actually perform in them."¹² But this uncertainty, cited by Morgenthau as being helpful, was noted by Richard Rosecrance as making foreign policy more difficult, and outcomes less predictable:

Multipolarity, then, raises the difficulty of policy-making. Results may be altogether unforeseen; choice becomes very complex. Since multipolarity raises incalculability, the system finds it more difficult to achieve stable results. War may occur, not through a failure of will, but through a failure of comprehension.¹³

While Haas and Levy purported to show the relative stability of bipolar systems empirically, Kenneth Waltz actually sought to explain this phenomenon. Like DePorte, Waltz's admiration for the bipolar system was based primarily on the unchanging distribution of power in Europe during the postwar period. He proffered several reasons why this system might lead to more stability than the classical multipolar system. One reason was the presence of a clearly superior power within each alliance system. "As Machiavelli

¹²Ibid., p. 335.

¹³R. N. Rosecrance, "Bipolarity, Multipolarity and the Future," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Volume 10, 1966, p. 320.

and Bismarck well knew, an alliance system requires an alliance leader; and leadership can most easily be maintained where the leader is superior in power."¹⁴ With two superpowers, Waltz wrote, there were no peripheries; bipolar division was capable of transforming almost every conflict worldwide. Waltz also believed that competition expanded in such a system to include non-military factors; the economy became an important indicator of ability to sustain power, as was domestic support. There was an unwillingness to accept even small territorial losses to the other side. The constant presence of pressure to guard against any gain of advantage by potential opponents, described by Waltz as inherent in a bipolar system, was, contrarily, lauded by Morgenthau as a trait in a multipolar balance of power. According to Waltz, threats were worth turning into crises if they served to prevent war later. "Admittedly, cases also occur in a multipolar world, but the dangers are diffused, responsibilities unclear and the definition of vital interests easily obscured."¹⁵

If Waltz is correct, therefore, the remarkable stability of the division of Europe from 1949 until 1989 therefore may have had dimension other than that recognized by DePorte. Rather than just being a fortuitous period during

¹⁴Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," Daedalus, Volume 93, 1964, p. 881.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 884.

which Germany was divided between two superpowers, it may have been an era when the whole world enjoyed the relative benefits of bipolarity.

According to DePorte, the main problem facing the multi-polar European balance of power after 1871 was the presence of uncontainable German power. If this, and not the multipolar distribution of power itself, was the main threat to relative peace and stability, then it is surprising in retrospect that such a system could have been allowed to collapse in 1989 without more effort being made to contain what had been the system's primary threat all along. However, the lesson of the Cold War might be, instead, that a bipolar system is better able to hold in check opposing forces than is the classical multipolar balance of power.

One way to test this proposition is to review the role which German-Soviet relations played in two periods of recent history, one in which the balance of power was multipolar, and one in which it was bipolar. Relations between the Soviet Union and Germany during the entire Soviet period resulted in several episodes that had implications for the whole continent and the international system. Each of these episodes was approached by the Soviet and German statesmen with more than the minimal amounts of national ambition, creativity, flexibility and a healthy sense of state survival. Yet how these episodes played out is strikingly different across systems, and the sum of them

lends credence to those who argue that bipolar systems are more stable than multipolar ones. Three of the most important episodes during the period before the Second World War, when the state system was multipolar, demonstrated the inability of the system to maintain the status quo. Conversely, three episodes during the Cold War, initiated for the purpose of undermining the position of the other side of the bipolar split, instead led to a more abiding dedication to that split and its agreed parameters.

Morgenthau cited uncertainty as a restraining influence characteristic of a multipolar system. Rosecrance found this uncertainty led to unintended consequences. Waltz said that in crises under such circumstances dangers appear diffused, responsibilities unclear, and vital interests obscured. The course of negotiation, posturing, decision-making and risk-calculation surrounding the decision of Germany and the Soviet Union to cooperate at three crucial points from the end of the First World War to the beginning of the Second reveals the characteristics of multipolarity. The examples were the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Rapallo and the Molotov-von Rippentrop Pact. The results were the unintended consequences cited by Rosecrance and the obscured vital interests cited by Waltz.

Waltz similarly delineated the characteristics of a bipolar system. Lesser powers would be led unavoidably to follow of the leader of their respective alliance. There

would be no real peripheries; every venue could be an opportunity for bipolar conflict. The levels of competition would increase to include régime legitimacy and economic performance. There would be an unwillingness to accept even small territorial losses, and the tendency would be to allow threats turn into crises. These factors cited by Waltz, characterized German (both East and West) and Soviet actions during the Cold War in response to attempts to alter the status quo. They are found in the reactions to the Stalin Note of March 10, 1952, the Second Berlin Crisis, and Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik.

PART ONE

THE INTERWAR PERIOD

There were no two countries on the European continent with more reason to fear and distrust each other on ideological grounds during the interwar period than Germany and Soviet Russia. Germany during this period was led by military and industrial élites, under aristocratic, then bourgeois-republican, and finally, mass-movement fascist guises. Tsarist Russia fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks who nationalized Russia's industry, politicized a rebuilt military, and proclaimed the coming of an international, anti-imperialist revolution of the proletariat.

Despite the rather severe incompatibility between the world views and ultimate objectives of the leaders of these two countries, the dictates of realpolitik necessitated that at key junctures from the latter days of the First World War to the opening salvos of the Second, German and Soviet leaders put aside ideological animosity and struck deals with each other to the disadvantage of the leading Western European powers--Britain and France. These examples of cooperation had very serious consequences for the multipolar balance of power.

Of these arrangements, those embodied in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Rapallo Treaty, and the Molotov-von Rippentrop Pact signalled the greatest threats to international stability.

CHAPTER I
BREST-LITOVSK

Before the First World War had concluded its third year, Tsarist Russia's internal political structure collapsed and the three-hundred year reign of the Romanov dynasty came to an abrupt end. Relying on the continuity of the few popular, non-aristocratic structures the Empire possessed, a provisional government was formed from the ranks of the Duma in March 1917, and the new government tried to pursue the war against the Central Powers to a victorious conclusion.

V.I. Lenin returned from his Swiss exile in April. Upon arrival in Petrograd he called for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the granting of all power to the workers' soviets, where the power of the Bolsheviks was greatest. With the army in full retreat in the face of German advances along the entire front, the Bolsheviks saw their opportunity in October and seized control of the government. They promised the war-weary population that a Bolshevik coup would result in further workers' revolts abroad and a just, painless peace. According to Kennan, "The principal significance (of the coup) was seen by its authors to lie in its quality as a prelude to that collapse

of all European imperialism in which they were primarily interested."¹⁶ But the revolution in Petrograd and Moscow did not immediately result in workers' revolts in the capitals of the other warring parties. This made the position of the fledgling Bolshevik régime extremely difficult. Having promised the populace peace in exchange for power, the Bolsheviks risked going the way of the provisional government if they too tried to keep Russia in the disastrous conflict. But worse than that, staying in the war was not only not a viable political option, it was no longer even a military one. The disintegration of the Russian Army had been deliberately encouraged and pursued by the Bolsheviks as part of their strategy for gaining power,¹⁷ for it demonstrated at once the hopelessness of the counterrevolutionary cause and the power the masses could wield by refusing to obey orders. It also destroyed the most potent weapon the government might have used against the Bolshevik insurgency. But the price to be paid--inheriting a nation almost completely undefended against a powerful invader--was onerous. The Bolsheviks had no choice but to sue for peace and hope for the best.

The Germans immediately sensed that Russia's necessary withdrawal from the war could not have come at a better time

¹⁶George F. Kennan, Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1941 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1960), p. 12.

¹⁷Ibid.

for them. Army Commander Erich Ludendorff had already decided to seek the conclusion of the war on the Western Front before American troops could arrive on the battlefields in great numbers. To accomplish this, he wished to transfer most of the German Army in Russia to the Western Front.¹⁸ Besides augmenting the forces in the west required to balance the recent addition of America to the Western Allies, Germany also needed a quick conclusion to the war in order to meet the needs of its malnourished, war-weary population. Not only would the Russian withdrawal bring victory nearer in the military sense, but the prospect of foodstuffs coming from the Russian steppes brought hope that the German population would receive the sustenance necessary for the final push. For this reason, as well as the desire to contain Bolshevism and promote Germany's imperial designs, Germany also sought the "liberation" of some of the Russian Empire's non-Russian provinces.

So while the Soviet government called on all the warring countries to conclude a general armistice, German Chancellor Hertling spoke to the Reichstag on November 28, 1917, of Germany's intention to safeguard the "right to self-determination" for the peoples of Poland, Courland and Lithuania. Couched in almost Wilsonian terms, this declaration was a tactical maneuver to detach these areas from

¹⁸Winfried Baumgart, Deutsche Ostpolitik 1918: Von Brest-Litowsk bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1966), p. 14.

Russia and attach them to Germany. Poland had already been recognized by decrees of the Kaiser on November 5, 1916, and Lithuania and Courland were more or less under German control by the fall of 1917.¹⁹

The Soviet government had no choice but to negotiate. According to historian Wheeler-Bennett: "The whim of history willed that the representatives of the most revolutionary régime ever known should sit at the same diplomatic table with representatives of the most reactionary military caste among all ruling classes."²⁰ The stage was set for a series of negotiations which carried enormous risks for the involved parties, more so for the Bolsheviks, but promised mutual advantage. The lure of the immediate advantage promised was great enough to transcend considerations of ideology and long-term objectives.

The negotiations proceeded in four phases, with the Soviet position becoming more desperate at each stage.²¹ In late December 1917 an armistice was signed and the two sides began to discuss the terms of a peace treaty. Hoping still that propaganda from the conference table would spark revolution in Germany and Western Europe, the Bolsheviks brashly proposed a general peace with no annexations, no

¹⁹Ibid., p. 15.

²⁰Richard F. Rosser, An Introduction to Soviet Foreign Policy (Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969) p. 96.

²¹Ibid., p. 97.

indemnities, and self-determination of peoples. The Germans announced that they would agree if the Allies would also agree, which they would not. Then the Germans explained that the former tsarist provinces were exercising self-determination by choosing independence with the status of German protectorates.²²

At this point the Bolsheviks began to appreciate how fraught with dangers was the option they had no choice but to pursue--negotiated peace with the Germans. Continuing the armed conflict was neither a political nor military possibility, but the peace with Germany might be so unacceptable to the Bolsheviks politically that its acceptance could lead to their overthrow. The Bolsheviks could not be spared this danger unless the peace were to become a general one, embracing all the parties, or a revolution were to occur in Germany to redirect that country's foreign and military policies radically.²³ Although these occurrences were not quite at hand, the Bolsheviks believed them to be imminent. Therefore, having signed an armistice with the Germans which ended their advance into Russia, the Bolsheviks now saw their interest in delaying a peace treaty and waiting for historical forces to rescue them.

To pursue this policy of intentional delay, the Bolsheviks sent Leon Trotsky to lead the Soviet negotiators at

²²Ibid., p. 97.

²³Kennan, p. 12.

Brest-Litovsk. This phase began on January 9, 1918. Trotsky began his filibuster with revolutionary predictions, propaganda, and attempts to draw the German negotiators into philosophical, ideological, and legalistic discussions. The Germans brought this circus to an end on January 18 when representatives of the Rada, the governing body of Ukraine's recently declared independent republic, arrived. The Germans announced that they would negotiate with the Bolsheviks over a treaty covering the front north of Brest, but they would negotiate with the Rada over the future of Russia south of Brest.²⁴ The hollowness of Trotsky's strategy became readily apparent. He allowed the delegation to be recalled to Petrograd for consultations.

Among the Bolsheviks at this point were three factions. The left faction, led by Bukharin, argued that political costs made peace with the Germans prohibitive. It would give a victory to imperialists and mark the Bolsheviks as traitors to the Russian nation; it was completely out of the question. Bukharin argued for the Bolsheviks to launch a "revolutionary war" immediately against European imperialism. Fearing the German occupation of Petrograd that would certainly result from this foolhardy but romantic proposal, Lenin urged the immediate signing of a peace treaty to give the new régime "breathing space." Trotsky, finding Bukharin's proposal unrealistic and Lenin's unacceptable,

²⁴Rosser, p. 98.

proposed that the Bolsheviks unilaterally declare that they would neither wage war with the Germans nor sign a peace treaty with them.²⁵ Since it seemed less dangerous than resuming the war effort, Lenin agreed to back Trotsky's plan. On February 8, the Germans signed a separate peace with the Rada representatives, but the Bolsheviks drove the Rada out of Kiev the same day. On February 10, Trotsky announced that there would be no war and no peace with the Germans. At first confused by the meaning of Trotsky's declaration, the Germans announced on February 16 that they would resume their advance in two days.²⁶

Russia's ability to show any organized resistance to the new German advance along the entire front was as nonexistent as Lenin had feared, and on February 21 the Germans announced harsher terms. The Bolsheviks made inquiries as to what aid they might receive from Britain and France if they chose to resume the war. Bukharin strenuously objected to receiving any help from the imperialist West. Lenin responded to such concerns, "Please add my vote to those in favor of receiving food and weapons from the Anglo-French imperialist robbers."²⁷ On February 23, seven voted with Lenin in the Bolshevik central committee to sign a treaty

²⁵Ibid., pp. 98-99.

²⁶Ibid., p. 99.

²⁷Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973 (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc. 1974), p. 68.

with the Germans. Four supported Bukharin's proposal to fight on. Four, including Trotsky, abstained.²⁸ Talks resumed on February 27 and treaty was signed March 3. Under the terms of the treaty, the Bolsheviks agreed to the separation from Russia of the Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic provinces, Finland, and the Transcaucasus. For the most part, the German Empire was to have decided the relative level of self-determination of each of these areas.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was a short-lived agreement. It was renounced by the Soviets immediately after Germany signed an armistice on the Western Front on November 11, 1918, but the example it set was profound and the effects lasting. This treaty between German military leaders and Bolshevik revolutionaries might have cost the Allies victory in the First World War, but whilst less damaging than that, it made the task of creating a stable world order on the foundations of a multipolar balance of power after the war much more difficult. Victory in the East, and the near victory in the West that almost occurred as a result in the summer of 1918, gave life to the contention that the German Army, which had not really suffered defeat in the field, had been stabbed in the back by cowardly Social Democrats in Berlin. This notion played a crucial role in fanning the flames of German revanchism in the 1920s and 1930s. As a result, Germany would pay lip service at

²⁸Rosser, p. 100.

times to the Versailles Treaty but would never really adhere to its letter or spirit.

For the West, the Bolsheviks were threatening because of their treachery; they had destroyed Russia as a fighting force against Germany and allowed the transfer of German troop strength to the West. Moreover, they had repudiated tsarist debts and nationalized foreign investments, which continued to be a major source of friction after the war. Bolshevism also represented a major ideological threat to industrialized countries because of its appeal to class warfare. For these reasons, the Allies and Associated Powers sent troops to occupy Russian ports and meddled extensively in the bloody Russian civil war of 1918-1921. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk demonstrated that, absent American help, Britain and France might deal successfully with either Germany or Soviet Russia but could not handle both. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk frustrated Allied desires for a friendly Russia without Bolsheviks and for an unambiguous German defeat. The lack of solid relations with Russia made the efforts of Britain and France to contain German power on a long-term basis extremely difficult.

CHAPTER II

THE RAPALLO TREATY

The Rapallo Treaty of 1922 was one of the most significant steps in the foreign policies of the Weimar Republic and Soviet Russia in the interwar period. It was a response to the failure of the Great Powers to harmonize their interests, and it represented a major blow to the ultimate ability of the Entente to contain the revisionist aims of the Bolsheviks and Germany, and thus guarantee the peace of Versailles.

The Rapallo Treaty of 1922 was a by-product of the Genoa Conference which was convened to deal with the reintegration of Russia into international trade and to bring Germany in as a junior partner in the economic reconstruction of Europe. The European powers failed to prevent the Bolsheviks from establishing power but were successful in their efforts to contain the spread of revolution. They sought to take advantage of changes inside the Soviet Union and the consequent willingness of the Bolsheviks to seek an accommodation with the capitalist powers for the sake of the aid, trade, and investments necessary to revive the Russian economy. Germany sought to participate in the general effort to reinvigorate the world economy and, by demonstrat-

ing that the reparations burden placed on Germany at Versailles was inimical to this goal, to achieve a substantial reduction in that burden. The Bolsheviks were not willing, however, to endanger the political gains of the revolution by becoming the passive object of European imperialism. Nor was Germany willing to help the Entente strengthen its directing role in the international system unless it could demonstrate that the increased ability to protect German interests would be the *quid pro quo* for cooperation.

The Genoa Conference had its immediate origins in the Brussels Conference of October 6-8, 1921, at which twenty-one nations, including Germany but excluding Russia, met to discuss the Soviet request for famine relief and a resumption of economic relations with the capitalist world. The decision made at Brussels and conveyed to the Soviet leadership expressed a willingness to provide famine relief to Russia, but it would be linked to political and economic obligations: the Bolsheviks would have to recognize the debts of tsarist Russia and would have to establish a régime under which future credits would be secure.²⁹

The reply of Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin came on October 28: Russia would expect substantial aid and investments if it agreed to the terms; it required a cessation of intervention against the régime and *de jure* diplomatic

²⁹Carole Fink, The Genoa Conference: European Diplomacy, 1921-1922 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1924), pp. 5-6.

recognition; and there would have to be an international conference to mediate the financial claims of the involved parties.³⁰ This reply was the climax of several important events in Russia in 1921. The first was the defeat of the forces of counterrevolution and the end of foreign intervention. This was followed by a switch from war communism to the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the consolidation of government political, and financial institutions. By then the Soviets had also begun to direct the forces of world proletarian revolution through the Communist International, which would have the effect of enabling the Soviet state to change the role of Communist parties from agents of domestic revolution to surrogates acting in defense of Soviet Russia.

These developments represented a shift by the Bolsheviks away from the immediate overthrow of international capitalism to protecting the Soviet security interests, first by rebuilding the Russian economy and then preventing action against the USSR by a united front of the imperialist powers. These changes resulted from an altered Soviet view of the imminence of world revolution and the success of war communism as a stop-gap measure. The earlier optimism about world revolution was dashed by the failure of the revolutionary war in Poland, the fizzling of the expected revolution in Germany, and the threat posed in the 1921 Kronstadt uprising when the sailors of the great Russian naval base

³⁰Ibid., p. 6.

demanded political freedom for all socialist and anarchist parties.³¹ By 1921 Russia was interested in reaching an accommodation with the capitalists in order to obtain the capital necessary to build the economy, to gain international recognition for the régime, and to build relationships that would allow the Bolsheviks to exploit capitalist contradictions and play one power off against another.

The Weimar Republic at this time was facing a severe economic, and therefore political, crisis because it was unable to meet the demanding reparations schedule set by the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles. When the Allies, through the London Ultimatum of May 1921, put pressure on Germany to step up its efforts to meet its payments, the German cabinet resigned rather than comply with the demands. President Ebert called on Dr. Wirth, a member of the left-wing of the Catholic Center Party, a strong nationalist with the confidence of the German People's Party, to form a new government. Wirth was an advocate of "Erfüllungspolitik," or policy of fulfillment, which had as its goal showing ostentatious compliance with Entente demands in hopes of undermining the will of the Entente to continue imposing the reparations. By demonstrating Germany's good faith and exposing the crippling effects of reparations, it was argued, the Entente could be split. For domestic political reasons, France continued to insist that the reparation

³¹Ibid.

demands were too lenient, while Britain, the United States and the neutrals found them exorbitant. Furthermore, Britain recognized that the demands were inhibiting a revival of the world economy. If the Entente could be split and made unable to agree on policy with regard to Germany, Germany could hope to escape paying most of the reparations while avoiding assaults on its territorial integrity.³²

There were, therefore, general trends leading both the Weimar Republic and Soviet Russia to seek accommodations with the Entente, but other events showed that neither of their respective national interests would be secured by one-sided agreements imposed by the "have" powers against the "have-nots". This mutual realization laid the groundwork for a German-Soviet rapprochement at the expense of the victors of Versailles.

The Soviets feared that they would be faced with a united front of capitalist nations at Genoa that would force the Bolsheviki to recognize tsarist debts. They were even more fearful of an idea advanced by Germany Foreign Minister, Walter Rathenau, that the Western powers should establish a joint international consortium for the purpose of trading with and investing in Soviet Russia. Such a monopoly would eliminate competition among the capitalist powers for concessions from the Soviets and would turn Soviet Russia into a semi-colonial object for exploitation by

³²Ibid., p. 15.

Western capitalists.³³ To the Bolsheviks, the power most likely to want to see a major upheaval against the status quo as laid down in the Treaty of Versailles, was Germany, which became the obvious target of any concerted Soviet effort to break the united front of capitalist powers. According to Gustav Hilger, throughout the efforts during 1921 to establish normal diplomatic relations, the Soviet leaders urged the German policy makers to "answer French and English intransigence and hypocrisy by establishing a friendship of the two major underprivileged nations." But, he said, in the long run the Bolsheviks' threats were probably more effective than their cajoling.³⁴

In Pravda, on December 27, 1921, Bolshevik columnist Karl Radek hinted broadly that the USSR could always adhere to the Versailles Treaty and thereby collect reparations from Germany under the provisions of Article 116, which had to do with the circumstances under which Russia could seek reparations. He assured Germans in private conversations, however, that Soviet Russia would like to avoid this if at all possible. But an article in Izvestiya on February 5, 1922, stepped up the pressure by hinting that Soviet Russia held the fate of the German bourgeoisie in its hands. All Soviet Russia needed to do, the article said, was join with

³³Gustav Hilger and Alfred G. Meyer, The Incompatible Allies: A Memoir-History of German-Soviet Relations 1918-1941 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1953), p. 75.

³⁴Ibid.

the Entente in implementing Article 116, which could be a means of sparking proletarian revolution in Germany because the resulting impoverishment of the Weimar Republic would intensify class conflict. The Soviets should not be sentimental about the fate of the German bourgeoisie, it was argued, because the policies of the Weimar Republic suggested that it was siding with the forces of international capitalism against Soviet Russia. Izvestiya added a note to the bottom of the published article emphasizing that it did not agree with the view of the author.³⁵

Germany had once before recognized that in some areas its interests coincided more with the Bolsheviks than with the Entente when Germany maintained its neutrality in the Soviet-Polish War of 1920. By denying the transfer of French munitions across Germany to Poland, it had shown its unwillingness to assist Entente policies when it perceived them to be inimical to German or German-Soviet interests. This policy assisted the development of German-Soviet relations in that it demonstrated the readiness of Germany to look East when the West was unhelpful; it enhanced the Soviet's recognition of the importance of Germany to the breakup of the united front; it showed the inability of the Entente to enact its policies in Eastern Europe over German objections; and it demonstrated the inability of the Entente to keep Germany under control.

³⁵Ibid., p. 76.

Germany's approach to Soviet Russia did not come about until the fall of 1921 when Erfüllungspolitik was dealt a severe blow by the West's handling of the plebiscite held by the League Council on March 20, 1921 to determine whether Upper Silesia should be part of Germany or Poland. Although a great majority had voted for union with Germany over Poland, the rules of the game were altered by the League Council after the fact so that Germany could keep much of the population of Upper Silesia, but Poland was granted much of the industrial and mining wealth of the region. There followed another crisis in the German cabinet in which Wirth dismissed his anti-Russian Foreign Minister Friedrich Rosen and recalled the pro-Russian Baron Ago von Maltzen from Athens, where Rosen had exiled him, to head the Eastern Department in the Foreign Ministry.³⁶ According to Hilger, the German press correctly interpreted the changes as evidence that the government was considering moves toward establishing relations with Soviet Russia.³⁷

Even the advocates of Ostpolitik³⁸ within the Foreign

³⁶Stephen White, The Origins of Détente: The Genoa Conference and Western-Soviet Relations, 1921-1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 151.

³⁷Hilger and Meyer, p. 74.

³⁸The term "Ostpolitik," while familiar to most for its association with Willy Brandt's foreign policy initiatives, dates at least to the Weimar era. Literally "eastern policy," it is usually used to indicate a German foreign policy orientation seeking Germany's vital interests in the East through political, economic and cultural initiatives. Konrad Adenauer, alternatively, was an advocate of "Westpolitik" even

Ministry hastened to warn against moving too hastily toward an agreement with Russia that would benefit only the Soviets by hurting Germany regarding reparations to the Entente. But, on the other hand, they argued Germany should not permit itself to be abused by the Entente if it chose economic collaboration with the Soviets. And they feared that after a year of the NEP, the Bolsheviks were anxious to conclude a trade deal with the capitalist countries and would not hesitate to use Article 116 if it were a means of securing such trade.³⁹ As the Genoa conference approached, Germany began to believe in a worst case scenario in which the Soviets would acknowledge debts to France, but insist on paying for them out of reparations owed to Russia by Germany under Article 116.

En route to Genoa, Soviet Foreign Minister Georgii Vasil'evich Chicherin stopped in Berlin. His purpose was to try to convince Germany to sign an agreement renouncing any outstanding debts and establishing diplomatic relations. France had given the Germans an inducement to accept the Soviet offer by publicly floating the idea that if the Bolsheviks were to accept responsibility for Tsarist debts,

in the Weimar era. In the table of contents of Deutsche Aussenpolitik in der Ära der Weimarer Republik by Ludwig Zimmermann, published by the Musterschmidt-Verlag of Göttingen in 1958, a corresponding chapter subheading is called "Der Rapallovertrag und die Grundprobleme der deutschen Ostpolitik." A later chapter is entitled, "Ostpolitik nach Locarno."

³⁹Ibid., p. 77.

France would support Russia's application under Article 116 of the Treaty of Versailles to receive reparations from Germany. Fortunately for the Germans, the Bolsheviks had no interest in accepting the Tsar's debts, no matter the incentive, but in Berlin before the conference they let the Germans believe that they were on the point of signing an agreement with France.

Notwithstanding this pressure from the Soviets, Germany hesitated. It feared that signing a separate agreement with the Soviets might spark Allied anger and retribution just as Erfuellungspolitik might be paying dividends. Even though France had already foreclosed the discussion of the reparations, the British might still reopen the question to Germany's advantage, particularly if Germany proved useful in negotiating with the Soviets as part of a united capitalist front. Regardless of last-minute illusions of what the conference in Genoa might hold for a desperate German Republic, one scholar of Chicherin's career has noted:

George Vasil'evich did not travel to Italy with nothing to show for his efforts. The talks in Berlin demonstrated how close the two governments were to an agreement, as they had developed a draft treaty that could be used at the Genoa conference. And the Germans had consented to maintain close contact with the Soviets at Genoa.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Timothy Edward O'Connor, Diplomacy and Revolution: G.V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1918-1930 (Iowa State University Press, 1988), p. 88.

The first week of the Genoa conference, April 10 to 14, quickly resulted in an impasse. In response to the demands for recognition of tsarist debts, Chicherin presented a counterclaim for damages to Russia caused by the Entente intervention which prolonged the Civil War. The figure Chicherin presented to the Entente far exceeded the value of the investments they wished to recoup.

Germany had little success getting any of the powers to discuss the reparations issue. Indeed, the German delegates felt entirely left out of the discussions and were excluded from some of the semi-official conversations between the Soviets and the Entente. They began to fear a deal being struck at Germany's expense.

Over the weekend, the German delegates were invited to the Hotel Imperial near Rapallo, where the Soviet delegation was staying, to discuss the treaty which had nearly been signed in Berlin. After some minor revisions, it was signed on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1922.

In the Treaty of Rapallo, both Germany and Russia renounced any claims against the other relating to reparations from the war. This effectively removed the threat of Article 116. Second, Germany waived its claims to credits extended to the tsarist government and recognized the nationalization of the property of German citizens, although it retained the right to review these claims should Russia satisfy the claims of other powers. Not only did this

establish a break in the capitalists' united front regarding the Soviet's past debts, it also made it unlikely that the Soviets would recognize such claims by other powers. Third, the treaty established diplomatic relations between the Weimar Republic and the Soviet régime, and Germany promised that German contact with Russian counterrevolutionary White missions in Berlin would cease. Fourth, the treaty set up most-favored nation trading status between Weimar Germany and Bolshevik Russia. And last, the German government pledged to promote trade and investments actively in Soviet Russia.

The press conference on Monday morning, August 17, announcing the weekend's developments had a devastating effect on the Genoa conference. Although Lloyd George, the British P.M., had long before predicted that harshness toward Germany would lead it to seek friendship from Bolshevik Russia, such warnings had been dismissed by Clemenceau as an attempt to placate Germany at France's expense.⁴¹ Now that the treaty had been signed, France declared it to be in violation of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and illegal under international law. Others felt that Germany's action violated the spirit of international cooperation, and particularly the spirit in which Germany had been included at Genoa. Although under pressure to disavow the treaty, Germany defended it as a step toward international reconcil-

⁴¹Ibid.

iation and expressed its willingness to place the treaty within the framework of any general international agreement worked out at Genoa. In the event, however, Germany was excluded from the rest of the conference.

One of the charges against the Russo-German treaty at Genoa was that it contained secret military clauses, which both Germany and Russia vigorously denied. No such secret written understanding between the Weimar Republic and Soviet Russia regarding military matters has ever been traced, but the signing of the treaty did help the German military to reach a full understanding with the Bolsheviks on the basis of negotiations (independent of the Weimar government) that had been going on since at least 1921. This military relationship provided the Reichswehr with bases in Soviet Russia where it could try out advanced techniques and weapons prohibited at Versailles. Second, arms factories were established by the German military from which half the output went to the Red Army, and there was an exchange of technical military plans and instructors between the Reichswehr and the Red Army. Because of this clandestine relationship between the German and Soviet military establishments, Germany was able to revive its military strength and circumvent the Versailles restrictions while the Soviets gained access to a sophisticated armaments industry.⁴²

⁴²Ulam, p. 152.

The short-term results of Rapallo were more important for their political and military than their economic implications. Although Soviet trade with Germany increased steadily, it never reached the volumes of the prewar years. Germany's inability to pay reparations led French and Belgian troops to occupy the Ruhr in 1923, but Germany had sent a signal to the Entente at Rapallo that it had other options than just buckling under to Western pressure. During Streseman's leadership of the Weimar Republic in the mid-1920s, the reparations were made more manageable by the Allies, the German economy recovered for a while. Germany signed the Locarno Treaty, and it joined the League of Nations. While developing secure relations with the Entente, however, Germany also continued to turn eastward, cultivating trade and military relationships with the Soviet régime.

The German Ambassador in Moscow, Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau used the terms "spirit of Rapallo" and "community of fate" to describe German-Soviet relations after 1922. He shared Chicherin's view that as vanquished nations the two countries had to cooperate to prevent political domination by the victors of the war.⁴³

The Soviets were considered the major victors for their ability to hold their own diplomatically. The deal with Germany provided the basis for trade agreements and official

⁴³O'Connor, p. 95.

diplomatic recognition from other European countries, though relations continued to be shaky. Adam Ulam wrote that the Treaty of Rapallo was "the most important formal step in Soviet policy between Brest-Litovsk and the Molotov-Rippentrop Agreement of 1939."⁴⁴

Rapallo was the first step toward overturning the order set up at Versailles. The treaty broke the diplomatic and economic isolation with which Bolshevism had been faced, making it possible for Soviet Russia to deal with capitalist countries separately, and to try to play them off against one another. More importantly, it facilitated a Soviet relationship with Weimar Germany that allowed Germany to rebuild its military strength and escape some of the restrictions of the Versailles settlement. The obvious ultimate object of this alliance was to weaken Poland, which was France's principal instrument for containing both Germany and Soviet Russia.

Bolshevism was the mortal enemy of both Imperial and Nazi Germany and posed the greatest internal threat to the Weimar Republic almost until its collapse, yet both Germany and Soviet Russia found that their opposition to the European *status quo* allowed them to risk working together. Because the system was multipolar, Germany and Soviet Russia could not be stopped from playing a part in the balance of power. There was considerable uncertainty on the part of

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 149.

Germany at Genoa as to what Britain and France would allow. And because both Germany and Soviet Russia wished to increase power relative to the others, Britain and France were unable to clearly identify which would ultimately be the greater threat.

CHAPTER III

THE MOLOTOV-VON RIPPEMONT PACT

The final and most famous example of German-Soviet cooperation, leading to devastating consequences for much of the world, was the agreement to divide Poland and establish "spheres of influence" in the rest of eastern Europe. By the 1930's both Germany and Soviet Russia had acquired leaders whose aggressive goals were logical extensions of the subtler attempts at subterfuge pursued by more moderate governments during the 1920's. For example, if, for the Communist movement, reality had dictated that the Bolshevik régime in Russia be given breathing space, legitimacy, protection from foreign intervention, and a chance to industrialize, with foreign help if possible, then it was reasonable for Stalin to demand that the Communist International relegate revolution in other countries to the back burner whenever this was in the interest of Soviet foreign policy. And if "socialism in one state" was going to be the vehicle through which capitalism would be vanquished, then Soviet Russia was justified in seeking to reestablish control over previous imperial provinces. Rather than seek direct confrontation with imperialist powers, Stalin sought to protect the Soviets from involvement in a war while hoping

that the powers to the West would engage in weakening fratricidal conflict.

Similarly, one might sympathize with Germany which, under the Weimar Republic, had continuously tried to undermine the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and reestablish itself as a great power with spheres of influence like any other great power. And if the right to seek a revision of the borders to the east had always been a legitimate Weimar goal, then it was no less so after the National Socialists out-maneuvered more traditional conservative elements and seized control of the state in 1933. A.J.P. Taylor concluded, "In principle and doctrine, Hitler was no more wicked than many other contemporary statesmen. In wicked acts he outdid them all."⁴⁵

The British and French continued to rely on collective security to forestall the use of war to change international boundaries, but with modifications. By the 1930's many in the west had begun to concede that the peace imposed in 1919 had been altogether too harsh. Tolerance grew for efforts by Germany to seek revisions in areas where the rights of German nationals had been infringed or where Germany might be denied the usual right to self-defense accorded any other state. At the same time, however, France tried to bolster its alliances with the objects of Germany's revisionist

⁴⁵A.J.P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961), p. 71.

claims to the east, especially Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia in 1935. With the latter three, France established a "Little Entente" calling for action should any party to the pact be attacked. After Germany occupied the Rhineland in 1936, France invested in a series of heavy fortifications on the German frontier as a defensive measure.

Hitler's fears, as he began the process of revising Germany's borders to the east, were that Britain and France would go to war before German armed forces were strong enough and that the Soviets would be on the Anglo-French side. Under no circumstances did he want to fight France, Britain, and Soviet Russia at the same time. Indeed, on the occasion of each advance, Hitler gambled that he had manipulated the situation so that war would not result.

Conversely, Stalin's greatest fear was that Britain and France would stay neutral while Germany launched an invasion to the east. This fear was heightened after Britain and France failed to prevent the reoccupation of the Rhineland and allowed German and Italian intervention to turn the tide in the Spanish Civil War. Knowing that all of Hitler's remaining known desiderata lay to the east, by the middle of 1936 the Soviet government was already seriously concerned over the likely failure of collective security.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Kennan, p. 91.

By supporting the Republicans in Spain and by being the only country offering aid to Czechoslovakia during the Munich Crisis, albeit under provisos that clearly could not be met, Stalin hoped to signal to Britain and France that there would be Soviet help in containing the Nazi menace.

After Germany had succeeded in changing its borders with Austria, Czechoslovakia and Lithuania, Hitler's attention turned next to Poland, the most formidable neighbor to the east. He offered to support Poland's claim to the Ukraine in exchange for a peaceful cession of Danzig and the Corridor, which Poland rejected.⁴⁷ It then became necessary for Germany to ascertain the reactions of Britain, France and Soviet Russia were Poland to be invaded. Hitler believed that the British and French would go to war over Poland only if they could be guaranteed that the Soviets would also. However, since it was in the Soviets' best interest for Germany to fight Britain and France without Russia's involvement, only a direct attack on Soviet territory could have enlisted Stalin on the side of the Western Allies, and this would not be possible until Poland and Romania were under German control.⁴⁸

On March 10, 1939, Stalin gave a famous address before the XVIIIth Communist Party Congress. Although read by some

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 96.

⁴⁸James E. McSherry, Stalin, Hitler and Europe, Volume I: The Origins of World War II 1933-1939 (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968), p. 230.

to indicate a readiness to strike a deal with Germany, Ulam interprets the speech as an attempt to draw out the Western powers, citing Stalin's usual use of taunts, false expressions of self-confidence, and mere insinuations of rapprochement with Germany. "'We don't need you, but you may need us; if so hurry up' is the most sensible translation of what Stalin was saying."⁴⁹ However brave Stalin made himself appear, he still had no guarantee that Britain and France would not stand idly by while Hitler invaded Poland and then the Soviet Union, just as they had surrendered when faced with every previous Nazi demand. Weakened by Stalin's purges, the Red Army in 1939 was no match for the Wehrmacht.

Then on March 31, Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, unilaterally guaranteed that Britain would intervene if Poland were attacked. Ulam concluded that this statement made possible the whole train of events leading up to the conclusion of a pact between the Nazis and the Soviets. "On its face," he wrote, "the British Government's pledge guaranteed Poland; in fact, its timing and circumstances provided a guarantee to the U.S.S.R. and doomed the Polish state."⁵⁰ Had the guarantee not been made, Stalin had no assurance that Germany's imminent invasion of Poland would not leave the U.S.S.R. alone as the next victim of Hitler's aggression. With the guarantee, Stalin could rest

⁴⁹Ulam, p. 263-4.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 267.

assured that once Poland was invaded, Britain would go to war, with or without the help of the Soviets. Chamberlain might have withheld his guarantee as a means of forcing Stalin into making a guarantee to Poland a necessary condition of alliance. During the subsequent months, the Soviets, through their diplomacy, endeavored to exact maximum benefits from the European crisis by negotiating simultaneously both with the West and with Germany.⁵¹

At first, the Soviet feigned indifference and antipathy toward the British guarantee, but the Germans made no diplomatic move toward the Soviets.⁵² Then the Soviets began negotiations with the West over guarantees to various eastern European states and on April 28, Hitler renounced the 1934 Non-Aggression Pact with Poland and the Anglo-German naval treaties. Stalin replaced Litvinov with Molotov as Soviet Foreign Minister May 3. This worked as a gambit to intensify interest by both Germany and the West.⁵³ Supposedly, Litvinov was the proponent of collective security and Molotov, like Stalin, was a realist.

By August 1939, Hitler had decided to conclude a pact with Stalin, accepting his foreign minister's assurances that the announcement of such a pact would cause Britain and

⁵¹Louis Fischer, Russia's Road From Peace to War: Soviet Foreign Relations 1917-1941 (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 329.

⁵²Ulam, p. 268-9.

⁵³Ibid., p. 272.

France to abandon their commitment to Poland. The Soviets continued negotiations with the West, attempting to determine for certain that war would break out if Germany invaded Poland.

Each side had a primary and a fall back position. Stalin's first choice was to have Germany fight Britain and France, with the U.S.S.R. neutral; but since it might not be possible to avoid a German invasion of Russia, he needed to guarantee that Britain and France would participate in such a war as Soviet allies. Hitler desired that the West simply leave Poland to its fate. If this could not be accomplished, then he needed the neutrality of the Soviets to avoid a two-front war. Britain and France hoped that their guarantee to Poland and a Soviet alliance would dissuade Hitler from invading Poland. Failing this, Britain and France needed the Soviets as allies in a war.⁵⁴

During August, Hitler was frantic for an agreement, because the invasion of Poland was scheduled for August 26. According to one witness of the Russian and German diplomatic exchange, "Once the many counter arguments had been disposed of both went ahead with surprising enthusiasm."⁵⁵ When Hitler, on August 21, demanded an audience for his foreign minister, von Rippentrop, Stalin, not wishing to push Germany too far, agreed to conclude a pact on

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 271-2.

⁵⁵Hilger and Meyer, p. 288.

August 23. Secret protocols outlined the division of Poland and the Baltic States between German and Soviet spheres. Germany also recognized a Soviet "interest" in Finland and parts of Rumania. By this agreement Germany completed the revision of its borders to the east while avoiding a two-front war. The Soviets likewise recovered most of the imperial provinces lost after World War I and the subsequent wars and interventions. The *cordon sanitaire* meant to contain Bolshevism from the rest of Europe was completely removed.

Notwithstanding the new threats to the Soviets and the Germans that the outbreak of war brought, the cooperation exhibited in the Molotov-von Rippentrop Pact provided each party with the best possible opportunity to revise its place in the international order. This cooperation gave Britain and France the worst possible position from which to defend the status quo. Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were clearly dangerous enemies of each other on political and ideological grounds, as would be borne out by the subsequent German invasion of the U.S.S.R. and the later Sovietization of all of Eastern and Central Europe, including large parts of Germany; yet these animosities were laid aside in 1939, as they were in 1918, and again in 1922.

But the opportunity to cooperate could not be ignored because both countries had a stake in revising international order. With three sides to the maneuvering, the parties

were unable to predict accurately the consequences of chances taken. Because the system was multipolar, no one side could completely trust another because of the very real danger of betrayal. Estimations of the effect and durability of cooperation among one's enemies were shaky. This led to behavior born of miscalculation that likely would not have occurred under a more rigid distribution of power.

PART TWO
THE COLD WAR PERIOD

From the elimination of Russia as a player during the First World War until the outbreak of the Second, international relations in Europe had a distinctive three-sided nature, continuing at crucial moments German nationalist revisionism and Soviet Russian revolution against Anglo-French attempts to maintain the status quo. By the beginning of the Cold War, the German side had been eliminated and politics in Europe took on a distinctly two-sided nature. The Soviet Union's forces occupied all of Eastern Europe and much of the heart of the continent, guaranteeing friendly, nonthreatening governments to itself in each of the occupied lands. To meet the Soviet threat, the USA did not disengage from the other half of the continent. Germany quickly became, through its respective occupied spheres, a factor on both sides of the equation.

The Cold War was initially and often characterized by the worst outward belligerence and distrust, posing, it seemed, a grave threat to the peace and the future of humanity. Yet throughout several incidents regarding the future of Germany, and especially its relations with the Soviet Union, all sides chose the stability of the existing

order over the uncertainty of another in which either one side of the other might benefit or a third side might be created. Among these incidents were the reactions of the various parties to the Stalin Note of March 10, 1952, the Second Berlin Crisis, 1958-1961, and the series of treaties resulting from Willy Brandt's "Ostpolitik," 1970-1973.

CHAPTER IV
THE STALIN NOTE

By the time the Soviet Union's note of March 10, 1952, was issued, proposing a final settlement of the questions of German reunification, a peace treaty, and the withdrawal of occupation troops, all the involved parties had made commitments knowing that their policies would make the division of Europe into two camps a reality for the coming decades. The Second World War was fresh in everyone's mind and the Cold War was in full swing. No state was about to make any concessions likely to undermine its own position of security.

The Soviet note of March 10 called for Four-Power negotiations leading to a peace treaty with a unified Germany. It suggested the creation of an all-German commission composed of delegates representing the two established German states to write a constitution for a unified Germany. It also conceded the right of that state to have armed forces necessary for its defenses, so long as Germany was precluded by treaty from entering an alliance directed against any power which had participated in the war against it. In a rather blatant appeal to German nationalists, the Soviets called for the restoration of political and civilian

rights to all former soldiers and former Nazis not currently serving prison sentences.

This was not the first time a final settlement of German issues had been proposed. In April 1946, the United States had offered to conclude a Four-Power treaty on Germany providing for the demilitarization of Germany and Germany's exclusion from alliances, but the Soviets refused. The Americans and British merged their zones in January 1947. By the end of the year the Soviets were proposing the withdrawal of all foreign troops, but the Western Powers reaffirmed the need to maintain the occupation. The Soviet Union withdrew from the Allied Control Council, the body in which all decisions concerning Germany as a whole were made, on March 28, 1948, protesting Western discussions on Germany.

At the London Conference June 7-20, 1948, the Western Powers announced plans for establishing self-government in the three Western zones. On June 23, the Soviet and East European Foreign Ministers declared the London Conference to be in violation of the Potsdam Agreement and called for Four-Power action to establish an all-German government, demilitarization, joint control of the Ruhr, and a continuation of reparations. Along with these demands, all traffic between the Western zones of Berlin and the Western zones of Germany were cut off by Russia and the Berlin Airlift began. There was no further serious discussion of a German settle-

ment until 1950. On the contrary, in the meantime different German governments were established in the Soviet and Western zones.

For the Americans, the Soviet note of March 10, 1952, was a particular annoyance. America had already committed itself to the rearmament of West Germany within the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Soviet note was seen as an attempt to undermine the difficult process of getting Europeans to cooperate and rearm against the USSR.

In the words of Adam Ulam:

Had [the note of March 10] been presented in 1947 or 1948 ... the West would have eagerly seized upon it as a basis for negotiations. But in 1952 it was bound, at least in Washington, to create consternation and the feeling that the Russians were "not playing fair." Here American diplomacy has finally put together a plan for the defense of Europe and the construction of a sizable army--in the process overcoming American neo-isolationism, British apprehensions, French suspicions, and German touchiness--only to find the wretched Russians with yet another beguiling plan, again hinting obscurely that under certain conditions they just might throw their East German régime to the wolves.⁵⁶

Too many things had happened in the recent past, from the American view, to make a deal with the Soviets over Germany possible. First of all there was the Berlin Crisis of 1948-1949, designed to discourage the Western Allies from establishing a government in their newly fused zones. From June 1948 to May 1949 the Soviets denied the Western allies road, rail, or water links to their zones in Berlin, requir-

⁵⁶Ulam, p. 535.

ing them to supply the city by airlift. The Western powers were most perturbed by their weak military position in Western Europe, which made a more forceful response to the blockade unwise. Also in 1948, the Soviets participated in a *coup d' état* against the Czechoslovak government, and the other "people's democracies" in Eastern Europe were transformed into socialist republics. Then, in 1949, the Chinese Communists drove Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang off the Chinese mainland. These developments made American policymakers extremely reluctant to come to any sort of deal with the Soviets which might lead to a withdrawal of the American presence from Germany. It was the invasion of South Korea by the forces of the Communist North in 1950 that convinced the Americans that the West would have to broaden its available resources for the worldwide containment of Communism; therefore Germany would have to be rearmed and made part of the West's European forces.

In September 1950, the Western powers ended the state of war with the Federal Republic of Germany and pledged to study a means for the "participation the German Federal Republic in the common defense of Europe."⁵⁷ What was required was a revision of the Occupation Statute signed with West Germany the year before and a means by which Germany could rearm without France feeling threatened. But

⁵⁷Evan Luard, ed., The Cold War: A Reappraisal (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1964), p. 26.

America was determined to rearm Germany within the Western camp even if it meant that the Soviets remained in occupation of their zone and Germany was permanently divided.

France had apprehensions about any sort of German strength. It had, at various times, supported Soviet demands for severe reparations, and the detachment and internationalization of the Ruhr. It had favored putting permanent limits on Germany's industrial output and wanted the Saar permanently attached to France. France was opposed to German rearmament of any kind, even within the framework of the European Defense Community in which German soldiers would be under the direct command of the Western powers. But France was not calling the shots. When the British wanted to revive the German economy to prevent their sector from becoming a permanent economic drain, and when America wanted to rearm Germans to prevent the defense of Germany from being a permanent drain of military resources, France could kick and fuss and protest but had to go along because it was dependent on American economic aid and needed British support on the Continent.

France was relieved by the new Soviet proposal because it gave an excuse to head off immediate proposals for German rearmament. But France found the Soviet proposal for Germany's armed neutrality very disturbing. The French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, told U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson that even French Communists were embar-

rassed by that aspect of the Soviet proposal.⁵⁸ Faced with the prospect of Germany being rearmed, either unified or divided, the French were ultimately going to prefer that Germany be armed but divided in two opposing camps, minimizing the potential danger to France, than united and armed, but beholden to neither camp.

By 1952, Germany had already become important as an integral part of the Western economic recovery, Western unity, and Western defense. It was no longer possible to contemplate a Germany that was not closely tied to the West.⁵⁹ The need for economic recovery in Europe had led the Americans and British to fuse their zones in 1946, to forget any idea of placing limits on Germany's industrial output, and to introduce currency reform in the Western sectors of both Germany and Berlin in 1948 (cited by the Soviets as making the blockade of Berlin necessary). European recovery and concerns about Germany's independent development of industrial capacity led to extending the invitation to West Germany to become an associate member of the Council of Europe and to Schuman's plan for a coal and steel pool in Western Europe in May 1950. In the wake of Korea, it was judged that Europe could never defend itself against similar Soviet aggression without a German army as

⁵⁸Robert McGeehan, The German Rearmament Question: American Diplomacy and European Defense After World War II (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). p. 199.

⁵⁹Ibid.

part of the Western forces, which prompted the Western decision to revise the Occupation Statute and develop the idea of an integrated European Defense Community. Agreement on the principle of the EDC in Lisbon preceded by two weeks the Soviet note of March 10.

Not only did the note of March 10 not find any real friends in Western Europe, but despite the overt appeal of the note to German nationalism, it did not find much support in Germany either. West Germans were extremely reluctant to sacrifice their sovereignty for unity, and they had no guarantees that any unity scheme proposed by the Soviets would leave them with their independence. The Berlin Blockade, Czechoslovakia, and Korea aside as evidence of Soviet intentions, German democrats were concerned about developments within the Soviet Zone that boded ill for the prospect of free elections ever being held there. The Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone had been forced into a merger with the German Communist Party in 1946, resulting in the formation of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). Any hopes the Soviets had that this new party would be able to compete eventually in open all-German elections were dashed in the Berlin city elections of 1946, in which the Social Democrats who refused to merge won an overwhelming victory. So while Schumacher, the Social Democrat (SPD) leader in the West, favored unity and neutrality, no German democrat could have

anything to do with the SED or a régime controlled by it in the East.

Even if Soviet troops were withdrawn, German democrats did not have any confidence that they would have been able to operate freely in the Soviet Zone because the SED had been equipped with a militarized police force that was an army in all but name. Indeed, it served as the basis for the creation of the East German army in 1956.⁶⁰ So German democrats in the West feared that if the occupation troops were removed, the SED would be in a position to wage civil war. All German efforts to create a unified German state were therefore out of the question until free elections had been held in all of Germany, and this required the participation of the SPD in the Soviet Zone and the removal of the militarized police force from SED control.

After the Soviet Union responded to the initial Western plan to rearm Germany with the Prague proposals of November 1950, calling for the creation of an All-German Constituent Council with equal numbers of representatives from the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, the West Germans responded with the demand for free elections first, in all of Germany. A UN Supervisory Committee--consisting of representatives from Iceland, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Brazil and Poland--was set up in 1951 to supervise all-German elections, but the Polish represen-

⁶⁰DePorte, p. 164.

tatives withdrew from the effort and the committee was refused entry into the GDR.⁶¹

Although German nationalists criticized Konrad Adenauer, leader of the Christian Democrats and Chancellor of the Federal Republic, because his entanglement with the West would make the eventual reunification of Germany a virtual impossibility, he was able to reject all Soviet overtures by refusing to recognize the Oder-Neisse boundary, which the USSR had imposed in 1945, as the permanent border between Germany and Poland. Instead, Adenauer saw an alliance with the West as the surest means of regaining German sovereignty, albeit only for West Germany. He claimed that joining NATO and then dealing with the Russians from a position of strength would insure Germany's unification in freedom. But because this policy antagonized the Soviets, the Christian Democrats had to accept that reunification would not be within the range of possible options within the foreseeable future.

Finally, one may question how serious the Soviet Union itself was about its own proposal. The Soviets were prisoners of earlier decisions they had made with regard to the German question. The major decision was to have the GDR sign a treaty with Poland in 1950 recognizing the Oder-Neisse as the permanent boundary between them. This

⁶¹Donald Warr, "Germany," The Cold War: A Reappraisal, Evan Luard, ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1964), p. 109.

guaranteed, on the one hand, that Poland would be dependent on Soviet support against German revanchism, but on the other guaranteed that German revanchism would be directed against the Soviet Union. There could have been no "Rapallos" with the independent, armed, unified German state envisioned in the March 10 note. Furthermore, the decision on Oder-Neisse made sure that under competitive circumstances, which would have to have been guaranteed in any All-German settlement acceptable to West Germans, the SED would have enjoyed no popular support in a unified Germany, and the Soviets would have had no internal leverage in such a régime. So, ultimately, even had talks progressed in response to the note, the Soviets would have concluded that they were better off with a divided Germany in which one part was in the Western camp and the other permanently dependent on the Soviet Union for its survival than with a neutral, armed Germany seeking to place itself in the Western camp at the first available opportunity.

The Soviet Union was also a prisoner of earlier decisions in the sense that it had already created the SED and the German Democratic Republic, and could not undo them without an enormous loss of credibility, particularly among its Eastern European satellites. This explains, perhaps, why the Soviets could never make the one concession that the West would have demanded before agreeing to any all-German settlement: free elections. The Soviets' Prague proposal

in 1950 had called for an equality of the FRG and the GDR. The West Germans could not possibly agree since it offered no security that negotiations would break the stalemate. Once created, the GDR was clearly not something the Soviets could seriously bargain away.

The effect of the Soviet note of March 10 was to soften the West to the point that they had to consider further negotiations with the Soviets seriously, but it did not alter any commitments already made. It did play a role in the defeat of the EDC proposal, but the FRG was rearmed anyway as a sovereign ally in 1954. The lack of enthusiastic response to the Soviet note highlighted that freezing the status quo, rather than undermining it, might provide the basis for some future détente.

The Soviet note of 1952 itself was the only serious effort of any kind the Soviets made to try to forestall the rearming of Germany. Soon after Stalin died, there was a workers' uprising in the GDR in June of 1953 that was put down only with the help of Soviet tanks, underscoring the fact that the régime was maintained only by virtue of Soviet occupation forces. Two months later, when the Western Powers proposed a meeting of the Four Powers to discuss the reunification of Germany and a peace treaty with Austria, it led again only to Western demands that an all-German government be based on free elections and to the Soviet demand

that a provisional government be set up on the basis of the existing governments.⁶²

But Anton DePorte points out that despite the open hostility, the rearmament of Germany, and the absence of a peace treaty, peace and stability were maintained in Europe. He cites the Austrian Peace Treaty in the spring of 1955, the Great Power summit conference in Geneva in July, and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the FRG and the USSR in September, as examples of policies which contributed to peace and stability.⁶³ None of this came about until West Germany had been rearmed and the West Germans had accepted that rearmament would make reunification a matter to be dealt with in the distant future.

The aftermath of the Soviet note of March 10 reinforced for all parties that the Four Power efforts to deal with Germany had never been a cooperative effort by allies, but had always been a struggle of adversaries for the future of Europe. It was only after all parties acquiesced in the freezing of the status quo along its predetermined lines that all could recognize that the division of Europe was a stable situation and formed the basis for, if not a friendly peace, at least a relatively non-threatening stalemate. This was possible because between the superpowers there were

⁶²Luard, p. 28.

⁶³DePorte, p. 164.

limited alternatives, and each side had the opportunity to realistically assess the possibilities and limits.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND BERLIN CRISIS 1958-1961

The opening salvo in the second Berlin crisis was lobbed by Khrushchev at a Polish-Soviet Friendship meeting held in Moscow November 10, 1958. He said that in creating the GDR, a democratic, peace-loving, antifascist and anti-militarist workers' state by his account, the Soviet Union had lived up to its obligations under the Potsdam Agreement. The West, however, by allowing fascist and revanchist passions to drive the FRG to militarism, had grossly violated the spirit of Potsdam. In Khrushchev's view, the only thing the West retained from Potsdam was the occupation of Berlin, and they only continued this in order to subvert the GDR.

In a note to the United States on November 27, 1958, the Soviets formalized the charges: the Western Powers had violated the Potsdam agreements, forfeiting their right to occupy Berlin; they had refused to conclude a peace treaty with Germany, or in its absence, with the two German states; the West had used West Berlin for the purpose of subverting the GDR. Therefore, the USSR demanded that the West must abandon its occupation régime and West Berlin must become a "free city"--demilitarized, neutral, guaranteed by the four powers, and dependent on negotiations with the GDR for

access rights. The Soviets proposed that there be no unilateral changes in Berlin's status for six months.

It is often argued that the Soviet's demand was not serious in that they by no means wanted the West to abandon Berlin at this time. Rather, by putting pressure on Berlin they might force the West to negotiate over Germany. As John Mander reasoned:

By eliminating both the Allied and the West German presence from the city, the Communists would throw away the lever by which they hope to influence Germany as a whole. If they are genuinely concerned about German 'militarism' and 'revanchism' they would surely be reluctant to do this.⁶⁴

Similarly, Jack Schick opined: "Berlin crises are Moscow's way of opposing Bonn's policies: in 1958 it feared nuclear weapons acquisitions; in 1948 it opposed resurgence of German economic power."⁶⁵ In other words, when the West instituted monetary reform, the Soviets tried to stop it by blockading Berlin. When the question of German rearmament first came up, no Berlin crisis was necessary because the European Defense Community failed, but Stalin did issue the note of March 10, 1952, holding forth the prospect of reunification, to forestall West German integration into NATO.

The second Berlin crisis began after Sputnik had shown that the Soviets had the capability to produce long-range

⁶⁴John Mander, Berlin: Hostage for the West (Baltimore Penguin Books, 1962), p. 72.

⁶⁵Schick, p. xvi.

missiles. In response in 1958, the West Germans urged the Eisenhower Administration to deploy nuclear weapons in West Germany under the terms of the December 1957 NATO agreement ensuring American control of warheads. Moscow stepped up its campaign to have Central Europe declared a nuclear free zone and proposed other regional disarmament proposals. "The United States listened to Bonn as an ally of course," Jack Schick wrote, "but Khrushchev could always catch the ear of the President by reheating the crisis and threatening to blockade the city."⁶⁶

Walter Ulbricht, the head of the GDR's ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED), was much more anxious than Khrushchev to see the Western powers vacate West Berlin. In addition to the constant outflow of refugees sapping his county's labor force, West Berlin was embarrassing because many residents of East Berlin commuted there daily to work, enjoying the higher wage rate earned in West German marks. Although the official East German exchange rate was 1:1, in West Berlin the eastern currency was only worth five to the West German mark. But whilst working in the west, workers benefited from government subsidies in housing and food in the East Germany socialist economy. Furthermore, the presence of Western occupying forces in the German capital 100 miles from the GDR-FRG frontier was an embarrassing denial of GDR state sovereignty. If the Soviet Union did not, in the end,

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 8-9.

really want the Western powers to leave the city and deprive them of easy access to a pressure point, Ulbricht, caring less for concerns of superpower balance than for the survival of his régime, did want them out. On October 27, 1958, Ulbricht described West Berlin as an island of the Cold War in the middle of the GDR.⁶⁷

While the East German régime hoped for a drastic change in the situation which would end the outflow of refugees and gain it legitimacy and recognition, the West Germans under Chancellor Adenauer strove to preserve conditions under which the German situation looked temporary. In other words, in order to continue the claim that the West was actively working to unite Germany in freedom, Adenauer opposed any action which lent the suggestion that the division of Germany had become permanent. Preservation of the four-power occupation status of the German capital was an important part of making a long-standing condition look temporary. The Soviets' demand that a peace treaty had to be signed to normalize an abnormal situation only contributed to the appearances Adenauer wanted maintained.

Beginning on August 30, 1960, the GDR instituted a selective blockade of West German traffic (Western military traffic was excepted) in order to protest a rally of refugee organizations scheduled in West Berlin. The GDR broke

⁶⁷David M. Keithly, Breakthrough in the Ostpolitik: The 1971 Quadripartite Agreement (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), p. 15.

precedent by issuing the order in the name of the GDR Minister of the Interior rather than the Mayor of Democratic (East) Berlin, for the first time officially treating East Berlin as a part of the GDR. The Western commanders protested the blockade as a violation of quadripartite status. The blockade was lifted when the refugee groups departed September 4.⁶⁸

On September 8 the GDR announced that FRG citizens would require special passes to enter East Berlin and that West Berliners could enter by showing their West Berlin identity cards but not FRG passports. When Bonn refused to let West Berliner's use their ID cards for travel to the East this amounted to a ban on travel. Bonn retaliated on September 30 by threatening to cancel the interzonal (FRG-GDR) trade agreement just concluded and scheduled to go into effect January 1. Ulbricht announced on November 7 that goods from West Berlin to the FRG would be subject to "inspection requirements." Bonn proposed on December 1 that trade be renewed in exchange for lifting the travel restrictions. GDR officials showed interest in the talks, but not in the proposed linkage. On December 18 Ulbricht threatened to halt a portion of FRG traffic to West Berlin after January 1 on the grounds that the 1949 New York Agreement lifting the blockade was dependent on the viability of interzonal trade. A compromise was reached December 21

⁶⁸Schick, p. 130.

whereby the trade agreement was reinstated in exchange for the GDR lifting the inspection requirements and pledging that the travel restrictions would not be permanent. The trade agreement was restored on December 29. According to Schick: "Ulbricht successfully compelled Bonn to choose between access to East Berlin or access to West Berlin. As expected, Bonn chose the latter."⁶⁹

On June 3-4, 1961, President Kennedy and Khrushchev met in Vienna where Kennedy tried to convince Khrushchev that the U.S. was prepared to go to war if the access routes to Berlin were threatened. Khrushchev tried to convince Kennedy that the Soviets were prepared to go to war to defend GDR sovereignty if the West insisted on remaining in Berlin after the Soviets signed a peace treaty with Germany. The Soviets reissued a demand that a peace treaty recognizing the emergence of two German states, ending Western occupation rights in Berlin, and turning West Berlin into a free city be concluded without delay.

Speaking to the country by television June 15, Khrushchev said, "We ask everyone to understand us correctly: the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany cannot be postponed any longer, a peace settlement must be attained this year."⁷⁰ He went on to declare that if certain countries

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 132.

⁷⁰George D. Embree, ed., The Soviet Union and the German Question September 1958-June 1961 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), p. 318.

refused to participate in negotiations for a peace treaty the Soviets would sign one with the two German states. And if the FRG would not sign, "we shall sign it with the German Democratic Republic alone, which has long declared its desire to conclude a peace treaty and has agreed to the formation on her territory of a free city of West Berlin." He continued, "There are some in the West who threaten us, saying that if we sign a peace treaty it will not be recognized and that even arms will be brought into play to prevent its implementation." He claimed that in this case, as in the case of the West violating GDR sovereignty and moving to and from West Berlin by land, sea, or air without GDR permission after the conclusion of a peace treaty, the Soviets would be able defend against such aggressions.⁷¹

On the same day Ulbricht held a press conference in Berlin in which he said that there were no plans to build a wall between east and west Berlin. This most likely reflected his hopes that the Soviets would allow him to pursue his maximum objective, driving the West from West Berlin. According to Robert Slusser, while the West Berlin question and the demand for a peace treaty were seen by Khrushchev as levers to force the West to acknowledge a shift in the international balance in favor of the Soviet Union, for Ulbricht securing control of West Berlin was an end in itself--or rather a "cluster of related goals": elimination

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 316 and 318.

of the outpouring of workers and the youth, enhancement of the GDR's international prestige, and stabilization of its political and economic position. "The international aspects of the Berlin problem were of secondary interest to Ulbricht; his eye was fixed on a definite target--absorption of the Western Sectors of Berlin."⁷²

Ulbricht's conditions for a free and neutral West Berlin included: termination of political asylum to escapees from the GDR, elimination of all western spy and "human trade" organizations that the GDR pretended were responsible for the mass disappearance of citizens into the Western Zone, closing of the refugee facilities, Western guarantees of GDR sovereignty in the overland transit routes and in the air corridors, and renunciation of all Western rights in Eastern Germany.⁷³

For Kennedy there were three guarantees for Berlin that could not be surrendered: security, free access, and economic viability.⁷⁴ On July 25, he addressed the American public on what had become the Berlin Crisis. In his speech, he defined the threat to Berlin as a threat to free men the world over. U.S. interest in Berlin required continued U.S.

⁷²Robert M. Slusser, The Berlin Crisis of 1961: Soviet American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin, June-November 1961 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 9.

⁷³Keithly, p. 23.

⁷⁴Mander, p. 74.

military presence, access and egress for the U.S. garrison, and security and vitality for West Berlin. He requested congressional authority for the mobilization of selected military units and he proposed negotiations with the Soviets.⁷⁵ Kennedy expressed a willingness to get rid of "irritants" surrounding West Berlin to which the Communists objected,⁷⁶ but on the question of continued Western presence Kennedy's words were clear. "We cannot and will not permit the Communists to drive us out of Berlin, either gradually or by force."⁷⁷

The speech was clear on the aspects of the status quo in Berlin on which the West would not give way, but by its omissions not so clear on the other aspects of the crisis. Schick noted: "The Soviets probably didn't know what to make of Kennedy's speech in which he said nothing about East Berlin. They noticed in Vienna that Kennedy seemed more concerned about the practical aspects of Western access to West Berlin than about any other issue in the Berlin crisis."⁷⁸ This is because there was considerable concern on the Western side of the border about the consequences of the outflow of refugees and the measures to which it would drive the Communists. It was feared that if the measures were too

⁷⁵Schick, p. 149-50.

⁷⁶Mander, p. 78.

⁷⁷Slusser, p. 82.

⁷⁸Schick, p. 160.

harsh, there would be an uprising in the East and the West would be in a quandary over the proper response. Even in the Federal Republic there were concerns that if too many people of the GDR came west, they would be replaced with Poles and Czechs and the region would lose its German character. In the USA on July 30 Senator Fulbright said on TV, "I don't understand why the East Germans don't close their border because I think they have a right to close it."⁷⁹ Similarly The New York Times wrote on August 4: "There has never been any East-West agreement that would prevent the Communists from closing the border between East Germany and East Berlin. Why they have not done so in the past is something of a mystery."⁸⁰

On August 7 Khrushchev made another speech threatening to sign a separate peace treaty with the GDR and talking about the horrors and destruction that thermonuclear war would bring in its wake. He called West Berlin a "convenient loophole to obstruct the GDR as a socialist state" and vowed the loophole would be closed.⁸¹

And so it was. Shortly after midnight on August 13 the GDR published a Warsaw Pact declaration, adopted on August 6, that accused the FRG of using Berlin for subversive activities and requested the GDR to take measures to secure

⁷⁹Slusser, p. 94.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Schick, p. 159.

the border with West Berlin. As a signal to reassure the West the note added: "It goes without saying that these measures must not affect existing provisions for traffic and control of communication routes between West Berlin and West Germany."⁸²

As the announcement was being made, a legion of heavily armed East German guards were stringing barbed wire across the Potsdamer Platz. This was subsequently replaced with a wall. The GDR announced new travel restrictions: East Germans could cross West Berlin borders only with special permission (i.e., not at all); East Berliners would be required to obtain a special permit for crossing to West Berlin (i.e., they could no longer cross); West Berliners would have to show their identity cards to enter East Berlin; "revanchist politicians and agents of West German militarism" would be barred from East Berlin; former decisions on control remained valid for West Germans entering East Berlin (making the 1960 restrictions permanent); and non-Germans would be unaffected.⁸³ The measure was an important one for the GDR, for it halted the loss of manpower, put an end to the embarrassment of East Berliners working in the West, and effectively denied the quadripartite status of the city.⁸⁴

⁸²Ibid., p. 163.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 171.

The American response was cautious, revealing a mix of moral outrage and political relief. On the day the barricades went up, Secretary of State Dean Rusk issued a "Statement Concerning Travel Restrictions in Berlin," noting, "Available information indicates that measures taken thus far are aimed at residents of East Berlin and East Germany and not at the Allied position in West Berlin or access thereto." He went on:

Limitation on travel within Berlin is a violation of the four-power status of Berlin and a flagrant violation of the rights of free circulation throughout the city. Restrictions on travel between East Germany and Berlin are in direct contravention of the Four-power agreement reached at Paris on June 20, 1949.

In view of the seriousness of what had transpired, he warned of the following action: "These violations of existing agreements will be the subject of vigorous protest through appropriate channels."⁸⁵

It was not yet clear to the Western Powers that the wall was the only action planned by the Communists and they preferred to hold retaliatory measures in reserve for when the other shoe dropped. Perhaps this was a preliminary to the signing of a peace treaty by the Soviets with the GDR and the transfer of Soviet responsibility for the West Berlin access routes to the GDR. It was clear that German access to East Berlin or East German access to West Berlin were not issues the Western powers felt they could do much about. In

⁸⁵Slusser, p. 135.

East Berlin on August 25 Ulbricht told a rally that his régime would not seek to control Allied communications with West Berlin until a peace treaty had been signed.⁸⁶

The pressure on the Western powers was effectively lifted by Khrushchev in his speech opening the Twenty-Second Communist Party Congress in Moscow October 17, in which he backed off his threat to sign a peace treaty before the end of the year. "The question of a time limit for the signing of a German peace treaty will not be so important if the Western powers show a readiness to settle the German problem. We shall not in that case insist on signing the peace treaty before December 31, 1961."⁸⁷

The Berlin crisis began with a challenge to the agreement allowing Britain, France and the United States to occupy sectors of the former German capital. Although the Soviets claimed that the Western powers had already lost their rights in Berlin and that the USSR could take unilateral action, it never did so act and the West successfully indicated that forceful action would have resulted from any violation of the rule allowing Western access to West Berlin.

However, the West failed to indicate that there would be any considerable sanctions for the GDR's challenge to the quadripartite status of the city and the GDR moved to close

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 132.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 310.

the border between West and East Berlin. Publicly denying that the GDR had the right to do this while claiming no authority to stop it, the Western powers tacitly accepted that the GDR, which was not recognized in the West, had the right to control its borders and that East Berlin fell within those borders. Both sides, clearly understanding by the end of the crisis what the other side would allow, displayed a complete unwillingness to make even minor territorial concessions.

Clearly shown was that a mutual recognition of the borders from which neither would surrender an inch was more important than gaining recognition of any rights that crossed those borders; the West gave up access to East Berlin and the Soviet Bloc gave up threatening the access from the West to West Berlin. West Germany desired the continued access to all of Berlin as a means of demonstrating that the bipolar division was impermanent and the GDR illegitimate. The GDR, conversely, felt that control over all of Berlin was vital to its hopes of achieving both domestic and international recognition of state sovereignty. Neither got their way because of the necessity of following the leader of their alliance system. This was an important moment demonstrating that mutual recognition of the bipolar division of Europe was a crucial factor in easing tensions between the two sides. Allowing the threats to turn into a

crisis and dealing with it as such may have allowed the situation to stabilize rather than turning into war.

CHAPTER VI

OSTPOLITIK AND THE TREATY OF AUGUST 12, 1970

The resolution of the second Berlin crisis in favor of the status quo led to some profound realizations by both German governments. The West Germans found that there was to be no rollback of Communism and thus had to accept that reunification from the West through strength was not a realistic short-term goal. Similarly, the East Germans found the Soviets unwilling to remove West Berlin as a capitalist outpost in the middle of their country, or even to make international recognition of the German Democratic Republic a condition for acknowledging Western access rights. But because it caused the West Germans to change their attitude about the nature of, and remedy for, the German problem, the construction of the Wall was to lead to some major challenges to the East German régime.⁸⁸

In 1962, West German Foreign Minister Schroeder announced a new "policy of movement" (Politik der Bewegung). This policy sought to substitute economics for politics and was aimed at improving ties with states in Eastern Europe,

⁸⁸N. Edwina Moreton, East Germany and the Warsaw Alliance: The Politics of Détente (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1978), p. 28.

at East Germany's expense.⁸⁹ It was hoped that these new East European trading partners would lose interest in the hard line politics of Walter Ulbricht.

The new eastern policy, or "Ostpolitik," beginning to take shape in the 1960s had several important goals. One goal was to improve the image of the Federal Republic and enhance its international status, not just in Eastern Europe but also in the Third World. A second was to pry open the door to the German Democratic Government and exert a moderating influence in East Germany. Thirdly, "Ostpolitik" aimed to reestablish German influence in both the northern and southern tiers of East Central Europe and thereby obliterate as much of the legacy of the Nazi period as possible.⁹⁰

An alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Free Democrats collapsed in 1966 and the CDU and CSU formed a grand coalition instead with the Social Democrats, bringing the SPD into the government for the first time since the war. With Kurt Georg Kiesinger as Chancellor and the SPD's Willy Brandt as Foreign Minister, the new Ostpolitik was implemented. Previously the FRG selectively refused to recognize any country that recognized the GDR, a policy known as the Hallstein Doctrine. Accepting that Warsaw Pact

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 29.

⁹⁰Andrew Gyorgy, "Ostpolitik and Eastern Europe," The International Politics of Eastern Europe, Charles Gati, ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), p. 154.

states faced special circumstances, the new government sought to exchange ambassadors with whichever East Central European states were willing to participate. As an incentive, the new government offered substantial economic aid in the form of trade and loans. The West Germans were willing to offer hard currency at low interest rates and long-term credit toward industrialization. This policy resulted in relations between the FRG and Rumania in 1967 and with Yugoslavia in 1968. Czechoslovakia and Hungary were about to fall into line when the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia intervened in 1968.⁹¹

In 1969, the SPD had the opportunity to lead the government and let the CDU/CSU go into the opposition. Brandt became chancellor in alliance with the Free Democrats. He and his foreign minister, the FDP's Walter Scheel, immediately sought to offset the international chill caused by the Czech invasion. Brandt felt that the only way to overcome the division of Germany was to seek accommodation with the existing political realities while trying to bridge the divide on a human level. Brandt realized that to reach all of the accommodations he was seeking, negotiations had to be pursued simultaneously on four levels in a fashion that maintained the linkage between each level. In late 1969, he began a campaign to reach agreements on each of these levels; establishing trust first with the Soviet Union

⁹¹Ibid., p. 156.

to win access to the bloc, then with Poland to allay concerns of revanchism, then working multilaterally to have the quadripartite status quo of Berlin formalized and stabilized, and finally, dealing with the GDR and the FRG's proper relationship. He signaled his serious intent to the Soviets by signing the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.⁹²

The Soviets were likewise willing to reach accommodations with the West in general and with West Germany in particular for a number of reasons. Tacit acceptance of the status quo during the Berlin crisis met many of the Soviet security demands. During the early 1960s Soviet policy aimed to change West Germany's foreign policy towards the East as a means of influencing the West by undermining Western cohesion, and thereafter reducing American influence. The Soviets hoped to encourage a greater acceptance from the West Germans for the division of Germany and the borders of Poland. The Soviets also wanted to prevent the increased West German activity in Eastern Europe from becoming a disruptive influence, but this policy seemed to contradict the Soviet desire to increase trade.⁹³

By the late 1960s the Soviets felt that they had substantially caught up with the West in terms of nuclear armaments. Furthermore, the lack of response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia indicated clearly that the Soviet

⁹²Ibid., p. 160.

⁹³Moreton, p. 30.

sphere of control in Eastern Europe would be respected. Thus, from the Soviet point of view, there was now a limited opportunity to seek a way out of their growing technical and economic difficulties by seeking industrial and technical cooperation with the West without engendering too much dependence.⁹⁴

Since West Germany was clearly not a military or nuclear threat to the Soviet bloc, the Soviets were able to seek economic and technical cooperation while hoping to reduce American influence in Europe and helping to reestablish respectability for the French and Italian Communists, who had a hard time defending the Czech spring.⁹⁵

With the Brezhnev Doctrine, which enunciated the right of the Warsaw Pact nations to intervene in member states militarily to prevent "counterrevolution," which they had espoused and enforced through the Czechoslovak crisis, the Soviets had clearly indicated to the FRG that any future accommodations with the West would not be permitted to pose a threat to their control of their bloc. This ensured that relations with the FRG would be less costly than previously may have been feared.⁹⁶

⁹⁴Hansjürgen Schierbaum, Intergerman Relations: Developments, Problems, Facts (Munich: tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1979), p. 24.

⁹⁵Ulam, pp. 751-2.

⁹⁶Michael J. Sodaro, Moscow, Germany and the West: From Khrushchev to Gorbachev (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 109.

By 1969, the leaders of the Soviet Politburo had converged on a policy of resuming negotiations with West Germany. Party leader Leonid Brezhnev was primarily concerned with Soviet economic needs, while ideologist Mikhail Suslov felt that cooperation with the SPD might help further the communist cause. Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin hoped that economic cooperation might lead to arms control, and likewise, Nikolai Podgorny, also a Politburo member, warned of the opportunity costs of pursuing the arms race. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko supported both the economic relations and arms control, and saw a link between détente with West Germany and détente with the United States.⁹⁷

The minimum Soviet desiderata included a recognition of the territorial status quo in Eastern Europe and recognition that economic relations with the West would not alter the basic structure of the Soviet command economy. Significant military détente had not yet been decided upon. These conservative parameters seemed to rule out trying to pry West Germany from NATO.⁹⁸

The East German leadership had learned entirely different lessons from the second Berlin Crisis than had the USSR. One was that a resolution of the crisis which required severing Western ties to West Berlin was beyond their control--such a decision remained the purview of the Sovi-

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 164.

⁹⁸Ibid.

ets, and therefore something remained of four-power control, whether the East Germans would admit it or not. The other was that because international recognition of East Germany was limited, because of the FRG's success at promoting the Hallstein Doctrine, the GDR had no choice but to deal with the world through its Warsaw Pact allies.⁹⁹

The West German campaign during the early 1960s to buy the friendship of these erstwhile friends of the GDR was therefore doubly troubling because if the East Germans could not get their allies to insist on FRG recognition of the German Democratic Republic before signing trade agreements, then the GDR risked isolation within its own alliance. Before Brandt's reformulation of the West German approach, the GDR could at least count on the Soviets to prevent the West German effort from succeeding.¹⁰⁰

The 1960s found the East German régime in much stronger shape domestically than internationally. After the Wall went up, the problem of the constant drain of the workforce across the border ceased and the leadership began to emphasize the separate development of East Germany. The SED's second in command, Erich Honecker, warned Ulbricht that his continued insistence that the GDR must be the foundation of a united Socialist Germany was undercutting the ability of the GDR to build a separate sense of identity. The main

⁹⁹Moreton, p. 37.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 41-2.

crisis facing the régime, according to this viewpoint, was not one of legitimacy, as seen by the West, but of its independent identity. The economic success of the GDR in the 1960s made the country stronger internationally, within its alliance, and made Ulbricht's leadership bolder.¹⁰¹

Ulbricht was well aware that the GDR was indispensable to the Warsaw Pact precisely because of its invaluable contribution to Soviet and East European economic development. Any encroachment into the economic relations of Eastern Europe by West German economic power would incline East Germany's allies to agreements with the FRG at its expense.¹⁰² Ulbricht also understood that the Czech crisis was the manifestation of domestic economic discontent. He feared that these forces would push the Eastern European leaders into hasty agreements which might subject them to economic dependence on the West in general, and Bonn in particular. This would have compromised the political independence of the Soviet bloc states and given the FRG a dangerous level of influence. Ulbricht was therefore the first to criticize Dubcek and warn that his reforms were about to go too far. He tried to rally the Warsaw Pact behind a program of economic modernization "by our own

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 38-40.

¹⁰²Sodaro, p. 135.

means." He offered to have the GDR be the first to accelerate its own economic development plans.¹⁰³

When Brandt changed FRG policy to include a willingness to recognize the territorial status quo and to deal with the GDR on an equal basis, the Soviets resolved, for aforementioned reasons, to undertake negotiations; and when this occurred in late 1969, the GDR was brought into dialogue with Bonn very much against its will.¹⁰⁴ The situation shows that the domestic and foreign policy needs of the GDR and its Warsaw Pact allies were inverted. While the threat of détente caused East Germany to step up its economic program, the need to step up their economic programs lead the other East Europeans to seek détente.¹⁰⁵

There were five major threats seen by the GDR leaders as inherent in détente with the West. First, permitting the FRG to accept international borders with reservations concerning the Oder-Neisse line was unacceptably impermanent. Second, having to acknowledge four-power responsibility for Berlin would mean losing the ability to claim full sovereignty, including control over the access routes. Third, any increase in contact between the East and West Germany would allow the FRG to manipulate and influence the Communist bloc, and possibly cause a decline in the impor-

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁰⁴Moreton, p. 201.

¹⁰⁵Sodaro, p. 165.

tance of the GDR within the bloc. Fourth, increased contacts between the West Germans and the East Germans could very well undermine domestic support for the SED, which was built on its comparative achievement within the East but which could not compare with the achievements of West Germany. Fifth, the doctrine of eventual reunification, not surrendered by Brandt, implied that someday the German Democratic Republic might cease to exist.¹⁰⁶ For these reasons, the SED rightly suspected that any agreement reached by the Soviets and West Germany would tend to compromise away its minimum requirements, complete physical security of the East German state and its full, uncompromised participation in international relations.¹⁰⁷

But the SED was not going to have a choice over whether the Soviets negotiated with the West Germans or not. Because Brandt's approach to the German issues was pragmatic it enjoyed greater success than his predecessor's policy of denying the legitimacy of East Germany. Because détente involved heretofore unprecedented openness and cooperation between the blocs, it had come to require that cohesion be maintained within each bloc.¹⁰⁸ So Ulbricht could not object outright when the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany signed a treaty in Moscow August 12, 1970 that

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁰⁷Moreton, p. 201.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 107.

renounced the use of force and established respect for the inviolability of borders. The FRG delivered a note to the Soviets the same day explaining that the Federal Republic of Germany would continue to seek German unity through free self-determination. But the West Germans agreed in the treaty to establish relations with East Germany based on equality and non-discrimination in terms of international recognition, and respect for independence and autonomy in matters concerning internal competency within their respective borders.¹⁰⁹ Brandt indicated that a four-power agreement on Berlin would be a prerequisite for West German approval of the treaty. The Soviets signalled their willingness to consider further concessions by signing the treaty.¹¹⁰ By December, the West Germans had concluded a treaty with Poland recognizing that the Oder-Neisse line constituted the western frontier of Poland and renouncing the use of force to change borders.

The German Democratic Republic was deeply annoyed by the FRG-Soviet treaty. For one thing, the treaty did not require that the FRG recognize the GDR as a completely independent, sovereign, and therefore foreign, country under international law. For another, Ulbricht could no longer use the image of a revanchist militarist Federal Republic to demand bloc solidarity in support of his government.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 150-1.

¹¹⁰Sodaro, p. 200.

Finally, the treaty not only did not mention Berlin, but the Soviets were beginning four-power negotiations in response to Brandt's insistence on their necessity.¹¹¹

Berlin was the key to the whole process, for a recognition of continued four-power control over Berlin implied a continued four-power responsibility for Germany as a whole--the legal basis for Brandt's insistence that there existed but one German nation. Berlin therefore continued to symbolize the ultimate lack of sovereignty by the GDR over its whole territory. Gaining the right to control access to Berlin was therefore important for the GDR. At this point in the negotiations, the pressure on the GDR between the West German challenge and the growing momentum of Soviet policy became acute.¹¹²

Ulbricht managed to bring the quadripartite talks to a stalemate temporarily when he tried to negotiate over transit to Berlin separately with West Germany, but the Soviets were quickly growing tired of his shenanigans, which verged on a declaration of independence from Soviet foreign policy. Soviet irritation helped bring to a head some conflicts over Ulbricht's economic policies within the SED leadership, leading to his replacement by Erich Honecker as First Secretary of the SED in the spring of 1971.¹¹³

¹¹¹Moreton, p. 149.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 204.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 205.

Honecker's first foreign policy speech as the new SED chief on May 3, 1971, indicated his party's willingness to accept whatever compromises over Berlin the Soviet's agreed to. He referred to West Berlin as a "city with a special status" rather than the heretofore insisted upon "independent political entity."¹¹⁴

The 1971 quadripartite agreement over Berlin recognized continued four-power responsibility for the city and guaranteed access from the West. Although West Germany was permitted to represent West Berlin in foreign affairs and maintain a close economic relationship with the city, the FRG had to agree that the city was not a constituent part of the Federal Republic and it agreed not to try to hold any more official gatherings there.

The agreement was a major blow to the German Democratic Republic on several fronts. Because civilian traffic was to be "facilitated" and given "preferential" treatment, the GDR lost the ability to obstruct such traffic, a means of exerting pressure towards a political goal. The recognition of four-power responsibility meant no sovereignty by the GDR over the access routes and it bolstered Brandt's argument that there was still a four-power responsibility for Germany as a whole. The inter-German agreement on transit forced the GDR to negotiate with the FRG over Berlin, a matter in which the GDR had always maintained the FRG had no legiti-

¹¹⁴Sodaro, p. 212-3.

mate interest. Finally, the agreement allowed West Berliners to visit East Berlin freely, and not just with special permission. After Ulbricht's departure, the interests of the SED leadership had not changed, but its willingness to openly defy Moscow had changed.¹¹⁵

In 1973, formal relations between the two German states were established. This relationship was not considered by the FRG to be a relationship with a foreign country, but rather a relationship that respected the GDR's autonomy in matters within its borders, according to Brandt's formulation of recognizing two states but only one nation. The Federal Republic continued to claim restricted authority regarding the German nation as a whole in order to maintain that the German question was still a matter to be resolved in the future. Nevertheless, both states became members of the United Nations.

While debating approval of the treaties between the FRG and the Soviet Union and Poland, the four main parties in the Bundestag (the SPD, the FDP, the CDU and the CSU) had reached a consensus on an interpretation that would not let the approval conflict with the FRG's Basic Law. This compromise affirmed that recognizing what constituted borders in the present did not lay a legal foundation that might be used to prevent establishing new borders that can only be established by a treaty of peace. Furthermore, the

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 214.

treaties did not negate four-power responsibility for Germany as a whole or Berlin as whole. After some reluctance, Soviet Ambassador Valitin Falin informed Scheel that Moscow would acquiesce in the Bundestag's interpretation. The Nixon Administration let the CDU know that it would like to see a yes vote on the treaties--which sent a positive signal to the Kremlin regarding America's willingness to intercede with its allies in the interest of détente. After pressure from groups of Germans who had been refugees from the eastern provinces, CSU leader Franz Josef Strauss backed out of the compromise, and the CDU and CSU abstained, allowing the treaties to pass without their support.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the treaties were seen as victory for Willy Brandt's "Ostpolitik" initiative in that they were perceived to have been a step toward overcoming the division of Germany rather than confirming it.¹¹⁷

The Soviet Union was widely interpreted as having won because the treaties recognized its hegemony over half of Europe. It lost only its questionable right to interfere with access to Berlin.¹¹⁸ But Brezhnev now chose a less accommodating path regarding the division of Europe than might have been possible. He chose to continue the arms build-up rather than risk the possible political dangers of

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 217.

¹¹⁷Schierbaum, p. 42.

¹¹⁸Ulam, p. 754.

disarmament. He realized that while disarmament might have helped reduce American influence in Europe, it might also have emasculated Soviet control over Eastern Europe because if West Germany were no longer considered a revanchist military threat, the East Bloc nations would grow less tolerant of Soviet troops stationed in their countries. The uncertainties of a less divided Europe were not attractive compared to the security of a Europe divided between two counterpoised military and ideological blocs. The firm continuance of West Germany in NATO was still an acceptable reality compared to an FRG with a much more independent, and less predictable, foreign policy.¹¹⁹

On the ideological front, too, the concept of coexistence was not incompatible with a strong bipolar rivalry. While the new rules explicitly renounced the right to intervene militarily in another country (of an opposing bloc, anyway), communists could not ignore that socialism and capitalism continued to be in constant struggle and that this struggle would continue to manifest itself in internal efforts for class liberation. This process would continue to be encouraged materially and politically by the socialist community. According to Stephan Doernberg, Director of the GDR Institute for Politics and Economy:

Peaceful coexistence is a category of international relations in a era of worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism. It includes the dialectic-

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 202.

tical unity of fight and cooperation on the various fields of relations with the aim of directing the conflicts between the socialist and imperial states rooted in the antagonism of the two social systems into peaceful channels. An ideological coexistence is, however, impossible, as socialist and bourgeois ideology are irreconcilably opposed to one another. It also is not and cannot be a guarantee of the status quo.¹²⁰

The cooperation achieved between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany led more immediately to an agreement to renounce the use of force, recognized the reality of postwar arrangements, opened up the East in terms of trade and human contact, and led to broader achievements in détente such as SALT, the end of the war in Vietnam, and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the Helsinki Final Act.

In more important ways, the treaties did confirm and strengthen the bipolar division of Europe. The Soviets were left with firmer control over their Warsaw Pact allies, and this control was tacitly approved by both the West Germans and the West. The Soviets also maintained a formidable arms position and, despite coexistence, found enough outlets for superpower rivalry to occupy better than a decade. West Germany likewise strengthened the Western position by obtaining access to the Eastern Bloc while giving the campaign for reunification on Western terms new life through a fresh, innovative and nonthreatening approach. This

¹²⁰Schierbaum, p. 27

approach remained firmly anchored in the NATO alliance and never created a third way between the superpowers.

CONCLUSION

During the Interwar Period, the three examples examined display many of the hoped-for characteristics of a multi-polar classical balance of power system, and, more importantly, all of the most dreaded characteristics of said international arrangement.

During the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, the Bolsheviks vacillated between their three alternatives (deal with Germany, deal with Western powers, or incur the ire of both) and charted the most opportunistic course allowing survival of revolution at home and independence of action internationally. The Germans, by dealing with the Bolsheviks, managed to make their subsequent defeat inconclusive at best because Germany was only defeated on one front. It also helped give the Bolshevik régime a better chance of survival, which proved problematic to the West after the war. Britain and France had the difficult task of trying to squelch revolution in Russia while trying to convince Germany that it had indeed lost the war, and should accept any terms of peace deemed appropriate by the victors.

This three-sided arrangement wreaked havoc with the Genoa conference and the attempt to reintroduce Russia and Germany as respectable concert-of-Europe players. Soviet

diplomats successfully played Germany off against Britain and France, winning for the USSR virtually cost-free readmission into the family of nations by signing the Rapallo Treaty. Germany vacillated between the perceived opportunity to work as an integral (though second class) part of the West, or take advantage of its first real opportunity to become again a major independent player. Britain and France proved unable to keep Germany on board with a united plan for dealing with Russia.

Finally, Stalin allowed Hitler to invade Poland while guaranteeing that Britain and France would go to war over it, the Soviet Union would be left out (for two years, anyway), and the Soviets would be able to claim some spoils from the deal to use as a temporary buffer against the German attack they knew was to come. Hitler was able to buy Soviet neutrality and gave himself the option of avoiding a two-front war.

Had the balance of power been less multipolar in each of these three circumstances; had Britain and France the relative power to make any of these three instances bipolar instead, they surely would have done so, regardless of what some might say about the merits of a multipolar system. Had Britain and France been stronger or either Germany or Russia weaker, they might have had the chance to send troops to the Eastern Front to prevent Russia's revolution and its withdrawal from the war. They might have been able to hold

Germany in their camp at Genoa without fear of German recovery and independence. They might have stopped Hitler's aggression earlier. But they had to deal instead with a multipolar distribution of power, and one is reminded of the observation of Rosecrance on multipolarity: it raises the difficulty of policy-making, because choices become complex and results unforeseen.

With hindsight, there seemed to have been no such problems of excessively complex arrangements of power in the Cold War Europe of bipolarity. Before Stalin issued the note of March 10, 1952, the United States would have gladly disengaged from Europe after the war, but the Soviets posed a threat which the U.S. could not ignore. France would have had the Germans never rearm, but France did not have the choice. The Soviets would have liked to have had no security concerns, but the outside world contained too much power. German democrats would have chosen unity, but there was no guarantee of elections or sovereignty. German communists would have likewise chosen unity, but there was no assurance they could win an election.

When Khrushchev threatened the Western presence in Berlin, the West was absolutely unwilling to surrender even an inch of territory. The crisis seemed to take the world to the brink of war, but the stakes were clear, the division of responsibilities understood and interests defined. The

Western Powers were willing, however, to allow the other side title to what was effectively already its.

During Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik offensive, although the levels of competition deepened to include comparative domestic support and economic power, issues of contention no longer posed any threat to borders or bloc control. The Soviet bloc was secure under the Brezhnev Doctrine; Soviet control was practically now sanctioned by the NATO countries. So when the Soviets decided to pursue détente from a position of strength, the East German régime had no choice but to fall into line, no matter how inimical the policy was to its own interests. The bipolar division eliminated most of the options for most of the countries, but the stability of the system continued for lack of a serious third force challenge.

As Waltz observed: "The constancy of effort of the two major contenders, combined with ... their preponderant power, have made for a remarkable ability to comprehend and absorb within a bipolar balance the revolutionary political, military and economic changes that have occurred."¹²¹ He noted that the two "losses" of China (presumably the first by the United States when the Nationalists fled the Mainland, and the second by the Soviet Union when the Sino-Soviet rift occurred in the late 1950s) barely affected the

¹²¹Waltz, p. 886.

balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹²²

If bipolarity is such a wonderful thing, what can be said for a world that no longer enjoys it? For one thing, much depends on whether the world becomes multipolar, unipolar, or a new bipolarity emerges (or the old one returns). Unipolarity was said by Haas to be more stable but by Levy to be less. Rosecrance had another prediction concerning the loss of bipolarity:

If détente is desirable, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. A total bipolar rapprochement, an end to the Cold War, would be likely to create a new bilateral tension between major power and multipower spheres. In practical terms it would represent a conflict of rich countries and poor countries This emergent bipolarity would demand a rapid spread of nuclear weapons in previously multipolar areas.¹²³

Based on an understanding of the relative merits of bipolarity and multipolarity, a wise course of action may be to attempt to create a more unipolar world order with the sober expectation that a bipolar world may be an expectable result and a survivable fallback position.

¹²²Ibid., p. 887.

¹²³Rosecrance, p. 322.

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