

**THE YALTA CONFERENCE**

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The Yalta Conference climaxed twenty-five years of changing relations between the United States, Great Britain, and Russia. For this reason Yalta cannot be understood as an isolated event. The inter-war period was characterized by mutual mistrust between Soviet Russia and the two nations that became her allies in the Second World War. Both sides share the responsibility for the tension that existed, but at least some of the later Soviet action can be traced directly to the earlier militant moves of nations in the West.

There is as yet insufficient source material to underpin a definitive study of the Yalta Conference. Yet the evidence available is sufficient to provide contemporary students with a general picture of the conference, and to answer many specific questions that have arisen in the public debate over the meeting. As this record is examined it is important to consider and keep constantly in mind the many duties and great responsibilities under which all the participants worked. Political leaders had no realistic or practical alternative but to accept the advice of the military and make their decisions accordingly. To expect President Franklin D. Roosevelt and other top-level officials to have done otherwise is to judge them before the fact.

World society reached a crisis in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. Traditional institutions were challenged by a new and somewhat effective ideology whose exponents declared that it offered an alternative to the recurring wars and depressions that plagued capitalism since the 1890's. Controversy over the agreements made at Yalta has reflected this division in men's minds--and between the minds of men--that has characterized recent times.

This crisis was dramatized in the United States and England in the form of an especially severe economic depression. But in time all the capitalistic nations were affected. Large surpluses depressed the prices of all goods, and were a result of what most observers considered to be over-production. The noted British economist John Maynard Keynes, however, argued that the basic problem was under-consumption. Whatever was the right diagnosis, surpluses of all commodities continued, and government leaders were compelled to deal with this over-supply of goods and vast unemployment of men that accompanied it until hostilities broke out in 1939. In addition to economic disorder, Great Britain was faced with social and colonial revolutions in parts of her empire. The western democracies had not found a solution to the problem of insuring adequate economic status for all their citizens in the rapidly changing machine age.

The New Deal was the American attempt to solve the economic crisis. Efforts to reduce surpluses and curtail production combined with attempts to increase purchasing power were its main features. In England many of the same methods were attempted and in addition commercial ties within the British Commonwealth were strengthened. Economic conditions were improved by the above measures. But until the war began, all the Western nations had to cope with a large amount of unemployment, as well as low prices and decreased trade.

Conditions were radically different in Soviet Russia. Although substantially increasing, agriculture and industrial goods were in short supply. During the 1930's the Stalinist regime made a great effort to increase production in all sectors of the economy. Those efforts increased as the danger from Hitler intensified. Consumer production increased somewhat during the first two five-year plans, but after 1937 food and consumer allocations were decreased as a result of the stress on production of heavy industry.

Although many New Deal agencies were abolished when the war began, those who were most active in operating them continued in office. Thus, the background of those who met at Yalta differed vastly. Chronic under-production before the war, underscored by the fact that much of eastern Russia was destroyed, resulted in the Russian leaders being extremely

aware of the need for increased post-war production. The American leaders, whose chief pre-war concern had been an over-supply of goods, were still influenced in their post-war planning by the problems connected with surpluses.

Most of Roosevelt's advisors at Yalta were ill-prepared to determine top-level policy at such a critical period. Mistakes were made, particularly in underestimating the importance of economic factors in the post-war era. This emphasizes the fact that the developments that preceded and followed Yalta were characterized by forces that were more fundamental than the negotiations of diplomats in February, 1945.

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**PART ONE**

**THE INTER-WAR PERIOD: 1917-1941**



# I

## ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS<sup>1</sup>

The dominant theme that characterized Anglo-Soviet relations during the period discussed was one of mutual mistrust and suspicion. In this study, the blame for the state of those relations will not be placed on any one man or group of men. Nor will an attempt be made to trace in detail the involved diplomatic history between the two countries. Yet the legacy of suspicion and misunderstanding generated during these times does much to explain the difficulty of achieving genuine understanding, even when the two countries became allies in a great war.

The general facts of British support of anti-Bolshevik elements during the intervention period in Russia are well known. The men in England who were most responsible have never sought to deny their activities. The plans for intervention in Russia were far advanced of what finally took

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<sup>1</sup>This summary is based on the following studies: Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1949); W. P. and Zelda Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1945); Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930); Isaac Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949).

place, as proved by an Anglo-French agreement concerning proposed spheres of influence in the Ukraine and the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup> Winston Spencer Churchill, holder of many cabinet positions, and who at a later time was to take the lead in offering the hand of friendship to the Soviets, was one of the British leaders who was most active in the fight against the Bolsheviks. The attempt to overthrow the Communist regime failed for many reasons. Louis Fischer, a well known author and a man who lived in Russia for many years, wrote in 1930:

Perhaps one of the Western World's greatest errors was its persistence in the conviction that the Bolsheviks represented a mere handful of agitators who could not long hold power.<sup>2</sup>

The refusal for so long to accept the fact that Lenin and his heirs were the legitimate rulers of Russia greatly influenced English policy toward the Soviets.

Later, in 1930, Winston S. Churchill summarized intervention in this manner: "Were they (the Allies) at war with Soviet Russia? Certainly not, but they shot Soviet Russians on sight." "They desired and planned its downfall," he continued, "but war--shocking! They were impartial--Bang!"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930), I, 836.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 237.

<sup>3</sup>Winston Churchill, The Aftermath (New York: Schribner, 1929), 243.

The importance for the future of the intervention period was the intensification of the natural suspicion and distrust held by most Russians toward the West. Although unsuccessful, it was an example of actual hostile action, and the memory of those frightful days when a "capitalistic encirclement" was a reality, was probably not without its effect on the few Bolsheviks who later negotiated with the same powers.

During the 1920's Anglo-Soviet relations varied a great deal, but at no time were they really cordial. The willingness of the British people to think the worst of the Soviet Russians was apparent at different times. Perhaps it is not surprising that people are easily aroused against a society controlled by a party whose avowed goal is to destroy virtually every institution existing in their own country. Yet their very sensitivity would seem to indicate some weakness. At any rate, the diplomatic relations between the two countries were worsened several times as a result of allegations against the Soviet Union that were never proved.

Strangely enough, trade talks with the Soviets began even before the last English soldiers were out of Russia. On May 20, 1920, Leonid B. Krassin, a Soviet envoy, began trade negotiations with the British. The event revealed the dichotomy that was characteristic of British policy toward the Soviets during the following two decades. The

Labour Party strongly urged closer relations with the Soviets, and was successful at times; but powerful conservative elements also resisted any pro-Bolshevik movements. The trade talks went slowly, and only after many delays was an agreement reached on June 18, 1923.

The breach between Soviet Russia and England widened during the 1920's. The Genoa Conference of May, 1922, held for the purpose of clearing up Russia's debts, and as some hoped to take care of the Bolshevik menace as well, failed miserably for England and France. Conversations leading to the Rapallo Treaty, concluded between Germany and Soviet Russia had started in 1920.<sup>1</sup> German bitterness toward the West over the Versailles Treaty and the reparation demands was the background of these early exploratory talks. And when the left-wing attempts at revolution in Germany had been either suppressed or proved abortive, certain elements in German society (including the leaders of heavy industry and one wing of the army) turned to Moscow for an understanding between outcasts. The German rapprochement with Soviet Russia served to make English negotiations with the Soviets more difficult. Due to the Labour Party victory in the fall of 1923, however, England gave Soviet Russia de jure recognition in February of the next year.

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<sup>1</sup>Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 331.

The publication of the Zinoviev Letter on the eve of a national election that resulted in the Tory victory in August, 1924, ushered in a period of bad relations with the Soviets that finally culminated in the diplomatic rupture of 1927. The letter itself was proved quite conclusively to be a forgery.<sup>1</sup> Since it helped elect a government, the letter influenced Anglo-Soviet relations during the next few years. The uproar over the Zinoviev Letter, as well as the reaction of later charges by the British that the Soviet government was aiding coal miners in England, was symptomatic of the general anti-Soviet feeling in England, at least among those who were most vocal.

In European diplomacy, London continued its campaign against Soviet Russia. The Soviets considered the Locarno Pact, in which all the major European nations were associated but them, as directed against their country.<sup>2</sup> If we are to believe a memorandum quoted by Fischer as authentic, the British thought of Russia at that time as "the most menacing of our uncertainties," and that "because of Russia" a program for security must be worked out.<sup>3</sup> It came as

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<sup>1</sup>W. P. and Zelda K. Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1945), 197; Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 498.

<sup>2</sup>Jane Degras (ed.), Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 57.

<sup>3</sup>Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 595.

no surprise to informed Europeans when the British broke off relations with Soviet Russia on May 27, 1927. Soviet activity in China, where the Moscow agent Michael Borodin encouraged Communist movements, contributed to British bitterness.

Despite continued diplomatic bickering, England did considerable trading with Soviet Russia during these years. Exports to Russia rose to a high of just over nineteen million pounds sterling in 1925, after which they dropped off sharply. The exports to Russia were mostly manufactured products, which were paid for with lumber and grain imports. After the rupture in relations with the Soviets in 1927, the volume of trade began to slowly increase again.

In the early 1930's after the earlier breach had healed, Anglo-Soviet relations improved. A definite shift in British foreign policy toward greater cooperation with the Soviets occurred in 1934. One factor was the Soviet concentration on internal affairs, which seemed to lessen the danger of world revolution. The most important reason for the change of English policy was the menace of the rising power of Hitler and Mussolini in Europe, and of Japanese militarism in the Far East. The admittance of the U.S.S.R. into the League of Nations was a direct result of the modified British attitude. As a gesture of friendship Anthony Eden, the Privy Lord Seal, visited Moscow in the spring of 1935, but

no negotiations were conducted. Later, British regard for the Soviet Union changed markedly when opinion varied as to the Soviet's ability to be of some assistance. One could say that Stalin did some remarkable about-faces as his need for the British varied.

Anglo-Soviet relations were so complex in the years 1936-1941, that only a brief description of them can be given here. It is important to understand the events, and there were many, that served to increase mutual distrust, and which strained relations to the breaking point before the two countries found themselves in mortal danger fighting a common foe.

Isaac Deutscher, a brilliant biographer of Stalin, averred that Soviet participation in the Spanish Civil War did much to exacerbate the relations between Russia, Britain and France.<sup>1</sup> Stalin's attempt to lay all the old revolutionary ghosts aside and cooperate with Popular Front governments, only resulted in worsened relations. Elements in the successful Popular Fronts inevitably followed revolutionary tendencies and their actions naturally led to strikes and disorders. The Soviets were in the main blamed for such troubles.

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<sup>1</sup>Isaac Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 429.

While between 1936 and 1938 the Soviets attempted to better their relations with the western democracies by their activities abroad, events inside Russia largely cancelled out any progress they might have made. In the League of Nations Soviet representative Maxim Litvinov forcefully pleaded for collective action in the face of mounting German and Japanese aggression. His pleas were recognized as being genuine by many in the United States and England. But the purges, when so many veteran, high-ranking Bolsheviks were liquidated, nullified any gains the Soviets might have made by their apparently honest efforts for collective security in the League. Due to the nature of the Soviet regime, perhaps the truth about the Moscow trials will never be known. But they shocked the western democracies, and were a factor in the strained relations that followed.

The details of the events which culminated with the signing of the Munich agreement between Germany, Italy, England and France, cannot be recounted here.<sup>1</sup> During that tense September of 1938, the Soviets offered to cooperate with England and France. On September 2, 1938, Ivan Maisky,

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<sup>1</sup>The following sources are useful in studying the period: L. B. Namier, Diplomatic Prelude (London: Macmillan Co., 1948); John Wheeler-Bennett, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948); Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948).



the Soviet Ambassador to England, during a conversation with Churchill, offered to begin staff talks.<sup>1</sup> There were other offers from the Soviets but all were ignored. In Deutscher's opinion, it is impossible to know if Stalin would have gone to war to carry out his agreement, but there was nothing in his conduct at that time with which he can be reproached.<sup>2</sup> Stalin was not represented at the Munich Conference. For that slight he was to pay the western democracies with interest. Few would charge British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain with consciously planning to facilitate a German attack on Russia. Certainly his goal was peace. But Stalin did take Munich to mean an attempt to turn the Nazis east, and his suspicion of England increased.

Throughout the winter of 1938-1939, the situation in Europe was very explosive. The complete dissolution of Czechoslovakia on March 14, 1939, shocked Chamberlain into taking extreme action. On March 31, he pledged England to support Poland in case of attack. The pledge, also given by France, was proclaimed without reference to Russia. In a private letter to Churchill, Prime Minister Chamberlain wrote on March 26: "I must confess to a profound distrust of Russia. I have no belief whatever in her ability to

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<sup>1</sup>Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1948), 294.

<sup>2</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 427.

maintain an offensive." "And I distrust her motives," he added, "which seem to me to have little connection with our ideas of liberty. Moreover, she is both hated and suspected by the smaller states."<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain had little faith in Russian strength, a mistake that many people made until 1942. But his statement also reveals the enmity and blind suspicion that he, as well as many other people in the Western World, held toward the Soviets during the period. It furnishes one not only with a key to understanding British policy in the succeeding months, but also for understanding Stalin's startling volte face in August, 1939.

The primary significance of the negotiations held during the summer of 1939 was the extreme reluctance of the British to come to an agreement with Moscow. During those months Stalin played a diplomatic game fraught with danger, but did so with consummate skill. But the very reticence of the British to reach an understanding with the Soviets made his choice easier. Litvinov was replaced as Soviet Foreign Minister by Vyacheslav Molotov in the early summer of 1939, in order to make negotiating with the race-conscious Germans easier. The German Foreign Secretary, Joachim von Ribbentrop flew to Moscow on August 23, 1939, where, after two meetings

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 349.

with Stalin, a pact was signed. With the exception of a secret protocol, the terms of the agreement were announced to a startled world the same day. In the opinion of Deutscher it is impossible to say confidently whether Stalin attached greater importance to German or Allied negotiations.<sup>1</sup> One might say that the self-delusion and wishful thinking toward Russia, of which not only Chamberlain, but many other people in the Western World were guilty, was the basic cause for the failure of British diplomacy.

After the publication of the pact, and later the Soviet invasion of Poland, Anglo-Soviet relations reached their nadir. Most people considered Russia as a partner in the subjugation of that unfortunate nation. And the Soviet attack on Finland, which began on November 30, 1939, led to the final deterioration in relations. The people in England had great sympathy for the Finns in their struggle against the Russian invaders. On December 14, Russia was expelled from the League of Nations. Churchill urged that full support be given the Finns.<sup>2</sup> The recriminations of the press on both sides further embittered relations. On March 2, 1940, Edouard Daladier, the French Premier, decided

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 434.

<sup>2</sup>Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 544.

to send 50,000 volunteers to Finland later in the month. In the light of later events, the French offer seems fantastic, for it would have meant weakening the front against Hitler's forces.

In a short time, moreover, the phony war exploded into a very real struggle, and France was over-run by Hitler's Legions in six weeks. The Third Republic was forced to sign an armistice on June 22, 1940. The German victories struck fear in the hearts of those in Moscow, as well as the British leaders. But Stalin still attempted to hide behind the provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The able Sir Stafford Cripps was appointed Ambassador to Russia on June 9, 1940. Under his directions, negotiations at Moscow were carried on, but no satisfactory agreement was reached regarding outstanding differences, which were in reality rather minor.

On November 9, 1941, in response to Hitler's invitation, and while the Western World waited and wondered, Molotov went to Berlin. During the ensuing negotiations Stalin, in effect, refused to join in a Four-Power Pact in return for vague promises for parts of the British Empire. It was a grave move, and three weeks later Hitler gave his Chief of Staff the first instructions on the campaign against Russia.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 451.

The appointment of Anthony Eden to the post of Foreign Minister in December, 1940, was designed to take advantage of any possibility for better relations with Moscow.<sup>1</sup> But during the winter and spring of 1941 attention was diverted to Hitler, then moving south into the Balkans. Stalin, now concerned with Hitler's every feint, managed to gain a very important diplomatic victory on April 13, 1941, when he concluded a nonaggression pact with Japan. Yet the Russian dictator desperately tried to placate Hitler during the spring of 1941. Despite warnings given Stalin by Americans, Englishmen, and presumably his own intelligence, he refused to order full mobilization along the common border with Hitler. He sometimes went to ludicrous extremes in his attempt to appease Hitler. In such a situation it is evident that Moscow would limit its contact with the British to a diplomatic minimum. After weakening his possible strength on the Eastern Front, the future Generalissimo made a last desperate effort to appease Hitler. On June 14, exactly one week before the invasion, he authorized his news agencies against all diplomatic custom, to violently attack the British Ambassador for spreading rumors of an impending Russo-German war.<sup>2</sup> Such efforts were near pathetic, for Hitler's invasion

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<sup>1</sup>Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, 653.

<sup>2</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 455.

came as scheduled. Stalin and Churchill, who had so often been at odds, suddenly found themselves allies in a desperate struggle against the powerful German war machine.

The difficulties that faced the two countries as they sought to maintain an alliance, and later to agree on a peace settlement, should be evident from the foregoing discussion. It is now necessary to briefly review the relations between Soviet Russia and the United States, the last country to join the ranks of the Big Three.

## II

### AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS<sup>1</sup>

Mutual hostility characterized many phases of the relations between the United States and Soviet Russia between the years 1917-1941. Yet of all the states that could be defined as capitalist according to Marxist doctrine, Moscow was less antagonistic toward the United States. Perhaps this was in part a consequence of the Soviets understanding that the health of American capitalism was still good. More important was Moscow's desire to side with Washington against Tokyo and--if Rapallo proved illusory--against Germany. For both Marxist and power politics reasons therefore, Soviet Russia's policy toward the United States was the best example of what later came to be known as the policy of co-existence. Yet even after President Franklin Delano Roosevelt extended recognition to the Soviet Union in 1933 the relations between the two nations remained cool until Hitler's attack to the East.

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<sup>1</sup>This summary is based primarily on the following studies: Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs (New York: Jonathon Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930); Foster Rhea Dulles, The Road to Teheran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944); William A. Williams, American-Russian Relations 1781-1947 (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1952); William L. Langer, The Challenge to Isolation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952).

The delay on the part of the United States to recognize Communist Russia might suggest a more militant opposition against Communist principles than in England where recognition had been extended many years before, or perhaps less enlightened statesmanship. In England the Labour Party continually pressed for closer ties with the Soviets. During the same period there was a small but influential group of men in the United States that continually urged for recognition of Soviet Russia. But they never were supported by a party dedicated to their cause, as was true of those in England who advocated greater cooperation with the Soviets.

American participation in the intervention in Russia in 1917-1920 played a significant role in later relations. Opinion is varied concerning American support of that abortive venture. Even though the United States was less active than the other powers, perhaps her responsibility was just as great, for America was then regarded as the moral leader of the world. President Woodrow Wilson's role was controversial, but that he allowed point six of his own Fourteen Points, which guaranteed the integrity of Russia, to be violated by American troops cannot be denied. Louis Fischer's view, in 1930, was that America was the "least aggressive of the Powers in the Russian Civil War."<sup>1</sup> The United States

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<sup>1</sup>Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 225.



was never united in its policy toward the Soviet regime, most probably because of confusion within the administration. In 1931, General William S. Graves, who commanded the American troops in Siberia, described the conflicting orders that he had received while there. The General became convinced that the primary reason for his force being sent to Siberia was to assist anti-Bolshevik elements. "I doubt if any unbiased person," he wrote, "would ever hold that the United States did not interfere with the internal affairs of Russia."<sup>1</sup> American troops were also sent to North Russia, and later the government sanctioned loans to Admiral Alexander Kolchak.

The legacy of the American action was one of fear and suspicion. The possibility of a capitalistic encirclement of Russia was dramatically demonstrated. The action was unfortunate, and twenty years later the ruler of Russia was to remind western leaders of their earlier policies.

The 1920's were barren of any political action that served to better the relations between the two countries. On August 10, 1920, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby expressed the views upon which Washington based its policy toward Russia during the next decade. The Secretary wrote: ". . . the present rulers of Russia do not rule by the will . . . of the Russian people." Later

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<sup>1</sup>William S. Graves, America's Siberian Adventure (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931), 347.

he emphasized that, "in the view of this Government, there cannot be any common ground . . . with a Power whose conceptions of international relations are so entirely alien to our own. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Washington had reverted to Wilson's earlier policy, which meant that recognition would be granted only after the government was approved.

Charles Evans Hughes, who succeeded Colby as Secretary of State, remained militantly opposed to the Soviet regime. He refused recognition of Soviet Russia on the grounds that there was "insufficient proof that it had been accepted;" and "its persistent effort to destroy the governments whose recognition it sought."<sup>2</sup> As the years passed, the first reason seemed to lose its validity, and the bogey of Soviet propaganda was more frequently used. Hughes' successor, Frank B. Kellogg made no effort to reach an understanding with the Soviets. The bitter life-long enmity of Herbert Hoover toward the Communists in Russia is well known. He served as President of the United States from 1928 to 1932, and he and his Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson maintained the non-recognition policy.

Of considerable importance in American-Soviet relations was a small group of men who consistently advocated American

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<sup>1</sup>Notes Exchanged on the Russian-Polish Situation by the United States, France, and Poland," International Conciliation (October, 1920), 464.

<sup>2</sup>Merlo J. Pusey, Charles Evans Hughes (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), 228.

recognition of Soviet Russia. There was never any doubt as to their loyalty to the United States. The senator from Idaho, William E. Borah, was a leader in the group of those in the government. Raymond Robins, who had been in Russia at the time of the October Revolution as head of the American Red Cross Commission, and who later negotiated with the Bolshevik leaders, was a prominent non-government member of the group. Alexander Gumberg, who had also been in Russia at the time of the Revolution, became an influential member of the group. Their arguments for recognition finally prevailed, but only after the majority of the business community had come to support them, and a new party had come to power.

Despite the fact that Soviet Russia had been previously described as an "economic vacuum," Senator Borah pointed out in 1931 that one of the biggest problems of that time was, "what to do with the vast exports coming out of Russia."<sup>1</sup> Trade with the Soviets increased substantially throughout the 1920's. This growth took place even though the United States still prevented Russian gold from entering the country.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>E. G. Buehler, B. W. Maxwell, and R. R. Pflaum, Recognition of Soviet Russia (New York: The H. H. Wilson Co., 1931), 257.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick L. Schuman, American Policy Toward Russia Since 1917 (New York: International Publishers, 1928), 259.

The Ford Company, General Electric, Standard Oil, and other firms did business with the Soviets. Colonel Hugh L. Cooper was widely known as engineer for the Dnepropetrovsk Dam project. Amtorg, a Soviet trading agency which employed several hundred Russians, was established in New York in the early 1920's. Exports to Russia rose from \$68,906,000 in 1925, to \$114,390,000 in 1930.<sup>1</sup> After 1929 the volume of exports to Russia was extremely important for certain industries; in 1931 the Soviet Union purchased sixty-five per cent of the machine tool industry's exports.<sup>2</sup> The prospect of aiding American capitalism with increased Soviet trade was a vital factor when recognition was finally granted the Soviet Union in November, 1933.

American policy toward Soviet Russia during the 1930's actually changed little from the previous decade. If the policy could not be termed hostile, at least there was a definite lack of effort to cooperate with the Soviets, sometimes when it would have been to the marked advantage of the United States. The failure of American statesmen was graphically shown in the Far East when nothing was done in 1931 to reach an understanding with Moscow, which would have

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<sup>1</sup>The United States and the Soviet Union (Committee on Russian-American Relations, 1933), 204.

<sup>2</sup>William A. Williams, American-Russian Relations, 1781-1947 (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1952), 244-45.

been virtually the only way to limit the Japanese advance. Later, in the face of continued Japanese and German aggression, Washington still refused to respond to Soviet offers for closer cooperation. How much this policy toward Moscow was due to blind prejudice against the Communist regime, or actual misinformation is difficult to determine. The estimate of the strength of Soviet Russia made by the military when she was attacked in 1941 would indicate that a lack of information was responsible for some of our errors. Yet that is by no means true of the entire period, for even a weakened Russia would have helped limit Japanese and German aggression in the early 1930's.

The immediate returns from recognition were disappointing. Trade was not greatly increased, as many people had hoped. After considerable haggling, debt negotiations finally broke down on February 1, 1935. The earlier Litvinov-Roosevelt talks were sufficiently vague on the matter of extending loans or credits to Soviet Russia, so that the question was not settled either way. The Roosevelt Administration's decision to refuse a large loan as part of the debt settlement would appear to be primarily responsible for the failure of the negotiations, rather than the passage of the Johnson Act, which is the usual explanation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, American-Russian Relations, 244-45.

To increase the tension, a progress report was given on the Communist movement in America during the Third International meeting in Moscow in 1935. Secretary of State Cordell Hull vigorously protested the action on the grounds that the propaganda clauses of the treaty signed when recognition was granted had been broken. After the Soviets declined to accept our protest, Hull described the situation thus: "We were now almost where we started. We had official relations with Moscow, but they rested on no bedrock of friendship and cooperation." Although trying, he declared that he could not establish the sound relationship between the two countries "that he thought so essential . . . as a counterweight for peace in the scales tipping more sharply to war."<sup>1</sup> During the complex and momentous events that took place during the years which preceded the outbreak of hostilities the two nations were drifting farther apart. The United States reiterated its position of isolation, while the Soviet Union remained the strongest proponent of collective action. As in England, the purge trials in Russia caused a reaction in the United States against the Soviets. Whatever was the real cause behind the trials, it is evident that they cost the Communists much prestige in England and America. It would be too much to assume, however, that they were responsible for the failure of the countries in the West to reach

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<sup>1</sup>The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), I, 307.

an understanding with the Soviets which would have forestalled Hitler. The United States had never attempted to reach an agreement with Moscow in the early 1930's that might have stabilized the Far East.

But it does not seem probable that Americans as a whole wished to see Hitler turn east and attack Russia. Certainly most people wanted peace. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August, 1939, brought a reaction against Soviet Russia from most Americans. When the Soviets participated in the fourth partition of Poland even left-wing publications normally friendly to them denounced the action. Soviet diplomatic stock in the United States dropped to a new low. But it was soon to go lower.

The Finnish war, which began on November 30, 1940, with the attack of the Red Army, intensified anti-Soviet feelings in the United States. No act by Hitler during the same period resulted in any greater revulsion of feeling. Few people cared to try to understand the Soviet's action. After Secretary of State Cordell Hull testified before a Senate Committee that the Soviets had frequently broken anti-propaganda pledges previously given by them, the House failed by only three votes to pass an amendment that would have stricken from the budget the salary for the American Ambassador in Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Foster Rhea Dulles, The Road to Teheran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), 225.

President Roosevelt expressed publicly for the first time on February 11, 1940, his criticism of the men in Moscow who a short time later were to become his allies. "I had originally been sympathetic toward the Soviet Revolution," the President remarked in an address before the American Youth Congress, "but my earlier hopes had been shattered, or put in cold storage for a better day." "Soviet Russia," concluded the President, "was run by a dictatorship as absolute as any in the world and was allied with another dictatorship."<sup>1</sup> By the spring of 1940 American Soviet relations were at their nadir. In the words of Sumner Welles, relations with Russia were only "nominal" and he further stated that "the Washington administration had been adhering to a policy of doing everything possible to cut down the export of strategic material to the Soviet Union."<sup>2</sup> On the whole, this policy was successful.

The tremendous military successes of the Nazis in the spring of 1940, which culminated with the surrender of France on June 22, induced Washington as well as London to take a

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<sup>1</sup>Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York: Random House, 1938-1950), XIII, 93.

<sup>2</sup>William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 389.



second look at Soviet Russia. The move toward better relations proceeded very slowly. On July 23, 1940, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles spoke out against the Soviet incorporation of the three Baltic States. Well could Molotov address the Supreme Soviet on August 1, 1940, saying, "I will not dwell on our relations with America, if only for the reason that there is nothing good that can be said about them."<sup>1</sup>

The situation in the Far East grew alarming, and at last Washington was constrained to negotiate with the Soviets. Relations improved somewhat as a result of meetings held between Sumner Welles and the Soviet Ambassador Constantine Oumansky. By the end of the summer of 1940, "Stimson, Morgenthau and even Under-Secretary Welles had come to see the possibility of exploiting the supposedly growing divergence between the Nazis and the Soviets."<sup>2</sup> By August, despite the fact that the Americans had been slower to understand the need for better relations with the Soviets, the viewpoints of British and American officials concerning the Soviets were quite similar.

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<sup>1</sup>Langer, The Challenge to Isolation, 724.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 728.

No negotiations of importance were carried on between Soviet Russia and the United States during the winter and spring of 1941. Hitler was expanding south at that time, and Stalin was desperately trying to maintain peaceful relations with the German dictator. On April 13, the mistrust and hostility of Americans toward the Soviet regime broke forth anew. After meetings in Berlin, the Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka journeyed to Moscow, where a non-aggression treaty was signed between the two old antagonists. Negative American reaction to the treaty was quick and vocal. The slow, hesitant attempts that were being made to secure closer cooperation with the Soviets were doomed. The Soviet action was viewed as a "direct slap, and as ultimate proof that Moscow, despite the folly of its policy, was irretrievably committed to the cause of the Axis powers."<sup>1</sup> Russian assets were frozen and further licenses for shipments to Vladivostok were withheld. "I might as well go home," Ambassador Oumansky is reported to have said to a state department official, "I can do nothing in Washington."<sup>2</sup>

Hitler's invasion of Russia on June 22, 1941, presented a dilemma to Washington. The longstanding hostility in

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<sup>1</sup>Pauline Tompkins, American-Russian Relations in the Far East (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), 272.

<sup>2</sup>Dulles, The Road to Teheran, 230.

America toward Soviet Russia that had manifested itself many times in the past could not be overcome in the course of a few days or weeks. Even though the world was in a convulsive state, when the unexpected often happened, few events could have been more surprising to the average American. Though the official attitude toward the Soviets soon changed the public only slowly came to accept them, first as friends, and later as allies.

PART TWO

WARTIME ALLIES

HOLDING THE LINE, 1941-1943<sup>1</sup>

Hitler's attack on Russia June 22, 1941, effected a radical change in the relationship between the United States, England, and the Soviet Union. The Western Allies moved toward cooperation with the Soviets, particularly after the initial defeat of the Nazis before Moscow by the Soviet armies, an event which coincided with American entrance into the war. This wartime alliance was a very complex relationship. For the purpose of this study the military and political events that took place before the Crimean Conference need not be discussed in detail. But it does seem desirable to comment on the more important conferences and military events that influenced relations between the Western Allies and the U.S.S.R. Only against such a background does the Yalta Conference become understandable.

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<sup>1</sup>This summary is based primarily on the following studies: Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper and Bros., 1948); Winston Churchill, The Hinge of Fate (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1951); Churchill, Closing the Ring (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1952); The Memoirs of Cordell Hall (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948).

The weary and harassed English, who had been fighting virtually alone against Hitler for almost a year, quickly united behind Churchill when he accepted the Russians as allies. To understand the extent to which that alliance was born of mutual interest, it is only necessary to examine a few lines from the speech given by Churchill on June 22, 1941. "The Nazi regime is indistinguishable from the worst features of Communism," Churchill said. "No one has been a more consistent opponent of Communism than I have for the last twenty-five years. I will unsay no word that I have spoken against it." In speaking of Hitler's objectives, Churchill asserted that "he wishes to destroy the Russian power because he hopes that if he succeeds in this he will be able to bring back the main strength of his army and air force from the East and hurl it upon this island, which he knows he must conquer or suffer the penalty of his crimes." Accepting the Russians as allies, he argued that "the Russian danger is therefore, our danger . . . just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free men . . . in every quarter of the globe."<sup>1</sup> Churchill chose the least dangerous of what he considered two evils, and the one he considered to be strengthening Britain's immediate position.

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<sup>1</sup>Winston Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1950), 371-73.

Americans were slower to accept the need for aiding the Russians. If one recalls the character of pre-war relations with Soviet Russia that hesitancy is easy to understand. "Collaboration between Britain and Russia," Herbert Hoover declared, "makes the whole argument of joining the war to bring the Four Freedoms a gargantuan jest."<sup>1</sup> Many agreed with him. The estimate given by the United States military leaders of Russia's ability to withstand the Nazi invasion is likewise revealing. After conferences with his military advisors, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson reported to the President as follows: "Germany will be thoroughly occupied in beating Russia for a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months."<sup>2</sup> The British military expressed similar views. These estimates would seem to reveal an incredible lack of knowledge of the Soviet Union. Ordinarily, military intelligence is not influenced by ideology. The estimates of the military were often wrong in those years, as proved by the speedy defeat of the French army, which, it is safe to say, was expected by very few. In the case of the Soviet Union, however, it was quite possible that intelligence reports were influenced by the then current

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Dulles, The Road to Teheran, 232.

<sup>2</sup>Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), 303.

hostile attitude toward Soviet Russia. Perhaps favorable reports of Soviet Russia were suppressed or ignored by those who determined policy. As an example, it does not seem that the reports of Joseph E. Davies, American Ambassador to Russia from 1936 to 1939, were seriously considered.

President Roosevelt was hesitant about committing the United States to provide aid to the Russians. There were powerful elements in the country that opposed aiding the Communists under any circumstances, but more important was the fact that there was little proof then that Hitler's armies could be stopped. Clearly, more information was necessary. At this point Harry L. Hopkins made his first appearance in American-Soviet relations. As the special advisor to a President, he was not without precedent. In many ways a remarkable man, Hopkins had been associated with various agencies in the New Deal program, and after many of the creations of the 1930's had ceased to exist he continued to remain in the White House. He played an important role in every conference of major importance held during the war, including Yalta; and he was constantly active in our relations with the Soviets. Hopkins was admittedly without language training or diplomatic experience, but his biographer emphasized that his quick ability to learn in new fields largely offset his previous inexperience.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 12.



Perhaps those critical years required more from the men who shaped our foreign policy.

The very important journey to Moscow made by Hopkins in July, 1941, demonstrated the unorthodox manner in which our foreign affairs were conducted so many times during the war. While in London, Hopkins got the idea to go to Moscow, and when the President received his request permission was granted. As was subsequently to be true on so many occasions during the war, the State Department was largely by-passed. This was primarily due to Roosevelt's tendency to employ personal representatives to carry out functions usually assigned to the State Department. Once in Moscow, Hopkins established a candid relationship with Stalin, and was given a frank estimate of the situation by the Red Leader. He had only two meetings with Stalin, and saw no Russian factories or any part of the great battle that was then raging. Hopkins knew nothing about military tactics. He gained his conclusions from Stalin's manner and from what he was told by the Russian Leader. His reports were used as the basis to form Russian policy, and, surprisingly enough, his estimates proved to be quite accurate. Hopkins became convinced that the Russians would keep fighting, and he was particularly impressed when Stalin gave aluminum high priority on his list of needs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 344.

Churchill and Roosevelt, meanwhile, met at sea off Newfoundland on August 9, 1941, and after several days of consultation agreed upon the principles that later became known as the Atlantic Charter. Although the United States was not technically at war, this document set forth the wartime objectives of the United States as well as England. Three of the principles agreed upon by Churchill and Roosevelt were:

That their country would seek no aggrandizement, that they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned, and that they respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of these commitments made while the United States was not at war, and without prior consultation with Russia, was to become evident when Stalin sought to open discussions of the post-war settlement.

The problem of supplying the Russians became very important in the fall of 1941, when the battle of Moscow was reaching a decisive stage. William Averell Harriman had been sent to Britain as Lend-Lease representative early in 1941 during a similar crisis. He was admirably fitted for the job, and soon won the confidence of the British. Harriman was a personal representative of Roosevelt, and was used

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<sup>1</sup>Leland M. Goodrich and Marie J. Carroll (eds.), Documents of American Foreign Relations (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), IV, 11.

in much the same way as was Hopkins. His importance in American-Russian relations increased as the war progressed. Sent to Moscow with Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Supply for England, late in September, 1941, Harriman negotiated with Stalin concerning the problems of material aid. The meetings were successful despite Stalin's periodic rudeness. On October 30, Roosevelt agreed to the Russian requests for Lend-Lease shipments totaling one billion dollars.<sup>1</sup>

Late in the fall of 1941 the situation of those fighting Hitler remained extremely critical, but the Red Army's success in holding the line before Moscow gave people the faint hope that perhaps the Nazis could be defeated. The British and Russians were greatly encouraged when the United States declared war in answer to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Although most Americans were repelled by the Soviet system of government, Hitler presented such an obvious, immediate danger that when the Russians succeeded in slowing the advance of his armies in the summer and fall of 1941, their limited success provided arguments that overcame objections of those who opposed sending them aid. Thus the formal entrance of the United States into the war brought a change in this country's relationship with England and Russia, but not as great as might be imagined as the United States had been

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 306.

directing its resources against the common enemy for some time. Joint military planning was now necessary, however, and Churchill came to Washington late in December, 1941. During the ensuing discussions, remarkably long-range plans were made by the military, and it was decided that the European Theater would be given priority.

These discussions in Washington resulted in the Declaration of the United Nations, signed by twenty-six nations including Russia. The Powers agreed to employ their full resources against the common enemy, and to make no separate peace. The Atlantic Charter, with the addition of a provision providing for freedom of religion, was included in this declaration. The circumstances surrounding the Russian acceptance of the Atlantic Charter, and its effect on political negotiations later in the war, form one of the most important episodes of the entire period.

Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov went to London and Washington in March, 1942, primarily to urge a second front, but also to negotiate a treaty that would establish postwar boundaries in Eastern Europe. Washington was opposed to any such commitments at that time. But in a message to Roosevelt on March 7, Churchill declared that "the increasing gravity of the war has led me to feel that the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to

deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her." Then he added that "this was the basis on which Russia acceded to the Charter. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

This admission is of key importance. The controversy over Poland's borders, and the question of the status of the Baltic Nations would seem to have been settled by January, 1942. Yet in the spring of 1942, Washington refused to agree to Russian control over the Baltic States. Perhaps the State Department was not fully informed at the time the agreement was made; or, which is more likely, Washington chose to ignore its earlier commitment which it found to be undesirable. The Poles continued to believe that Roosevelt would help them regain their pre-war territory until late in 1944. The record is not clear as to Roosevelt's attitude concerning Poland's borders during the Teheran Conference, but the condition to which the Soviets acceded to the Atlantic Charter would seem to rule out the possibility of the President upholding Poland's right to territory east of the Molotov-Ribbentrop line. Churchill's early advocacy of the Curzon Line is an indication that he had accepted the basic principle involved. President Roosevelt's continued indecisiveness concerning Poland is difficult to explain. Probably it was due mainly to his inability to accept the

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, The Hinge of Fate (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1951), 327.

consequences of the agreements made with Russia when that country agreed to the provisions of the Atlantic Charter. His vagueness aroused false hopes in the Poles, and did not advance their cause.

During Molotov's visit a twenty year treaty of alliance, omitting all mention of boundaries, was signed by England and Soviet Russia. Churchill would have been willing to include boundaries, and it was due mainly to Washington's stiff opposition that no territorial agreements were included. Molotov's second concern was to persuade the Western Allies to establish a second front. Unfortunately Roosevelt seemed to indicate to Molotov that we would provide a second front in 1942. After asking Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall if such an operation seemed probable, the President then "authorized Mr. Molotov to inform Mr. Stalin that we expect the formation of a second front this year."<sup>1</sup> Churchill was more non-committal, and in an side memoir he made it clear they could not promise a second front in 1942.<sup>2</sup> The question of a second front was no longer important at Yalta, but it had a vital effect on relations between the Allies during 1942 and 1943. Hopkins was generally pleased with the results of the Molotov visits. "I am sure," he

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 563.

<sup>2</sup>Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, 392.

observed to the American Ambassador to England John G. Winant, "that we at least bridged one more gap between ourselves and Russia."<sup>1</sup>

But a second front in 1942 was ruled out in July, and it was felt that Churchill should go to Moscow and explain the situation personally to Stalin. The Prime Minister cabled Roosevelt requesting him to allow Harriman to accompany him to Moscow. Churchill and Harriman arrived in Moscow August 13, 1942.<sup>2</sup> Of their first meeting with Stalin, Churchill reported that the Marshal looked "glum" when he was informed that no second front would take place that year. In revealing to Stalin the Allied plans for 1943, Churchill envisaged numerous attacks on the French coast. It is easy to understand the basic cause for the deterioration of relations between the Soviets and their Western Allies in 1943, when the military situation made an invasion of France impossible. When Stalin suddenly changed his attitude from one of cordiality during the first meeting to that of unfriendliness in the second, Churchill made this analysis of the shift:

I think the most probable is that his Council of Commissars did not take the news of what I

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<sup>1</sup> Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 569.

<sup>2</sup> This meeting represented the first time that Harriman attended a top-level conference between the Soviets and the Western leaders. There is no record regarding his activities there, but it is likely that he agreed with Churchill on all major questions.

brought as well as he did. They may have more power than we suppose and less knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The two great leaders seemed to have reached a working relationship; but no important political decisions are known to have been made at that time.

Considering the nature of past relations, it is apparent that a sudden alliance with the Soviets would create problems. But there is no doubt that Hitlerism constituted the greatest threat to civilization at that time. The decision taken by Washington to cooperate with all who would fight Hitler was basically sound. Some critics have charged that the administration went to unnecessary lengths to dispel the unfavorable and even hostile attitude held by many toward our Communist ally. This is quite possible. If so, perhaps they became influenced by their own utterances into taking an overly sanguine view of Soviet intentions. Jan Ciechanowski, the Polish Ambassador in Washington, wrote that Hopkins told him in 1943 that it was possible Roosevelt had oversold Russia to the American people.<sup>2</sup> No doubt Hopkins and Roosevelt had natural suspicions regarding the Soviets. But their lack of specialized knowledge greatly handicapped them in forming a positive policy toward the Soviets. This

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, 489.

<sup>2</sup>Jan Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1947), 199.



weakness of American policy became more evident as the war continued.

Relations between Soviet Russia and the Western Allies became quite tense during 1943. The tide of war definitely turned in favor of the Allies. One of the most significant battles of the first half of the twentieth century was fought at Stalingrad, where the Russians won a decisive victory. This German defeat had important consequences for Russia's relationship with the rest of the world. Leaders of the West began to realize, some perhaps for the first time, that Soviet Russia would be a major power after the war, and that it was very important to conduct diplomacy within this framework. Stalin, a man who knew the value of power so well, could not but have had full cognizance of Russia's new position. The effect was to put England and America in an increasingly defensive position; and those countries began to make proposals to and requests of Soviet Russia, instead of the reverse which had been true prior to the war and even until the battle of Stalingrad was won.

The first event of major importance in 1943 was the Casablanca Conference. No decisions were made that directly affected relations with the Soviets. But unexpected delays in military operations planned at Casablanca later brought forth complaints from the Kremlin. A convoy scheduled to sail for Russia in March had to be cancelled due to needs

in North Africa. Stalin protested the action, and the situation was not bettered when Ambassador William H. Standley made an unauthorized statement charging that the Soviet government was withholding from the Russian people the amount of aid provided by the United States. His statement appeared on March 8, 1943, and although the Soviets resented his insinuations they promptly published the figures on the amount of aid received through the Lend-Lease shipments. The White House did not approve of the action, and it was shortly decided to recall Standley.

Hopkins evidently disapproved of the action also, but Harriman wrote a revealing letter concerning the incident. "Many of my friends here," he reported, "are secretly pleased at the way Standley spoke out in Moscow, even if this was an indiscretion." He added that, "the feeling is growing here that we will build trouble for the future if we allow ourselves to be kicked around by the Russians."<sup>1</sup> Harriman's remarks indicate that even at that early date he realized the need for adopting a firmer policy toward the Soviets. That view came to prevail among Western statesmen only much later. Unlike Hopkins, Harriman did not have direct access to the President, and consequently was never in a position to directly make policy. But this was partly offset by the fact that policy came to be made on the scene more as time went on.

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 708.

Several other events took place during the first six months of 1943 that influenced relations between the Allies. As a direct result of the discovery by the Germans of the Katyn murder victims, there was a rupture of relations between the London Poles and Soviet Russia. One bright event in an otherwise rather gloomy year of relations between the Western Allies and the Soviets was the announcement on May 22, 1943, of the dissolution of the Third International. This Soviet action was welcomed by the people and leaders of the Western Nations. But the proclamation did not materially better the relations of England and the United States with their Eastern Ally. Suspicion of the Soviets remained, and more important, Soviet policy concerning Poland and Russia's general belligerency at that time did not allow a policy change.

Relations with the Soviets became so tense that Roosevelt felt compelled to attempt to arrange a meeting with Stalin. Churchill was not to be present. The former Ambassador to Soviet Russia, Joseph E. Davies, a man whom the Russians trusted as much as anyone from the West, conferred with Stalin for eleven hours. Stalin finally agreed to meet with the President sometime during July. Harriman, whose actual position was that of Lend-Lease representative to England, was instructed to inform Churchill of the plan.<sup>1</sup> But other

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 616.

developments forestalled this scheduled conference. Two important military conferences were held by the Allies during the summer of 1943. On May 11, Churchill and his staff arrived in the United States to plan future operations. During the ensuing discussions the date for the cross-channel invasion of France was definitely set for May, 1944. The military plans made at Washington evidently did not please Stalin, and he sent a cable to Churchill in which he charged his allies with deliberate bad faith. "But now," Sherwood wrote, "Churchill was evidently so angry that he sent off a scorching cable to which Roosevelt would never have agreed, had he been given a chance to read it in advance."<sup>1</sup> Stalin angrily recalled Litvinov and Ivan Maisky, the Russian Ambassadors to the Western Allies, and the proposed meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt was indefinitely postponed.

The diplomatic situation became serious, but the awareness of mutual interest in their fight against a common foe prevented a further deterioration of relations. At the Conference between England and the United States in Quebec on August 17, Hopkins argued from an important memorandum entitled "Russia's Position," prepared by high-level military authorities. "Russia's post-war position in Europe will be a dominant one," it began. After explaining that with

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 734.

Germany crushed no power in Europe could hope to challenge Russia, the report continued: "Since Russia is the decisive factor in the war . . . every effort must be made to obtain her friendship. Likewise, since without question she will dominate Europe . . . it is even more essential to develop and maintain the most friendly relations with her." Regarding the war against Japan, the report added, "finally, the most important factor the United States has to consider in relation to Russia is the prosecution of the war in the Pacific."<sup>1</sup>

The above memorandum has been quoted often by those who seek to justify Roosevelt's later actions at Teheran and Yalta. The section that stressed Russia's importance in the Pacific war certainly did put the President at a disadvantage in dealing with the Russian dictator. In order to be certain of assistance from the Russians in the war against Japan, he actually was in a position where many concessions might have to be made to Stalin. This was particularly true at Yalta, where the American delegation had to be careful not to alienate the Soviets too much on any issue. Yet the first section of the memorandum, which pointed to Russia's supreme position in Europe, should have also served as a warning to Roosevelt. But there is no evidence

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 748.

to show that he faced the issue squarely at either Teheran or Yalta. Nor was the State Department spurred to greater diplomatic activity in Europe such as planning for a realistic boundary settlement in eastern Europe after the war. On the contrary, American diplomacy was extremely inactive during 1944, despite the problems that were then becoming acute.

Toward the end of the Quebec Conference word was received that Stalin had agreed to a meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Moscow. It was generally thought that the meeting would be a prelude to a Big Three Conference, and Secretary of State Hull was sent as American spokesman to the Moscow Conference of October, 1943. The meeting was the first occasion that decisions were made and subjects discussed that were directly connected with the later negotiations at Yalta. Political questions could no longer be ignored, although the Soviets spent much time discussing the second front. The Conference was successful, and helped to insure President Roosevelt's long-sought meeting with Stalin. The Four-Power Declaration was considered important as it was the first real assurance given by the Powers that a World Organization would be established.

Harriman had been appointed United States Ambassador to Russia in October, 1943, after Standley's recall; but

though he attended all the meetings at Moscow there is no record of his activities. Regarding the Pacific war, Hull described a conversation he had with Stalin as follows:

He astonished and delighted me by saying clearly and unequivocally that, when the Allies succeeded in defeating Germany, the Soviet Union would then join in defeating Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Hull added that Stalin referred to the war in the Pacific entirely on his own. Stalin very likely considered his voluntary offer as his part of a quid pro quo bargain in which the Western Allies were expected to guarantee Russia's western borders. When Washington refused to negotiate a settlement, Stalin probably felt that he had grounds to doubt their good faith. It is possible that Roosevelt could have obtained a direct commitment in the fall of 1943 from Stalin to enter the war against Japan at some future time in return for a settlement of Russia's western borders that would not have included any concessions in the Far East. But it is doubtful if it would have changed the ultimate course of events in Asia, as the Chinese Revolution was a result of many factors, only some of which were connected with Russian activity.

Hull was able to confer but briefly with Roosevelt as the latter was leaving for Cairo to meet Chiang Kai-shek

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<sup>1</sup>The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1309.

on November 13. The difficulties had been overcome, and the President was able to journey to Teheran for a meeting with the Red leader. At Cairo he agreed to give increased aid to China by conducting an offensive in Burma and making an amphibious assault on the Andaman Islands. Ten days later the President broke his promise to the Chinese in order to free more landing craft for the European Theater. In the meantime he had gained Stalin's assurance that Russia would enter the war against Japan when Germany was defeated, an agreement that seemed to ease the situation in the Far East. Stalin's word was good in those days.

Roosevelt and Churchill arrived at Teheran on Sunday, November 20, 1943. Various interpretations have been given of the events that took place there. The subjects discussed were primarily military; but certain political questions that became so important later were also considered. No final political decisions were made, but the military strategy agreed upon was of paramount importance. To a large degree, the military decisions made at Teheran determined the position in which each country found itself at the Yalta Conference.

Several years after the war Churchill attempted to prove that at no time did he advocate abandoning the cross-channel operation, but that he was concerned only with using troops already available in the Mediterranean to invade islands in



the Aegean Sea and possibly to land on the Dalmation Coast. This could very well be true. But that he was not also thinking in terms of the relative post-war position of Russia and England passes the limits of credibility. He made a curious statement concerning his plans for military action in the Mediterranean. "I would have gained Stalin," he wrote, "but the President was oppressed by the prejudices of his military advisors and drifted to and fro in the argument, with the result that the whole of these subsidiary but gleaming opportunities were tossed aside."<sup>1</sup> Other accounts of the Conference indicate that while some in the American delegation opposed Churchill's plans, Stalin was even more determined than they to avoid large-scale operations by Allied forces in southeastern Europe.

Harriman and Hopkins were both present at Teheran. Harriman's attitude on the more important problems is not known. But Hopkin's views on problems such as those presented by Churchill's "gleaming opportunities" in the Mediterranean have been recorded. He was only slightly less enthusiastic than Roosevelt about military operations in the eastern Mediterranean. Hopkins made it clear in a memorandum that was included in the minutes that the Turks could

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Closing the Ring (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1951), 346.

not expect extensive aid if they declared war as the plans then stood.<sup>1</sup> His action was not instrumental in bringing about the failure of Churchill's plans, but it does indicate that he was even less aware than President Roosevelt of the need for establishing armies from the West in the Balkans if a balance of power in Europe was to be maintained.

The views of other men concerning Teheran usually differ from those expressed by Churchill.<sup>2</sup> General John R. Deane, who attended the Conference, later wrote that "President Roosevelt was thinking of winning the war; the others were thinking of the relative positions when the war was won." "Churchill," he added, "thought our post-war position would be improved and British interests best served if the Anglo-Americans as well as the Russians participated in the occupation of the Balkans."<sup>3</sup> Isaac Deutscher's excellent interpretation is also valuable: "To win the war . . . this was Roosevelt's main preoccupation." "In Roosevelt's pragmatic, non-class-conscious mind," he continued, "the importance of this, the immediate purpose, over-shadowed the aftermath of

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 793.

<sup>2</sup>During the discussions concerning the forthcoming cross-channel invasion, Stalin's enthusiasm for the landings in Southern France is easily discernable. He obviously did not want any extra troops in Italy to be sent to the Balkan region. It should be clear that at Teheran, the military stage was set for the Crimean Conference.

<sup>3</sup>John R. Deane, The Strange Alliance (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), 45-44.

the war, with its possible antagonisms and tensions that were already perplexing his British friend." "This was the moment of Stalin's supreme triumph," concludes Deutscher, "Europe had now been militarily divided in two; and behind the military division there loomed the social and political cleavage."<sup>1</sup> One might add, however, that considering the later experience of the Allies fighting the Germans in France it is doubtful if a significant part of the Balkans could have been recaptured by the Western Allies even had Churchill's plans been adopted.

Political problems were also discussed at Teheran, but few decisions were reached. Germany was to be given harsh treatment, as revealed in Roosevelt's plan which provided for the division of Germany into five separate entities. Churchill, aware of the need of a counterpoise for the great power that Russia would represent after the war, advocated isolating only Prussia, and the formation from the remaining states of a Danubian Confederation. Stalin, quick to disapprove of Churchill's plan, said that "he preferred a plan for the partition of Germany, something like the President's plan, which was more likely to weaken Germany."<sup>2</sup> Stalin had a real fear of Germany, but it is likely that he also

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 508-09.

<sup>2</sup>Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, 402.

realized the advantages to be gained by preventing the formation of an effective non-Communist force in Central Europe.

The attitude of Stalin toward the Polish government should have furnished a storm warning for the tumultuous years ahead. To a suggestion by the President that the Soviets recognize the London Poles, Stalin replied that he "would like to guarantee that the Polish Government-in-exile would not kill partisans, but, on the contrary, would urge the Poles to fight the Germans. . . . But he was by no means sure that the Government-in-exile was ever likely to become the Government it ought to be."<sup>1</sup> This was the same government that he had previously recognized, and whose members later fought a courageous battle against the Germans in Warsaw while the Russian army remained inert but a few scant miles away. There is evidence that the Soviet army was perhaps incapable of continuing their offensive at that time. But the fact that Stalin refused to allow Allied supply planes to land at Soviet airfields until the most critical fighting was over indicates that he would have refused to aid the Poles even had his armies been capable of doing so.

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, 395.

The proposed United Nations Organization was discussed, but only in general terms. Roosevelt mentioned his idea of the four policemen who would keep the peace. All were agreed on the necessity for big power unanimity in the future international body. The voluntary declaration made by Stalin that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan after the Nazis were defeated was considered very important at the time. It probably helped to reassure Roosevelt of the good intentions of the Soviets. Perhaps Churchill was also encouraged. The Big Three stated:

We came here with hope and determination.  
We leave here friends in fact, in spirit,  
and in purpose.<sup>1</sup>

The public was not aware of the maneuvering of at least two of the members for their post-war positions.

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<sup>1</sup>Goodrich, Documents of American Foreign Relations, VI, 235.

## II

### 1944: "THE YEAR OF SURPRISINGLY FEW DIFFERENCES"<sup>1</sup>

Many events of 1944 had some effect on the later negotiations at Yalta. Two dominant factors characterized these developments. First, the period was one of almost constant military success for the United Nations. The military situation in Europe developed according to the plans made at Teheran. By the autumn of 1944, British and American troops were pressing on the West wall of Germany and Soviet troops were driving deeper into the Balkans. Victory appeared to be certain. Second, generally good relations existed between the Big Three during most of the year. There was a developing undercurrent of uneasiness among Western leaders as to the Soviet's future plans, due primarily to disagreements over the Polish question. Yet optimism remained high that the Big Three would be able to solve all problems satisfactorily by peaceful means. During the months following the

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<sup>1</sup>This summary is based on the following studies: The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948); William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950); Winston Churchill, Closing the Ring (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951); Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper and Bros., 1948).

Moscow Conference of October, 1944, the relations between England and Soviet Russia seemed to be particularly good. In December, American hostility over British action in Greece diverted attention from the growing differences between the Soviet Union and the two main Western Allies.<sup>1</sup>

Referring briefly to the military action in 1944, one finds that in January of that year the Red Army began a series of offensives that were later described by Stalin as the ten blows.<sup>2</sup> The first blow was struck in the region around Leningrad, and resulted in the liberation of that city which had been under siege since 1941. By the end of January, Russian troops had crossed what had been the pre-war border between Poland and the Soviet Union. That action raised the first major political question of the year.

The Polish government in London demanded the right to administer the pre-war Polish territory being freed by the Russian Army. The Poles in London had never agreed to relinquish the territory east of the Curzon Line, despite conversations with Churchill in which he indicated that a settlement of the eastern border along those lines had been discussed at Teheran. When Washington offered to mediate the difference,

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 477.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Stalin, The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union (New York: International Publishers, 1945), 128-30.

Stalin apparently became infuriated and according to Deutscher, "an obscure report was published in Moscow which charged the British with negotiating a peace with Germany behind Russia's back."<sup>1</sup> It was a veiled warning to the Western Allies, and was all the more insulting since it was issued so soon after Teheran. In March, as more Polish territory was liberated, the controversy broke out again. Stalin sent Roosevelt a copy of a message he was dispatching to Churchill concerning what the Soviets considered "meddling" in the Polish question. Admiral William Leahy called it the "most undiplomatic document I have ever seen exchanged between two ostensibly friendly governments."<sup>2</sup> The Polish problem did not mature into a full crisis until later, but Stalin's message made it clear that during the year of "surprisingly few differences" genuine trust and friendship did not prevail among the Allies at all times. "Your message, and particularly Kerr's statement, are interspersed with threats in regard to the Soviet Union," Stalin asserted. "I must, on the contrary, remind you that in Teheran you, the President (Roosevelt), and I came to an agreement regarding the rightfulness of the Curzon Line."<sup>3</sup> The President was attempting

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 513.

<sup>2</sup>William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950), 231.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 232.



at that time to steer clear of the troubled Polish waters; he even refused to meet with the Polish Prime Minister until after the successful Normandy invasion. Officials took the view that nothing should be done to endanger the unity of the Allies at that critical time.

Meanwhile, Allied military victories continued. On February 3, 1944, 100,000 Germans in the Dnieper region were surrounded by the Soviets, giving them the greatest military victory since Stalingrad. In April and May, the Soviet armies struck another major blow. Odessa was recaptured and the Crimea cleared of Germans. By the end of April, Russian troops were well into Rumania, and had reached Czechoslovakia on a 125 mile front. During the spring, American and British troops were gathering in England in preparation for the forthcoming Normandy landings. The successful cross-channel invasion of Normandy executed by Allied forces was a great and decisive stroke. Stalin himself described it as "a landing operation . . . that has no parallel in history for scope and organization."<sup>1</sup> After several weeks spent marshalling their forces, the Allies struck on July 18 at St. Lo., and began a spectacular advance that had carried them to the Rhine River by the time the Yalta Conference was held in February, 1945. On the eastern front the Soviets

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<sup>1</sup>Stalin, The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 132.

continued to gain victories, and in June the Vitebsk-Bobruisk line was broken and the West Ukraine freed. These continued Allied advances across pre-war borders intensified political problems.

The Balkan area was the region of greatest tension. The agreements made between Churchill and Stalin during the summer and fall of 1944 concerning southeastern Europe became important later. The British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax, first broached the subject of a possible division of authority in the Balkan states on May 30, 1944. The note from his government that Halifax gave Hull asked, "whether we had any objections to an agreement between Britain and Russia whereby, in the main, Rumanian affairs should be the concern of the Soviet Government and Greek affairs the concern of the British Government."<sup>1</sup>

Hull reacted strongly against such a move. Receiving a negative reply from the Secretary, Churchill appealed directly to the President. On May 31, Roosevelt received a cable from Churchill urging the President to accept the proposal, and assuring him that no spheres of influence were involved. In what seemed to be an amazing admission, Churchill revealed that Britain had suggested the plan earlier to the Russians, and that they had accepted it on May 18.

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<sup>1</sup>The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1454.

The British evidently had not trusted their American ally to understand the intricacies of European politics, and had made a proposal that would have had some effect whatever the attitude of Washington might have been.

Churchill continued to press for American acceptance of the plan. Halifax relayed another message from the Prime Minister on June 8, in which Churchill re-emphasized that no spheres of influence were contemplated, but in which he also stated that someone must "play the hand." He added that events moved very fast in the Balkans. On June 11, after Roosevelt had rejected his previous proposal, Churchill came back with a strong statement. "Action would be paralyzed," he said, "if everybody had to consult everybody else before taking action. Events in the Balkans always outstripped the changing conditions."<sup>1</sup> Churchill then suggested a three months trial period for his arrangement, after which it could be renewed. Without consulting the State Department, Roosevelt accepted this British plan.

A possible explanation of his action was later given by Churchill. He described the explosive nature of Greek politics in the spring of 1944. Only by vigorous action were the British able to put down dangerous mutinies in the

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<sup>1</sup>The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1454.

Greek army and navy. Although at that time the Soviets had penetrated but one country in the Balkans, Rumania, it was apparent that they would become predominant in eastern Europe. Evidently the Greek crisis frightened the British Prime Minister, and he felt that some action had to be taken to stop communism from spreading south to Greece and the shores of the Mediterranean. The weakness of the British position explains why he was the first to offer a plan for control of the Balkans. After explaining his active role in putting down the Greek mutinies in 1943, Churchill concluded: "I consider, however, that, taken by and large, my policy was vindicated by events; and this is true . . . up to the present time of writing."<sup>1</sup> He could only have meant that it was his belief that British action saved Greece from communism. The plan described above, which provided for division of authority in the Balkans, was part and parcel of his plan for keeping Greece democratic.

Wishing to learn American reaction to Churchill's proposal, Stalin made a direct approach to Washington on July 1. Hull indicated approval of the plan, but in his message to the Soviets declared that:

this government would wish to make known its apprehension lest the proposed agreement might . . . lead to the division . . . of the Balkan region into spheres of influence.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Closing the Ring, 552.

<sup>2</sup>The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1458.

The State Department was plainly worried. No doubt the Soviets considered Washington's acquiescence more significant than its doubts. Thus did a plan for the Balkans develop among the Big Three. During the rest of 1944, American policy in southeastern Europe rested only on the proclamation of a few general principles. In retrospect, Hull somewhat clarified the problem when he inferred that American difficulties in the Balkans would not have arisen if Roosevelt had not accepted the plan. It is true that United States inactivity during the rest of 1944 weakened later protests. But the problem was a consequence of earlier military decisions; and Churchill acted to salvage what he could.

A second Anglo-American Conference was held in Quebec in September, 1944, during the rising tide of Allied victories. On September 11, the day of the first meeting in Quebec, Allied forces reached the German frontier. Soviet armies in the east more than matched the successes of Eisenhower's forces, and in August both Rumania and Bulgaria were put out of action and declared war on the Nazis. Future strategy to be employed in the Pacific War was the primary consideration at Quebec. A meeting that was to have much more significance in future relations between the Allies was held a few weeks later in Moscow.

Not content with the Quebec Conference, Churchill pressed for another conference which would consider the problems

arising in the Balkans as the Soviet steamroller flattened the former Nazis satellites. Since it was only a few weeks before election day, Roosevelt obviously could not journey to some far-off site. But as Churchill observed, problems in the Balkans could not wait until the election returns were in from South Dakota and Oregon. The British Prime Minister and his trusted Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden arrived in Moscow on October 9, 1944, for the talks with Stalin.

The hand of Hopkins appeared again in American-Russian relations when on October 3, in an independent action, he stopped a cable that was being sent to Churchill, in which it was implied that the Prime Minister could speak for the United States as well as England in the forthcoming talks at Moscow. Instead, Stalin was informed that "Harriman could not commit this government relative to any important matters, which very naturally may be discussed by you and the Prime Minister."<sup>1</sup> In this case, Hopkins even more than Roosevelt was zealously guarding the President's future freedom of action. He did not explain, however, how Roosevelt was going to retain his freedom of action in zones occupied by the Soviets.

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 834.

Stalin and the Prime Minister discussed the character of political control in their respective regions. Churchill has recently explained how the ideas of percentage of control of southeastern European countries originated. He proposed to Stalin that Russia have ninety per cent predominance in Rumania, Britain ninety per cent in Greece, while the two countries would go fifty-fifty in Yugoslavia. Stalin readily agreed.<sup>1</sup> In a message to London Churchill emphasized that the system of percentage "is not intended to be more than a guide. . . ." <sup>2</sup> But the British Prime Minister never discussed the proposal with Stalin again, and it is probable that the Russians had the impression that the agreements were something more definite than a guide to future action.

An important point should be noted. Churchill and Stalin obviously came to agreements that either superseded or amended the previous June agreements to which the United States had adhered. The fact was made clear that Ambassador Harriman was merely an observer at the meeting in Moscow. There had been no further official statement from Washington regarding the three-months trial period plan for the Balkans which had been agreed upon four months before. One looks in vain for a definite policy statement either before or

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1953), 227.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 233.

after the October Conference concerning southeastern Europe. In effect, the United States was sans politique in the Balkans during the fall of 1944.

The importance of the Moscow Conference for the forthcoming negotiations at Yalta were the impressions that Stalin and Churchill gained from the talks there. By remaining relatively neutral during the talks in Moscow, and by not definitely renouncing the June agreement, Washington probably gave Stalin the impression that it had declared its désintéressement in the area that had been considered. The Red leader was immensely pleased with the results of the Moscow Conference; perhaps to him it marked the high point in wartime relations with his Western Allies. In a speech given on November 6, on the Twenty-seventh Anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin said in part, "differences of opinion are to be found even among people of the same party." "The surprising thing," he added, "is not that differences exist, but that there are so few of them and that, as a rule, in practically every case they are resolved in a spirit of unity and cooperation among the three great powers." Referring directly to the Moscow Conference, he said, "the recent talks in Moscow . . . are to be viewed as an even more striking indication of the consolidation of the United Nations front, held as these talks were in an atmosphere of friendship and a spirit of perfect unanimity."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stalin, The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 138.



An indication that Churchill felt that he had reached agreement with Stalin concerning the Balkan states was revealed in an address he made on October 27, 1944, shortly after he had returned from Moscow. "You would not expect three great powers so different circumstanced as Britain, the United States and Soviet Russia, not to have different views about the treatment of the . . . countries into which their victorious arms have carried them," he said. In words remarkably similar to those later employed by Stalin, he continued, "the marvel is that all has hitherto been kept so solid, sure and sound between us." Referring to the various states in the Balkans including Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, he said, "we have reached a very good working agreement about all these countries."<sup>1</sup>

The most important political problem during the remaining months of 1944 was the growing difference between the United States and England concerning Italy and Greece. When the British intervened in a cabinet crisis in Italy, and expressed their strong disapproval of Count Sforza, the liberals in America protested vigorously. Secretary Stettinius issued a statement on December 5, which, in effect, criticized British action in Greece, Belgium, and Italy where they

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<sup>1</sup>The Dawn of Liberation, War Speeches by the Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, compiled by Charles Eade (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), 284-85.

were giving support to Monarchist elements.<sup>1</sup> Churchill replied with a hostile cable to Roosevelt the next day. Roosevelt later accepted the British action and during the Yalta Conference the American and British delegates were united on most questions.

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 477.

**PART THREE**

**THE CONFERENCE**

## YALTA: PERSONALITIES AND POSITIONS OF THE BIG THREE

Because the personalities of the Big Three are so important in understanding the action taken at Yalta, it is advisable to briefly consider each of them. In connection with each man, the military position of his country will also be described. In the case of Roosevelt, first to be considered, the more important members of the American delegation will also be commented upon. The activities of such key men as Hopkins and Harriman have already been described. Their backgrounds, and those of the Big Three perhaps give some idea of their philosophy on foreign affairs which might have influenced their actions at Yalta.

President Roosevelt was somewhat cosmopolitan and had enjoyed the opportunity to travel and learn foreign languages when he was young. In 1936, relatively early in his career as President, he had displayed the ability of world leadership when he offered to hold a conference with the leaders in Europe on problems that were becoming critical at that time.<sup>1</sup> There is no indication, however, that he ever had

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 251.

the opportunity to learn about the Russians. The Russian Communists were a phenomenon that frankly puzzled him.

Secretary of Labor Francis Perkins revealed some of Roosevelt's thoughts on the Russians. There is something pathetic about a conversation the President had with Perkins shortly after he had returned from the Teheran Conference. "I don't know," he admitted, "a good Russian from a bad Russian. I can tell a good Frenchman from a bad Frenchman, I can tell a good Italian from a bad Italian, I know a good Greek when I see one." "But I don't understand the Russians," he added.

"Francis, see if you can find out what makes them tick."<sup>1</sup>

Perkins wrote that she read books on Russia by E. H. Sumners and William Henry Chamberlin, and talked with a few people who had lived in Russia. From that information she made little digests in which the President later became interested.

If we are to believe Perkins, Roosevelt knew little about unorthodox political thinking, and that he never had a full understanding of what the Socialists were driving at.<sup>2</sup>

Such a lack of knowledge of the Russians by the President, who was largely his own Secretary of State, is shocking.

Fortunately Roosevelt possessed great powers of understanding and intellectual ability which somewhat offset his lack of knowledge in certain areas.

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1950), 86.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 34.

Although Roosevelt probably know little about Marxist dialectics, and the nature of Stalin's Russia, that is not to say that he did not understand the challenge of communism. His concern for the peoples in the Middle East, and his repeated use of the American policy toward the Philippines as an example to be followed in all colonial lands, reveal his interest in post-war social justice. Elliot Roosevelt quoted his father as describing Churchill as still thinking in nineteenth century terms concerning colonial policy, a policy that Roosevelt intended to avoid after the war was won.<sup>1</sup> As he had little knowledge of foreign ideologies, Roosevelt always approached problems in a manner typically American. An example of that was his suggestion for a project similar to the T. V. A. for poverty-stricken areas he had seen in North Africa. Roosevelt probably envisaged a long period of peace, in which the western democracies would be forced to meet the communist challenge by effecting social and economic changes in many parts of the world, as well as adjusting capitalism to the continued demands made on it by the constantly changing machine age.

In large part, President Roosevelt displayed fine contempt for the career diplomats, which was probably unfortunate.<sup>2</sup> His principle advisors at Yalta were sadly lacking

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<sup>1</sup>Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), 156.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 185.

in specialized knowledge in foreign affairs. Experienced men such as Charles E. Bohlen and George F. Kennan, who were steadily becoming more important, could only influence Roosevelt indirectly through the Secretary of State. The winter of 1945 was a very critical time, when only men with the keenest minds and the best diplomatic training could be expected to properly advise the President of the correct course of action. One of Roosevelt's gravest errors both before and during the Yalta Conference was in thinking that America's interests would be best served by the quickest military victory possible, without considering other factors. It is generally conceded that American strategy in the war was made for the most part without consideration of the likely post-war positions of the United States and Soviet Russia. Critical post-war problems such as the policy to be followed toward Germany were left unsettled and confused.<sup>1</sup> One reason for this was the caliber of the President's political advisors. Three of his most important assistants at Yalta will be briefly commented upon.

One of the more controversial men in the American delegation was Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius. Some people point out that at the time of Yalta Roosevelt was largely his own Secretary of State, and that all he needed

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<sup>1</sup>E. F. Penrose, Economic Planning for the Peace (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), 227.

was a good-natured man to act as a kind of messenger in the post of Secretary of State. Yet it would seem that any cabinet officer should at least be able to advise and assist the President in his particular field. We shall briefly examine Stettinius' background, and attempt to determine what qualifications he had for the important position.

Stettinius attended the University of Virginia where he was a sociology major. His grades there were poor, and his chief attribute seemed to be that he made friends easily and was a good mixer. He planned to become an Episcopal minister, as he had an early bent for YMCA and other religious activities. But he was persuaded to begin work at General Motors in 1924, and by 1931 had become vice-president in charge of public relations. In the early days of the New Deal he served for a time as a liaison officer between the N.R.A. and industry. But by 1938 Stettinius had returned to industry as Chairman of the Board of Directors of United States Steel. He was called to Washington when the war began and served as Lend-Lease administrator from 1941 to the fall of 1943, when he became Under-Secretary of State. He had no great travel experience, and with the exception of an acquaintance with Churchill, little experience with foreign leaders.



One looks in vain for any training or experience that would have enabled him to gain any knowledge of foreign affairs, with the possible exception of when he was head of Lend-Lease, but then he was concerned primarily with production problems. Yet his appointment to the State Department was generally approved. The New York Times observed that:

as a creator of industrial good will, it was his function to see that . . . policies and methods were clearly understood . . . and that cordial relations were maintained with other corporations.<sup>1</sup>

This writer then asked what better qualifications could there be for a diplomat! There was no mention of the fact that it would be useful for a diplomat to understand foreign affairs and the nature of the countries with which he would have to deal. Some publications, however, expressed doubt of his ability. The Nation described him as being a "guileless boy scout."<sup>2</sup> The New Republic wrote that to "place such crucial affairs" in the hands of those whose "dedication to the popular cause is dubious, is a risk we dare not take."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. H. Crider, "Diplomat From Industry's School," New York Times Magazine (October 17, 1943), 14.

<sup>2</sup>I. F. Stone, "Stettinius and State," The Nation, CLVII (October 9, 1944), 402.

<sup>3</sup>"Test of Stettinius," New Republic, CXI (December 11, 1944), 785.

Important, and even crucial problems were often referred to the foreign ministers while the Conference was being held. Although Roosevelt made the final decisions, Stettinius was assuredly more than a "messenger." In December, 1944, Stettinius was faced with a problem of broad policy in Greece, and during the Conference many questions arose that required detailed knowledge of European politics. He possessed a pitifully inadequate background to deal with such problems. Both Stettinius and Hopkins lacked the historical perspective which would have enabled them to advise Roosevelt properly on questions of broad policy. Even if one assumes that President Roosevelt would have been virtually his own Secretary of State under any conditions, he should have had someone on whom he could depend to give him specialized knowledge about foreign affairs in some areas. He did not possess that man in Stettinius.

Hopkins has been mentioned before, and as his career is generally well known, there is no need to elaborate on his background. He was one of the most important men who determined American policy toward Russia during the war. His experiences as a social worker and later as head of various New Deal agencies would seem to preclude the possibility of his possessing much knowledge of Soviet Russia, or of foreign relations in general. He has been described

as Roosevelt's alter ego, and it is true that Hopkins regarded foreign affairs in much the same manner as did the President. He realized, with Roosevelt, that maintaining good relations with Soviet Russia was a prerequisite for peace in the world. As such was the case, Hopkins was determined to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Soviets, not realizing the great difficulties inherent in such an attempt.

Hopkins felt that economics would be very important in future American-Russian relations. Writing in 1944, he stressed the fact that Russia would need American products after the war. "I estimate that the first year after the war," he averred, "they will want to buy as much as 750 million dollars worth of goods from us. Rehabilitation to meet the demands of a rising standard of living, will occupy Russia for sixty years or more."<sup>1</sup> Ignorance of the nature of communism and internal politics in Europe probably helped him to keep his eyes on the higher goal of true international cooperation. Hopkins did not understand the implications of the altered conditions in Europe as well as the chief advisor to the President should have; his fundamental objectives, however, which were mostly reflections of Roosevelt's thinking, were sound.

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<sup>1</sup>Harry L. Hopkins, "What Victory Will Bring Us," American Magazine, CXXII (January, 1944), 21.

William Averell Harriman is one of the most fascinating of all those men who helped determine American policy toward the Soviets during the war. A cursory view of his career seems to indicate that he had a similar, and unpromising, background in foreign affairs as did the other businessmen and politicians who became diplomats during the war. Yet Harriman differed from most. His father was more than a railroad financier, and in the early 1900's he played an important role in United States foreign policy, particularly in the Far East. Young Harriman traveled much with his father, from whom he inherited great ability as well as wealth.

He was graduated from Yale in 1913, where one of his chief interests was crew. During World War I Harriman managed a ship-building company. After the war he established a steamship company, but the enterprise soon failed. He traveled often, and spent much time in England. His investment spirit was strong, and in 1924 he obtained a concession from the Soviets and established the Georgian Manganese Company. In 1926 he went to Russia and obtained a four hour interview with Trotsky. Harriman observed at the time that the Soviet government was likely to endure. In 1934 he became the New York representative for the N.R.A., which was his first connection with the government. During all this time he held important positions in the Union Pacific Company, of

which he became chairman of the Board of Directors in 1931. Many innovations such as the streamliner and the establishment of Sun Valley are attributed to him. He is truly a many-sided man.

Harriman and Hopkins were similar in that neither possessed a wide knowledge of foreign affairs, or a deep sense of history. They were essentially doers rather than planners and thinkers. One writer observed that "Harriman's approach to situations is pragmatic and intuitive rather than theoretical and reflective."<sup>1</sup> Sherwood wrote of Hopkins that "he looked to the immediate rather than the long term goal. He was an implementer rather than a planner."<sup>2</sup> The absence of advisors in the American delegation at Yalta who possessed a real knowledge of history was most harmful in that it almost ruled out the possibility of reaching a realistic settlement with the Soviets.

Like Stettinius, Harriman's formal education was certainly not one which would seem to have prepared him to understand foreign relations. He has never learned a foreign language. He has little sense of humor, and is a notably poor speaker. He has a passion for work, however, and

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<sup>1</sup>E. J. Kahn, "Portrait," New Yorker, XXVIII (May 10, 1952), 38.

<sup>2</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 6.

terrific powers of concentration. The experiences that he gained from traveling widely and meeting many prominent people in foreign countries before the war served him well when he came to occupy the important post of Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

After his mission to Moscow in September, 1941, he was sent to London to supervise the Lend-Lease program on that side of the Atlantic. Of importance in understanding his attitude toward the Soviets was the extremely close relationship he formed with Churchill while he was in London. It was Harriman who represented the United States during the two conferences Churchill had with Stalin. Like Churchill, he was aware of the dangers from the Soviet's greatly increased strength, and he seemed to have been a realist in dealing with the altered conditions. We have seen that he was not a profound student of history as was Churchill, but some sources indicate that he was the first American official to become apprehensive of future relations with the Soviets. In a conversation with Stimson on October 23, 1944, he expressed apprehension of Soviet methods.<sup>1</sup> Information in the Forrestal diaries indicate that he took the lead in proposing a firmer policy toward Russia in April, 1945.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry L. Stimson and M. Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Bros., 1947), 606-07.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Millis (ed.), The Forrestal Diaries (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), 41.

His thinking was probably closer to Churchill's than any other member of the American delegation, and he realized the danger of communism spreading to the states occupied by Soviet armies.

America's world position, militarily speaking, was a strong one at the time of the Yalta Conference. But the situation in Europe relative to Russia in February, 1945, was not impressive. Several events that could not have been foreseen at that time subsequently shortened the war and enhanced the American position. At that time American armies were scattered throughout the world, and the military was planning an invasion of Japan in which as high as one million casualties were expected. Although the Allied armies in Europe were commanded by an American, and were composed predominantly of Americans, our strength relative to the Germans was not one of great preponderance even at that time. Eisenhower later described the Allied military situation in the fall of 1944 by asserting that:

All our divisions were short in infantry replacements, and in total numerical strength of ground forces, the Germans still held a marked advantage.<sup>1</sup>

The Ardennes breakthrough, which had so recently been repulsed, was evidence that the Nazis were capable of determined resistance.

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<sup>1</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1948), 372.

Of importance in understanding America's position was Eisenhower's plan for completing the defeat of Germany. Eisenhower explained that "the engineers had made many studies of the Rhine River, based upon statistics covering a long period of time." As a result of their studies, they reported to General Eisenhower that successful assaults could not be made over the Rhine until about the first of May. "This opinion had been so forcibly expressed," Eisenhower wrote, "that in my own mind I had accepted the necessary delay and was planning not to start our major assaults across the river until about that time."<sup>1</sup> General Marshall was so impressed with the plan that he suggested sending General Bedell Smith to Malta, where he could inform the delegations that were en route to the Yalta Conference of the strategy that was planned.

The American position was not one in which we could by force of arms command or threaten the Russians. It was clear that by May, at the time Eisenhower planned to cross the Rhine, Russian forces would be deep in Germany. The capture of the bridge at Remagen on March 7 could not have been foreseen in February. Nor could the successful completion of the atomic bomb and its awful effect have been anticipated by Roosevelt at that time. The American position

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<sup>1</sup>Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, 372.



was not strong, but it is doubtful that Roosevelt would have used superior force as a threat even had he possessed the power to do so. That is not to say that the agreements at Yalta and the later interpretation of them would not have been different if the tremendous military strength of the United States would have been concentrated in Europe. Although many of what the West have considered to be violations of the Yalta agreements were caused by revolutionary forces within the countries in question, Stalin, the chief violator of the Yalta agreements, understood the importance of power.

Only a few words need be said about Prime Minister Churchill. He did not have difficulty in understanding the Russian Communists, a weakness that was easy to recognize in Roosevelt. Probably his long experience with the Soviets, and his knowledge of them and their probable post-war ambitions, are the most important things to know about him in order to understand his actions at the Conference. Also, his profound knowledge of European politics and realization of Britain's weakened position help to explain his approach to the many problems that were considered at Yalta. He was the only one of the Big Three who held responsible positions in both world wars. His long experience and great ability eminently qualified him to represent England at a

conference that would decide the future of Europe and the destiny of the world. Those who indiscriminately criticize President Roosevelt's actions at Yalta usually conveniently ignore the fact that Churchill was there also, and concurred in all the agreements made. In Anthony Eden, Churchill possessed a foreign minister of long diplomatic experience fully qualified to represent England's interests. The British delegation for the most part consisted of men who had devoted their lives to foreign affairs. They were in marked contrast to the representatives from the United States who possessed such varying backgrounds.

Unfortunately, the military position of England did not permit Churchill and his talented associates to determine policy at the Conference to the extent that they wished, or probably as much as would have been desirable. English troops were fighting in Germany, but under an American commander and in a definite minority to their comrades-in-arms. Their homeland had been severely battered, the people were fatigued, and their economy badly weakened. The observations of Penrose indicate that the British were aware of their weakness, resulting in large part from their liquidation of foreign assets during the early phases of the war.<sup>1</sup> In addition, parts of the British Empire were in turmoil; there

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<sup>1</sup>Penrose, Economic Planning for the Peace, 16.

was unrest in the Middle East, and India was demanding independence. British troops were in Northern Italy and in Greece, but the rest of southeastern Europe was controlled by the Communists. The English were also committed to a war in the Pacific that seemed likely at that time to last many more months and to require additional effort. "For temporarily at least," Sumner Welles wrote in 1946, "the British Commonwealth is weaker and poorer in relation to the rest of the world than it has been since the days when England alone prevented Napoleon from dominating the earth."<sup>1</sup> It is true that her armies in Europe were fine ones, and that she possessed a large, effective air force. But England was in no position to force any large nation to acquiesce to any plans she might have in Europe. This was particularly true in southeastern Europe.

Some facts about Stalin, one of the most powerful men of his time, may be noted. Few details of his private life are known. He had a long record of revolutionary activity at the time of the October Revolution. During all his life he was faced with dangers and crises. During and after his rise to power he developed his resourcefulness and skill to a great degree; at first in order to remain in the supreme position, and after Nazism appeared, to protect

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<sup>1</sup>Sumner Welles, Where Are We Heading? (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), 108.

the land that he ruled. He was a realist of the first rank; a man to whom power meant everything. He was devoted to Marxist-Leninist principles, but even more to power. Probably most important in understanding his action at Yalta was his ability to be utterly realistic concerning Soviet Russia's future safety, and to maintain many avenues through which he might go at some future time. At Yalta Stalin recognized the paramount position of the Soviet Union in Europe, and the many concessions that he made there indicate that he seriously considered establishing peaceful relations with the West.

Although the balance of power was restored to the West after the successful completion of the atomic bomb, Soviet Russia enjoyed a superior position in Europe in relation to her Allies when the Yalta Conference was held. The Red Army was firmly lodged in Poland and the Balkans in February, 1945, where they remained. Also, Soviet Russia was not handicapped by the necessity of fighting on two fronts; with the exception of a few divisions deployed on the Siberian border, all her strength was concentrated in Europe. A comparison between Russia and the Western Allies of their military strength in Europe reveals that the Red Army was greatly superior, at least in number. On June 6, 1944, when the Normandy landings were made, there were about sixty German divisions in France and the Low Countries, whereas

there were one hundred and ninety-nine German divisions and fifty satellite divisions engaged on the eastern front.<sup>1</sup> On January 9, 1945, there were one hundred and thirty-three German divisions on the eastern front.<sup>2</sup> During the last year of the war, Russia was engaging nearly two-thirds of the German field forces.<sup>3</sup> That is a very significant fact, and one which makes the views held by many that Roosevelt should have forced Stalin to agree to terms proposed by the American and British delegates at Yalta seem grotesque. Soviet armies had a long unbroken record of victories at the time of the Yalta Conference, and Red Army troops occupied virtually every European country that became a serious problem after victory in Europe was achieved.

Little was known at that time of the terrible losses sustained by the Soviet Union. It has been estimated that as many as fifteen million Russians lost their lives during the war. Commenting on the terrible damage done to Soviet Russia by the Nazis, Eisenhower wrote that, "when we flew

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<sup>1</sup>W. Averell Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, Statement Submitted to a Joint Senate Committee (New York, August 17, 1951), 5.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, The Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen to be United States Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 83d Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), 88.

<sup>3</sup>Strategicus, A Short History of the Second World War (London: Faber and Faber, n.d.), 224.

into Russia in 1945, I did not see a house standing between the western borders of the country, and the area around Moscow.<sup>1</sup> Russia suffered much, but in February, 1945, Soviet armies represented the greatest force in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup>Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, 469.

## II

### THE PRELIMINARIES AND THE PROCEDURES

A better understanding of the Yalta negotiations will be gained if some of the preliminary events are noted, and if the general procedure followed at the Conference is understood. Many important issues demanded the attention of the Big Three early in 1945. No final German policy had been agreed upon, although it was apparent that the Third Reich would soon be defeated. The position of France relative to Germany, and the proposed United Nations Organization had not been determined. The situation in Poland and southeastern Europe caused great concern. The question of the power of the veto in the proposed world organization had not been settled. And finally, the details of Russia's entrance into the war against Japan had yet to be worked out.

Important meetings were held by the Western powers as their delegates journeyed to the Crimea. On January 22, the day following the inaugural ceremonies, Hopkins took off for London. Charles E. Bohlen, who served as interpreter for Roosevelt and also consultant on east European affairs, accompanied Hopkins. One of Hopkins' objectives was to mollify Churchill, who was disturbed by complaints made by

Stettinius in December about British interference in Italian and Greek affairs. Churchill expressed irritation at Stettinius when they later met at Malta, but it is probable that Hopkins' talks helped reconcile the Prime Minister to the State Department's earlier statements. After these talks in London, Hopkins flew to Paris and Rome. At Paris he found De Gaulle embittered because he had not been invited to participate in the forthcoming meeting at Yalta. From Rome, Hopkins went to Naples, where he joined Secretary Stettinius and other State Department officials for preliminary consultations.

Stettinius left Washington on January 25. With him were State Department officials who assisted him at the Conference. Before the meeting at Naples, Stettinius and these assistants conferred for a few days at Marakech, in French Morocco. At the time it seemed that sufficient work had been done on the problems that were likely to arise at the Conference. But during the Conference it became apparent that insufficient planning had been done, particularly with reference to Germany. E. F. Penrose, wartime economic advisor to Ambassador Winant, writes that valuable planning was done in the lower echelons of the government but such efforts were often ignored by top leaders who made quick decisions without prior consultation with



those who had studied the problems.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, such as the problems connected with Russian reconstruction, it is apparent now that the American delegates completely missed the significance of the issues.

When Stettinius and Hopkins met at Naples, Hopkins criticized the lack of State Department action on Italy. Ambassador Alexander C. Kirk also argued that the time had arrived for civilian agencies to help in the administration of Italy; and Hopkins stated that it was essential for the State Department to stop being merely a silent partner in Italy.<sup>2</sup> The squabble is important in that it reveals the lack of State Department concern even for a country that had been occupied for over a year. The fact that Hopkins, who was so intimately associated with foreign policy, was disturbed indicates that there had been no agreement to let England take the lead in liberated areas. It would seem to indicate that American officials were even less prepared to make mature decisions in the other liberated countries that were to become critical problems at the Conference. When the talks were concluded on January 31, the party flew to Malta to join the British and American delegations gathering there.

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<sup>1</sup>Penrose, Economic Planning for the Peace, 258.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 52-53.

President Roosevelt, meanwhile, sailed from the United States on January 23, aboard the heavy cruiser USS Quincy. Admiral William Leahy and James F. Byrnes, Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, accompanied the President. They arrived at Malta on February 2, and that evening President Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister had dinner together, during which the forthcoming problems were discussed in a general manner. Beginning at 11:30 that night, planes took off at ten-minute intervals to carry seven hundred people fourteen hundred miles to Saki airfield in the Crimea.

The flight from Malta to the Saki airfield lasted about seven hours, which meant that the British and American delegations arrived in the Crimea during the morning of February 3, 1945. Foreign Commissar Molotov and other ranking Soviet diplomats were at the airfield to greet the Western dignitaries. The trip to Yalta began shortly after noon. The distance to Yalta was about ninety miles, but it took the motor caravan six hours to make the journey, with the result that the American delegation arrived at Livadia Palace about 6:00 P.M. Livadia Palace was located about a mile and a half from the town of Yalta, from which the Conference received its name.

The meetings were of three general kinds. Joint military staff talks were held during the mornings, except

during the last few days of the Conference. The discussions between the Foreign Ministers usually began about noon, and extended through lengthy luncheons. Much important work was done by the Foreign Ministers. Later in the afternoon, usually about four o'clock, the plenary sessions convened. The Big Three and their assistants were present at these gatherings, and it was there that most of the final decisions were made. These meetings lasted until eight or nine o'clock, after which one of the Big Three was usually host at a dinner.

Of considerable importance were two special meetings at which only Roosevelt, Harriman, Stalin, Molotov, and the interpreters were present. It was at these meetings that the terms under which Russia would join in the war against Japan were discussed briefly and agreed upon. The fact that only those men were present at the meetings became significant later when reckless charges were made that Alger Hiss influenced the terms of the agreement. No official stenographic record was made of any of the meetings. Charles Bohlen had the double task of interpreting and note-taking during the plenary sessions. Byrnes took shorthand notes, but they did not become part of the official record.

The first plenary session, held on Sunday, February 4, was devoted mainly to the discussion of the military situation.

The previous day Roosevelt had invited Marshal Stalin to a private meeting to be held before the plenary session convened. The President and Stalin exchanged greetings, and Roosevelt proceeded to lead the conversation into subjects that they could easily agree upon such as the extent of damage done by the Germans, and their mutual dislike for De Gaulle.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that he was attempting to establish cordial personal relations with the Marshal before the serious negotiating began. At the plenary session which began about five o'clock, the military situation on both the eastern and western fronts was briefly described by the ranking generals. That was the only plenary session which was attended by the military. The President gave a dinner for Stalin and Churchill at eight-thirty that evening. No important political problems were discussed, and an atmosphere of extreme amiability seemed to prevail.

Intense negotiations were carried on during the following week. Instead of dealing with the events chronologically, the chief problems will be considered separately, although most of them were discussed for several days. Some of the topics, such as Germany, were closely connected with other subjects. But the Conference can be understood better if the main issues are dealt with individually, instead of

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 100-101.

attempting to describe the activities of each day. We will first consider the problems posed by a rapidly collapsing Germany.

### III

#### GERMANY AND REPARATIONS: THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

Western plans for Germany did not work out as the policy makers hoped. Two agreements which have been heavily criticized, however, were not negotiated at Yalta. The occupation zones were outlined in November, 1944, and formally approved February 6, 1948.<sup>1</sup> There was no negotiating on that subject at the Conference. The failure to provide a corridor into Berlin from the West was due to action of the military at the time of the German collapse.<sup>2</sup> Of the three main problems concerning Germany, reparations, dismemberment, and the future status of France in the occupation of that defeated country, only the latter was satisfactorily settled at Yalta.

Opinion varied in the United States regarding the post-war treatment to be accorded Germany. The Morgenthau Plan, first agreed to by President Roosevelt at the second Quebec

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<sup>1</sup>P. E. Mosely, "Dismemberment of Germany," Foreign Affairs, XXIX (July, 1950), 598.

<sup>2</sup>For an explanation of why the military opposed negotiating a definite agreement for a corridor to Berlin see: Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1950), 25-26.

Conference, was repudiated by him in October, 1944. This plan provided for the destruction of the industrial plants in the Ruhr and the Sarr, and would have converted Germany into a country "primarily agriculture and pastoral in character."<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt's efforts to establish a united German policy resulted in the basic directive JCS 1067, a vague and ambiguous statement which Professor Penrose describes as perhaps the most "discreditable" state document ever written.<sup>2</sup> But the State Department's German policy, as expressed in a memorandum given to the President at Yalta on February 5, 1945, was also vague. "We favor abolition of German economic dominance of Europe," the memorandum stated, "and elimination of certain key industries, prohibition of manufacture of arms and all types of aircraft, and continuing control to achieve these aims."<sup>3</sup> Due partly to friction between the War and State Departments, and also to the lack of firm decisions made by those high in the government, the German policy of the American delegation was still ambiguous when the Yalta Conference was held.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1620.

<sup>2</sup>Penrose, Economic Planning for the Peace, 268.

<sup>3</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 41.

<sup>4</sup>Mosely, "Dismemberment of Germany," op. cit., 492.

Roosevelt opened the second plenary session on Monday, February 5, with the declaration that one of the first problems to consider was that of occupying Germany. At Teheran, Roosevelt had proposed dividing Germany into five parts. Very little progress had been made toward developing that suggestion into a concrete plan. At the Monday session Stalin indicated general agreement with Roosevelt's earlier ideas. Churchill countered by saying that the question of boundaries was much too complicated to be worked out during the Conference.<sup>1</sup> As at Teheran, Churchill did not approve Roosevelt's plan. Instead, he suggested that a second German state might be established with a capitol at Vienna. The American delegation certainly was not prepared to make detailed recommendations concerning dismemberment, and it is unlikely that either the Soviets or British had such a plan. Whether or not the word dismemberment would be included in the communique was briefly argued and finally the problem was referred to the Foreign Ministers. It was later decided that dismemberment would be included in the public communique, without any details mentioned as to what it entailed.

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 123.



Concerning the German problem, reparations was the most controversial topic. A clear understanding of Stalin's attitude on reparations helps to clarify the discussions on that issue, and also provides a clue to later Soviet actions. In the summer of 1944, a group of eminent Soviet economists published an article that was discussed at length within Russia and drew considerable attention from Western observers. These economists argued that surplus value from labor was still present in the Soviet Union and in their opinion would remain essential for a long period of time. They also emphasized that commodities must continue to represent certain values, meaning that money could not be ignored.<sup>4</sup>

This article, written as part of a serious and fundamental policy debate among top Soviet leaders, underscored the value of outside economic assistance for reconstruction purposes. Much of Russia was destroyed in 1945, and to men whose chief pre-war problem had been under-production the need for help in restoring their country seemed vital. The connection between the Soviet debate on surplus labor value and commodity exchange on the one hand, and foreign help on the other, is clear. For what the Soviets meant

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<sup>4</sup>L. A. Leontiev et al., "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union," The American Economic Review, XXXIV (September, 1944), 519-26.

by publicly emphasizing the continued validity of so-called capitalist concepts of surplus value and commodity exchange was that the transition from socialism to communism had been delayed even longer by the devastation incident to the war. In the language of Marxism the Russian planners were saying that the nation was weak, that capital goods would continue to be emphasized to the detriment of consumer products, and that the conditions necessary for the realization of communism did not exist. Analyzing the Soviet article in December, 1944, Paul A. Baron, an expert on Marxian theory, commented:

Faced with the fact of low and unequal remuneration of labor, confronted with the dire necessity for an extremely severe husbandary of resources, Messrs. Leontiev et al. regard it as desirable to invoke the authority of Marx in order to justify this difficult state of affairs.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of foreign policy this meant that Moscow was looking for outside aid to facilitate recovery, and implied that it would be necessary to expropriate such material assistance if it was not forthcoming in the form of reparations or loans. Molotov's continued emphasis on reparations from Germany, and his persistent efforts to talk seriously with Stettinius of a loan, document this connection between domestic problems and foreign policy in the minds of Soviet leaders.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul A. Baron, "New Trends in Russian Economic Thinking," The American Economic Review, XXXIV (December, 1944), 870.

Stalin's most able biographer emphasized that the Russian leader was extremely cautious.<sup>1</sup> The thesis that Stalin at the time of the Yalta Conference did not have in mind taking direct control of Poland and the Balkan states and thereby expanding socialism does not mean that he was abandoning Marxist-Leninist doctrines. He felt that time was needed to rebuild Russia, and that when Russia's economy had been restored, her strength and power of positive attraction would become so great that the states of eastern Europe would drift into an Eastward orientation. Actually this meant that Stalin was accepting the revisionist argument about Marxist theory rather than that of violent revolution, which had been a basic doctrine until that time. In the interim Popular Front governments would be organized in the Balkan states. These governments would satisfy the Western nations, and at the same time safeguard the Soviet frontier.

This theory is reinforced by a consideration of Stalin's essay on "Economic Problems of the U.S.S.R.," written in 1952. Even though the power of the Socialist states vis-à-vis the West had increased greatly since the war, Stalin still urged caution. He did not think that a war with the West

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Russia: What Next? (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 116-17.

was inevitable, and further suggested that war between capitalist nations was possible, and in time, even probable.<sup>1</sup> Apparently he felt that he could achieve his ends without a struggle with the Western powers. As Stalin was still reticent to engage the West in 1952, after increasing the Socialist domain in the world by about a third, he must have been more so at the time of the Yalta Conference. Yet to adopt successfully a revisionist position after the war it was vitally necessary to obtain outside assistance either in the form of reparations or loans, and a clear and definite territorial settlement.

American officials, most of whom had held positions in the New Deal and had thus been concerned primarily with problems of surplus production, completely missed the significance of the Soviet reparations demands. As the end of the war approached, Roosevelt continued to view the post-war period through the prism of the pre-1939 era. Fenrose stresses how the fear of over-production influenced American policy during the war.<sup>2</sup> Ambassador to Great Britain John G. Winant proposed to Roosevelt in the middle of 1944 that a decision be made concerning reparations which would

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<sup>1</sup>Stalin, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, IV (October 18, 1952), 7.

<sup>2</sup>Fenrose, Economic Planning for the Peace, 191-92.

be linked with American aid for the reconstruction of Russia's economy.<sup>1</sup> No action was taken on Winant's proposal. Not realizing that a scarcity of goods would be a particularly distressing problem in Russia, nor recognizing the relationship between this fact and the power of the United States to alleviate that problem, the Americans failed to understand the important issue involved and thereby lost the chance to get the Russians committed to specific points such as the status of Germany and Russia's western boundary in return for economic aid.

During the Conference the Soviets retained the initiative on the question of reparations. Ivan Maisky, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, presented a rather complete plan for collecting reparations from Germany at the Foreign Minister's meeting on Monday, February 5. According to his plan reparations would be of two general kinds. Withdrawal of real wealth, or reparations in kind, was to constitute one source. Yearly payments by Germany over a period of ten years would complement the goods and services. But when the plenary session considered reparations, Churchill questioned the wisdom of the Russian plan for taking eighty (80) per cent of German industry, and total reparations of twenty billions of dollars, one-half of which would go

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<sup>1</sup>Penrose, Economic Planning for the Peace, 241-42.

to Soviet Russia.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister argued from the unsuccessful attempt to obtain reparations after the first world war. He also warned of the dangers of a starving Germany. He mentioned that such a situation would put an undue burden on the occupying powers, but it is highly probable that he also had in mind the possibility of a social revolution in such conditions.

The Soviets were well prepared to support their claims. Malenkov observed that ten billion dollars was not too much, equating it with ten per cent of the American budget for that year and to only six months of British war expenditure. Roosevelt asserted that the United States desired no German goods. He also assured the others that America would not loan Germany great sums of money, as was done after World War I. During the plenary session on Monday the three leaders agreed to the establishment of a reparations commission in Moscow. The Foreign Ministers were to prepare directives for the commission, which would be referred back later to the Big Three. It is pertinent to note that the commission failed to reach agreement.

But the reparations question continued to be discussed. At the Foreign Minister's meeting on February 7, Molotov

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 131.

submitted Moscow's views on the "Basic Principles of Exaction of Reparations from Germany."<sup>1</sup> There was essentially nothing new in the memorandum; the Soviets still insisted that the total amount of reparations be set at twenty billion dollars, and that one-half of it be allotted to the Soviet Union. The matter of the use of German labor was to be set aside at that time but was to be considered later. During that meeting Malisky gave a detailed estimation of the Soviet's version of German national wealth, and of their probable ability to pay after the war. Although the Russians continued to press their claims, Roosevelt and Stettinius were not influenced by their argument, and during the succeeding meetings American action was largely devoted to moderating the Russian demands. Two days later reparations were again discussed. Stettinius presented a counter-proposal to the Soviet plan. The American draft emphasized that the total reparations suggested by the Soviets be used merely as a basis for discussion. Eden opposed the inclusion of any figure. The Soviet representatives agreed with the American plan, and it was decided that the matter would be referred to the Big Three.

But no decisions were made at that day's plenary session, and the reparation question was carried over to the meeting

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 165.

of the Foreign Ministers on the following day, February 10. Eden submitted a British proposal which stressed the fact that Germany's industrial capacity should not be lowered to a degree that would imperil the economic life of the country. No mention was made of the total amount of reparations that would be exacted. The most surprising part of Eden's proposal was the unequivocal statement that the use of German labor and lorry service would be allowed.<sup>1</sup> Molotov and Maisky were critical of the British plan because of its lack of severity. At the plenary session that afternoon the subject was discussed once more. Stalin argued forcefully for the acceptance of twenty billion dollars to be used as a basis for discussion. During the dinner that evening, Stalin agreed that no figures would be included, but he later changed his mind, and twenty billion dollars was mentioned in the official protocol. The American delegation concurred, provided that the sum would be used as a basis for discussion. The British maintained that no figures should be mentioned, and their position was written into the official protocol. However, the figures were included. Apparently Hopkins was largely responsible for the compromise.<sup>2</sup> As in the case of German disarmament,

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 254.

<sup>2</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 859.



no decision was made. This was partly due to obvious disagreements, but inadequate preparation and a serious lack of understanding of the significance of the issue by the American delegates was of greater importance. This lack of foresight contributed to the confusion that followed concerning the German problem, and to the tension that subsequently developed between the Soviets and the Western Allies.

The decision to allow France to participate in the German Control Commission as well as occupy a zone of the enemy was made only after much negotiation. At first Stalin disapproved of giving France an occupation zone, and at one point he asked President Roosevelt how long the United States would be willing to keep occupation forces in Germany. "Two years would be the limit," he replied.<sup>1</sup> Churchill seized on Roosevelt's statement as a reason for giving France more power in Germany. Then Stalin evidently expressed his approval of French participation in the occupation of Germany, but added: "I cannot forget that in this war, France opened the gates to the enemy."<sup>2</sup> His allies from the West did not remind the Marshal of the

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 127.

<sup>2</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 25.

situation in Europe at that time, when Germany had been receiving vital materials from Russia, and as a result of diplomatic agreements with Moscow had been able to hurl all its forces against France. Stalin still refused to allow France representation on the Control Commission, however, and Roosevelt agreed with him. At this juncture the question of France was referred back to the Foreign Ministers.

On February 7, Foreign Secretary Eden argued vociferously for French participation on the commission. Roosevelt as yet had not been convinced of the necessity of giving defeated France representation on the German Control Commission, and Stettinius suggested that the problem be referred to the European Advisory Commission, to which Molotov agreed. But on February 10, Roosevelt expressed his approval of French participation on the Control Commission, and Stalin agreed. Sherwood explained that Roosevelt previously informed Stalin through Harriman of his change of heart, and Stalin replied that "since that was the President's considered opinion, he would go along with it."<sup>1</sup>

Stettinius wrote that the President never told him "just how and when he had persuaded Stalin to make this major concession which was announced so suddenly."<sup>2</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 859.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 262.

might be considered significant that Harriman, the man who was most active in negotiating the Far Eastern agreement, conveyed Roosevelt's decision to Stalin. There is no evidence that Stalin used the French issue to gain specific concessions. But it was an available bargaining point, and it reveals the advantageous position of Stalin.

It is clear from his attitude on French participation in the administration of Germany that Stettinius did not understand the implications of what would soon be the new position of Russia in Europe. Churchill and Eden had to fight virtually alone to get French representation on the German Control Commission. But in the case of France and also German reparations, Stettinius was for the most part merely representing the President. Evidently Byrnes, Hopkins, and Harriman finally persuaded the President to support the British in their effort to get France represented on the Control Commission. But the major reason for their view apparently was that France would not accept an occupation zone under any other conditions. Byrnes does not indicate that the need for bolstering France as a means of strengthening Western Europe vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. was considered at that time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 25.

The British delegation was concerned about the increased power of the Communists in Europe. This is proved by their attitude on all the questions concerning Germany and France. Churchill used the President's statement that American troops would remain in Europe for a maximum of two years to show that the French were vital to protect Western Europe against a rebirth of German militarism. But the obvious coolness of the British toward plans for German dismemberment and high reparation payments should not be construed to mean that they were concerned with the welfare of the Germans. Rather was London thinking in terms of maintaining a balance of power in Europe.

#### IV

### SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE: THE LEGACY OF THE CHURCHILL-STALIN AGREEMENTS OF OCTOBER, 1944

A careful consideration of the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe and the significance of its terms is vital to an understanding of the Conference. It has furnished the basis for a large number of subsequent American protests to Russia. The Declaration was largely the work of the American State Department. America took the lead on this proposal aimed mainly at providing joint control in the Balkan countries freed by the Russians because the British were involved in the internal affairs of Italy and Greece, and were hardly in a position to be the exponents of concerted action. The heart of the plan provided for the three governments to "jointly assist" liberated states to "establish internal peace to form interim governments pledged to hold free elections," and to "facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections."<sup>1</sup> The right of all people to form the government of their choice was guaranteed. The Atlantic Charter was included. The State Department also

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<sup>1</sup>Coodrich, Documents of American Foreign Relations, VII, 353.

planned to establish a European High Commission that would be charged with implementing the above proposals. But Roosevelt later decided not to push the idea of a commission.

Stettinius argues that some of our later trouble in Europe would have been averted had the plan for a European Commission been agreed upon.<sup>1</sup> Due to precedents already set by the British in Italy and Greece, and in view of strength of communism in war-ravaged Europe, it is doubtful if such a commission would have materially altered the situation. Byrnes supported the President against the European Commission because he felt there would be opposition from Congress if it was established.

Roosevelt did, however, initiate discussion of the Declaration on Liberated Europe. Russia proposed an amendment calling for support to be given only to those leaders who had resisted the Nazis. Roosevelt rejected the Russian suggestion.<sup>2</sup> It might be pointed out that in many of the occupied countries the Communist Party formed the backbone of the resistance movements and the Russian clause would have greatly strengthened Communist elements. At the meeting of the Foreign Ministers the next day, Stettinius reported that the United States could not accept the amendment because

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 253.

it would involve "too much interference" in the countries involved which "should be left to the peoples in the countries involved."<sup>1</sup> Molotov withdrew the amendment, but submitted another one that weakened the Declaration considerably. Instead of the words, "establish appropriate machinery for the carrying out of joint responsibilities," he suggested that the wording be changed to read, "that the powers immediately take measures for the carrying out of mutual consultation."<sup>2</sup> If the American clause had remained, a body would have been organized to carry out the joint responsibilities. Molotov's amendment, which was accepted, merely provided for mutual consultation.

The revised version of the Declaration was discussed during the plenary session that afternoon, February 10. Eden suggested that the French government be asked to associate itself with the Declaration. The discussion that followed was very brief. Stalin indicated his approval of the Declaration. When the President referred to the section containing the agreement to "facilitate if necessary the holding of elections," Stalin quickly replied: "I accept that." The President then commented that he wanted Poland to be the first example of operating under the Declaration, and that

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 864.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 253.

he wanted the elections there to be beyond question, like Caesar's wife. Stalin replied to the effect that actually the lady had been guilty of certain sins. Byrnes wrote regarding this remark: "I only hope the lady had fewer sins than, in our view, this declaration had had violations."<sup>1</sup>

As has been mentioned, the Soviets proposed an amendment when the Declaration on Liberated Europe was introduced. Sherwood wrote that Stalin, perhaps with a trace of "impishness," observed that Churchill need have no fear that the amendment was designed to apply to Greece.<sup>2</sup> Stettinius also wrote that Marshal Stalin "mischievously" observed that Churchill need not be worried about the amendment applying to Greece. Stalin then added that it would have been "exceedingly dangerous" had the Prime Minister consented to any but British forces to enter Greece.<sup>3</sup> The Marshal, of course, was being more than "impish."<sup>4</sup> British military intervention in Greece has been previously mentioned. Churchill himself had flown to Athens a short

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 35.

<sup>2</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 364.

<sup>3</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 244.

<sup>4</sup>The question might well be asked as to why Sherwood and Stettinius, both of whom knew of the Churchill-Stalin agreements, used such phraseology.



time before, where he managed to temporarily settle the explosive political situation. Stalin also might have mentioned Italy, where the British intervened in Italian politics in the case of Count Sforza to the extent that even Washington had officially protested. The Churchill-Stalin talks of October, 1944, have been mentioned previously. At that meeting Greece was designated as Britain's responsibility, and varying degrees of influence in the other Balkan states were agreed upon. When Stalin referred to the Greek situation, he was reminding Churchill of his past unilateral actions, and was inferring that those were the conditions by which he would accept the Declaration.

Roosevelt had agreed in June, 1944, to a three-months trial period for dividing authority in the Balkans. But Washington had made no further policy statements regarding southeastern Europe. Also, by the time of the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt had accepted Churchill's action in Greece. Later Soviet interference in Rumania, which paralleled British action in Greece, became the cause of much of the tension that arose between the Allies in the Spring of 1945. Washington's position in 1945 regarding Russia's activities in eastern Europe can be criticized in that all agreements made before Yalta concerning that region were ignored as well as British action in Greece. But

in the final analysis the cause of the breach that occurred between Communist Russia and the West because of Soviet violations of the Yalta Declaration resulted from forces that were more fundamental than diplomatic agreements made in 1944 and 1945. The Yalta Conference did not spawn the tension that matured during the following years.

Little time was spent on negotiations regarding the Balkans and Yugoslavia. Although Yugoslavia had been the subject of previous negotiation, the American delegation had little interest in that country as is attested by the fact that Yugoslavia was not mentioned in the State Department's memorandum on possible subjects to be discussed at the Conference.<sup>1</sup>

In January, 1945, Churchill and Stalin approved an agreement made between Dr. Ivan Subasitch, of the London Yugoslavs, and Marshal Tito on November 1, 1944. All the democratic processes were guaranteed, and in return Tito obtained a promise that King Peter would not return until the people had indicated their approval.<sup>2</sup> In addition, it was agreed that Marshal Tito and Dr. Subasitch would form an interim government. Tito would be Premier, and

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 36-42.

<sup>2</sup>Constantin Potitch, The War We Lost (New York: The Viking Press, 1948), 302.

Subasitch would have the post of Foreign Minister. The Communists even agreed to a regent.

Yugoslavia was first mentioned on the fifth day of the Conference, when Stalin rather blandly asked what was delaying the formation of a government in Yugoslavia. Churchill explained that the British had two amendments which they would like to add to the agreement reached between Subasitch and Tito. One of the British amendments would have provided for the temporary assembly to include all those from the last Yugoslav legislature who had not collaborated with the Germans. The British amendment was an attempt on their part to broaden the representation of the interim government, and by so doing, strengthen the anti-Communist elements in Yugoslavia. At the plenary session on February 9, the proposed amendments were discussed by Churchill and Stalin. The interchange between them was quite sharp. Churchill felt that the amendments should take effect immediately, but Stalin objected. The issue was settled when Stalin agreed to accept the British amendments, but only after the Yugoslav government had been formed in accordance with the Tito-Subasitch agreement.

Later developments in Yugoslavia paralleled events in some other European states that became the subject of much friction between the East and West in the post-Yalta

era. During the Churchill-Stalin talks of October, 1944, it was agreed that Russia and Great Britain would share equal influence in Yugoslavia. Stalin tried hard to induce Tito to act in accordance with the compromise reached with Churchill. He went so far as to urge Tito to allow the return of King Peter.<sup>1</sup> Due to the preponderance of the Communist forces that he headed, however, Tito was able to disregard Stalin's orders. The strength of communism, stemming both from the Party's war record and post-war devastation, and which the Western powers abhorred, was the primary reason for the failure of the agreement reached at Yalta regarding Yugoslavia.

American rights on the Control Commissions in the Balkan states were of major concern to the State Department before the Conference convened. At the meeting in Marrakech a memorandum was prepared which asserted that the right of American representatives to travel freely in the countries unaccompanied by Soviet officers, and the privilege of courier service to Washington should be guaranteed. Most important was the request for the right to postpone directives issued by the Control Commission until advice was received from Washington in cases where the directive seemed

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<sup>1</sup>Vladimir Dedijer, Tito (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 235.

to conflict with American policy. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden informed Stettinius that the British were working on similar proposals.<sup>1</sup>

An earlier event in Rumania was probably one cause for the State Department's concern for clarification of American rights on the Control Commission. On January 4, 1945, a statement was received from the Russians notifying the British and American missions in Bucharest of an order to deport a large group of people in Rumania of Teutonic ancestry, which in many cases went back many centuries. Russia ignored Allied protests. About 80,000 people were shipped to Russia in cattle cars under the most harrowing conditions.<sup>2</sup>

There is no evidence to indicate that this issue was mentioned at Yalta. Perhaps after the American delegation arrived, they realized that the proposals were unrealistic, and decided not to raise the issue. Or it is possible that Churchill persuaded the Americans not to bring up the matter because it might endanger the British position in Greece, and undercut the agreements previously made by him with Stalin. The right to postpone directives was no doubt

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 65.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Bishop and E. S. Grayfield, Russia Astride the Balkans (New York: Robert M. McBride and Co., 1948), 125.

counter to the agreements made by Churchill in October, 1944, as it would amount to a veto in areas where Soviet influence predominated.

On the sixth day of the Conference there was a brief exchange between Eden and Molotov concerning a border treaty that had been concluded between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Eden protested the legitimacy of agreements made between two governments that were not as yet recognized by the British. As in the case of the dispute concerning Yugoslavia, the American delegation participated very little in the discussion. Washington's lack of interest in the area was the main reason for the American inaction. But if one remembers the background possessed by Secretary Stettinius it is obvious that his inexperience was another reason for the little contribution made by the Americans during the discussions concerning southeastern Europe.

The Churchill-Stalin agreements of October, 1944, must be considered when judging later Soviet action in eastern Europe. The United States never issued an official policy statement regarding the Moscow agreements, although Washington was fully aware of them. However, Roosevelt had agreed to a three-months trial period in June, 1944, which was similar to the arrangements made in October.

As Washington had never officially protested the Churchill-Stalin agreements, and the British acted in Greece in December, 1944, as a consequence of them, the Soviets had reason to believe that they amended the Yalta Declaration. Also important is the fact that neither London nor Moscow ever abrogated the October agreements. Thus, the differing interpretations of the Yalta Declaration were certain to result in dissension when the Russians occupied the liberated area included in the two agreements.

## POLAND: THE CENTER OF CONTROVERSY

One of the main purposes of this study is to point out that the long-standing complexity of the many problems that faced the delegations at Yalta explains, in large part, the character of the settlements. In no other case was the complex nature of the problems better exemplified than in the Polish question. Poland was the subject of more negotiations at Yalta than any other single topic. Few people have an understanding of the size or scope of the problem. Since Poland was the most discussed subject at Yalta, it is essential to develop quite fully the background of the problem. Before beginning, it may be pointed out that the Poles themselves had never been able to solve many of the problems that the men at Yalta were called upon to resolve.

Before 1648, the Poland of Sigismund III indisputably stood as a great power. The whole of Europe considered it the bulwark of western civilization against the Turks, Tartars, and Muscovites.<sup>1</sup> But after 1648 Poland declined rapidly due both to internal weakness and to foreign invasions.

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<sup>1</sup>O. Malecki, A History of Poland (New York: Roy Publishers, 1943), 142.



One cause of the ineffectiveness of the government was the notorious liberum veto, which allowed any deputy not only to prevent a measure from passing but to actually dissolve the diet.<sup>1</sup> It dated from about 1652. The weakness of the government facilitated the three partitions whereby Russia, Austria, and Prussia acquired sections of Poland. The final partition, which obliterated Poland as a nation, took place in 1795.

Revolts of 1830 and 1863 were crushed mercilessly by the Czar. Thus Poland remained divided and ruled by others until the end of World War I. The great difficulties that faced the Poles in attempting to create a democracy in the western sense in a nation that had been occupied for over a century should be evident.

It was as if, through the nineteenth century, Poland had stood still while the world with all its material and social changes had passed by her prison, and when, in 1918, she was free again, she resumed her old life and became the same old feudal state that she had been more than a hundred years before.<sup>2</sup>

The above quotation eloquently describes Poland's position in 1918.

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<sup>1</sup>Halecki, A History of Poland, 163.

<sup>2</sup>Frank P. Chambers, Christina Phelps Harris, and Charles C. Bayley, This Age of Conflict (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950), 173-74.

There are two factors that are vital to any understanding of the Polish question in 1945. The Poland of 1939 had one of the worst minority problems in Europe. As a result of a war against the Soviet Union in 1920 and 1921, about 5,000,000 Ukrainians were incorporated into the country. The Poles composed only fifteen per cent of the population in the territory gained from Russia.<sup>1</sup> Poland's borders were extended about one hundred and fifty miles east of the Curzon Line, which had been proposed as the ethnic and political border for Poland at the Versailles Peace Conference. The second and most important fact to note is that democracy failed. Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, who had led the armies of Poland against Soviet Russia a few years before, seized control of the government in 1926. It was not unlike the Fascist revolt in Italy in 1922. Most democratic institutions and rights were forbidden, and the Polish government remained authoritarian in nature until its defeat by the Nazis in 1939.

Wincenty Witos and other leaders of the Peasant Party were imprisoned. In 1935 a new constitution was promulgated which in effect legalized the dictatorship. The diet was retained, but it could be dissolved by the executive at

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), 255.

any time, who then could issue decrees that had the force of law.<sup>1</sup> After Pilsudski died in 1935, Poland was governed by his followers, headed by Rydz-Smigly. In 1936 and 1938 the Polish Peasant Party, of which Stanislaw Mikolajczyk was to become the leader, and the Socialist Parties, boycotted the elections. "The story of Poland is one of the most turbulent and unsatisfactory of post-war Europe."<sup>2</sup> Thus the great difficulties facing those who attempted to establish a democratic government in Poland in 1945 should be evident. The declaration at Yalta provided for a free, democratic Poland; but there were few democratic traditions or institutions on which such a Poland could have been erected. That is not to say that democracy would not have been successful in Poland if it had been given a chance after World War II. But even a superficial knowledge of pre-war Poland reveals the truly herculean task faced by those who sought to build a peace in Poland based on the western concept of democracy.

Interpretations of the Polish question vary greatly. But certain phases of Soviet-Polish relations that were controversial during the war and after have now become

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<sup>1</sup>Buell, Iland: Key to Europe, 99.

<sup>2</sup>Chambers, This Age of Conflict, 182.

better known. Yet as late as 1948, two English writers were able to prove to their own satisfaction that the Soviets did everything humanely possible to aid the Poles during the Warsaw uprising of August, 1944; that the London Poles did not believe that the Soviets were guilty of the murders at Katyn, and only used their accusations as blackmail; that the Lublin group represented the masses of the people; and that the sixteen underground leaders arrested by the Soviets in April, 1945, were guilty of acts against the Red Army.<sup>1</sup> Most of the charges cited above affected Soviet-Polish relations in the period before Yalta. Therefore they did influence negotiations at the Conference, and some of the events will be discussed.

To do so it is necessary to review the events after Hitler attacked Poland September 1, 1939. Seventeen days after the German invasion the Russians attacked from the east. The Soviets had agreed with the Nazis on August 23, as to what would constitute their respective "spheres of influence" in eastern Europe. The second provision of the secret protocol provided for a division "bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>W. P. and Zolda K. Coates, Six Centuries of Russian-Polish Relations (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1948), 151-84.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie (eds.), Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office (Washington: Department of State, 1948), 76.

It became known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop line and was quite similar to the line proposed by Lord Curzon shortly after World War I. Naturally enough, the Poles considered the Soviets as much their enemies as the Nazis in those dark days.

A Polish government-in-exile was formed during the fall of 1939. General Wladyslaw Sikorski, a very able man who had been exiled by the pre-war government, was named Prime Minister. His government was promptly recognized by France, Great Britain, and the United States. The diplomatic situation between Poland and Soviet Russia changed radically when on June 22, 1941, Hitler launched his hitherto invincible Wehrmacht against Russia. Several weeks later, on July 30, 1941, the Sikorski government concluded an agreement with the Soviets. The Soviet-German treaty relative to Poland lost its validity and diplomatic relations were restored between the two countries.<sup>1</sup> The question of frontiers was left in abeyance at that time. At a meeting in Moscow between General Sikorski and Stalin on December 4, 1941, a declaration of friendship and mutual assistance was signed. It was agreed that Polish troops would be organized in Soviet Russia to fight against the German invaders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Polish-Soviet Relations, 1918-1943, Issued by the Polish Embassy in Washington by Authority of the Government of the Republic of Poland, 107.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 109.

Unfortunately, mutual friendship proclaimed by the Sikorski government and the Soviets in 1941 did not endure. The full story need not be told here. The two greatest causes of friction were the questions of the future eastern border of Poland and the treatment of Polish citizens in Russia. The terrible Katyn massacre, and the circumstances surrounding the Warsaw uprising, served to widen greatly the breach. Controversy over what would constitute Poland's eastern boundary appeared very soon. In January, 1942, it became apparent that the Soviets planned to annex the territory east of the Curzon Line which Poland had taken in 1921. By the winter of 1943 the relations between the Soviets and the London Poles were quite strained. Hostile notes were exchanged in February and March, 1943. In a declaration to the Soviet government on February 25, 1943, the London Poles asserted that "so far as the question of frontiers between Poland and Soviet Russia is concerned, the status quo previous to September 1, 1939, is in force."<sup>1</sup> The Soviets replied bluntly that the territory east of the Curzon Line would be reincorporated into the Soviet Union, and accused the London Poles of being imperialistic.

An impasse was also reached on the question of providing aid to Polish citizens in Russia. The situation was

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<sup>1</sup>Polish-Soviet Relations, 208.

aggravated by the strange disappearance of thousands of Polish officers known to have been captured by the Russians. On April 13, 1945, the Germans announced the discovery of the mass graves near Katyn of about ten thousand Polish officers. The Nazis accused the Russians of the crime. Soviet Russia severed relations with the Polish government in London on April 25, as a result of the Polish request to the Red Cross to investigate the Nazi charges.

Because there have been conflicting reports on Katyn, it might be well to quote the findings of the latest investigation on the incident. In 1951 a special committee was appointed in the House of Representatives to investigate the Katyn Massacre.<sup>1</sup> Their conclusion states that:

The evidence, testimony, records and exhibits recorded by this committee through its investigations and hearings during the last 9 months, overwhelmingly will show the people of the world that Russia is directly responsible for the Katyn Massacre. Throughout our entire proceedings, there has not been one scintilla of proof or even any remote circumstantial evidence presented that could implicate any other nation in this international crime.

This committee unanimously finds beyond any question of reasonable doubt that the Soviet N. K. V. D. (Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs), committed the mass murders of the Polish officers and intellectual leaders in the Katyn forest near Smolensk, Russia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It is pertinent to note that this investigation was conducted at the height of the Korean war, and that no witnesses were called who might have offered contrary evidence.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, House, Interim Report of the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre, 80th Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), 27-28.

Since few people in the West knew to what extent the evidence indicated the guilt of the Soviets, however, the Katyn Massacre had little or no effect on the negotiations at Yalta. The action of the London Poles when the news was made known facilitated the severing of relations with the London Poles by the Soviets, and the formation by Stalin of the so-called Lublin group. But we have seen that relations between Stalin and the London Poles in the spring of 1943 were extremely tense, and Stalin probably would have been able to bring about a diplomatic break with the London Poles even if the Katyn affair had not been made known.

General Sikorski was killed in a plane crash on July 4, 1943, and Stanislaw Mikolajczyk succeeded him as the Polish Premier. It was never proved, but Sumner Welles declared in 1952 that he was sure Sikorski was assassinated.<sup>1</sup> During the summer of 1943, the Mikolajczyk government unsuccessfully attempted to reach an understanding with the Soviets. The differences regarding Poland that existed between the Western Allies and the Soviets were first brought to sharp focus at the Teheran Conference, held in November, 1943.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, House, Hearings Before the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre, 82d Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), 2078.



Churchill was the first to suggest at Teheran that the Curzon Line be made Poland's eastern border, but he was naturally well aware that the Soviets had already insisted on retaining the territory they had occupied when attacked in June, 1941. No doubt he also remembered the agreements made in the winter of 1942 when the Soviets signed the United Nations Declaration. The British Prime Minister suggested that the Poles move westward, like soldiers taking two steps "left close."<sup>1</sup> During the plenary session on the last day, there seemed to be general agreement on making the Curzon Line the border on the east, and the Oder River on the western border of Poland. Churchill asserted during the Conference that the Poles would be wise to accept their advice.<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt's opinion of that time is not definitely known. Statements attributed to Stalin at Teheran indicate that he had no intention of recognizing the London Poles.

At his first meeting with Churchill after the Teheran Conference, Mikolajczyk was bluntly informed of the Allied discussions concerning Poland. The Prime Minister tried very hard to get the Polish leader to agree at least "in principle," to the Curzon Line.<sup>3</sup> After consultation with

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Closing the Ring, 362.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 397.

<sup>3</sup>Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1948), 51.

the government in London, and underground forces in Poland, Mikolajczyk informed the British that they could only consent to a temporary demarcation line running east of Vienna and Lwow, which was of course unsatisfactory. Churchill was obviously trying desperately to get the Poles to give in to the territorial demands in order to induce Stalin to resume relations with the London Poles, and get a non-Communist government established in Poland proper. In view of the secret police and terroristic methods employed by the Soviets later in Poland, it is questionable if Polish acceptance of the Soviet demands would have significantly altered the events. Evidently Churchill felt it worth the effort. In extremely hypocritical action, Stalin demanded the dismissal from the London government of General Marian, the man who had made the announcement of the request for the investigation by the Red Cross of the event at Katyn.

Prime Minister Mikolajczyk met President Roosevelt in early June, 1944. The President told Mikolajczyk that he felt he would manage to get certain cities near the Curzon Line, and East Prussia for Poland.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the Poles should have realized that the United States no longer supported the restoration of the pre-war borders

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<sup>1</sup>Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland, 60.

of Poland. But the Polish leaders continued to entertain their old ideas of being the arbiters of eastern European politics. Events began to move fast. Late in July, Mikolajczyk flew to Moscow in an attempt to effect a compromise with the Soviets. The meetings lasted until August 10. Mikolajczyk managed to obtain the consent of the Moscow Poles to include him and three other members of his London cabinet in the future united government.<sup>1</sup> Toward the end of August, Mikolajczyk made other moves designed to meet the demands of Moscow. But as later events proved, he was unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, the Warsaw uprising had begun on August 1. The fighting lasted for sixty days. The exact extent of Soviet duplicity is as yet unknown. But certainly a government capable of doing the mass killings at Katyn would not be above purposely letting many thousands of Poles be killed. On July 30, the Kosciuszko radio station in Moscow urged the people of Warsaw to rise and fight the Germans. The station was controlled by the Polish Reds. There were thirteen such appeals.<sup>2</sup> A sombre battle developed

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<sup>1</sup>James P. Shotwell and Max M. Laserson, Poland and Russia, 1919-1945 (New York: King's Crown Press, 1945), 62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 63.

within the environs of Warsaw. The Germans turned all their might and fury against the Poles. Whether the Russian armies of Rokossovsky were able to storm the Vistula and come to the assistance of the Warsaw insurgents is not known. As has been mentioned previously, Stalin refused to allow Allied planes bringing supplies to the Poles to land on Soviet airfields, which reduced help to a minimum. Also, Stalin expressed doubt to Mikolajczyk that there was any fighting going on in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> However, the "adventure," as Stalin later called the Warsaw uprising, lasted until October 2. The incident could not have but further embittered the feelings of Poles toward the Soviets. It made the formation by those Poles outside the Soviet Union of a government friendly to Russia much less probable.

The meetings between Churchill and Stalin in October, 1944, have been mentioned in a previous section. In addition to the Balkan states, the Polish situation was also discussed. The Premier of the Polish government in London, Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, attended the meetings. The Lublin Poles, headed by Boleslaw Bierut, Edward Osobka-Morawski, and Wanda Wasilewski, were gaining more prestige at that time, at least to the Soviets. Churchill made an emotional

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<sup>1</sup>Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland, 78.

appeal to Mikolajczyk, attempting to persuade him to accept some of the Soviet demands. Finally he agreed to the Curzon Line if Poland would retain the area around Lwow and Vilna. Stalina rejected the proposals. Finding himself increasingly out of agreement with his government because of the concessions that he offered to Stalin, Mikolajczyk resigned as Prime Minister on November 24, 1944.<sup>1</sup> The possibility of a compromise between the London Poles and Moscow seemed very remote. But worse was to come.

On December 31, 1944, the Lublin Committee proclaimed itself the Provisional Government of Liberated Democratic Poland. A few days later, on January 5, 1945, the Provisional government was recognized by the Soviets. Stalina confronted England and the United States with a most awkward situation at Yalta. The London Poles were still recognized by the Western Allies. It was indeed difficult to foresee on what grounds an agreement on Poland would be reached at the Conference.

Polish difficulties can be divided into two general categories. The establishment of a government in Poland that was acceptable to all the members of the Big Three was the most pressing problem, but determining the borders of Poland also caused friction. Precisely when Washington

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<sup>1</sup>Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland, 105.

agreed to the Curzon Line is difficult to determine, and is perhaps not important since Roosevelt favored it as the eastern boundary at Yalta. It is possible that the United States was committed to support Russia's acquisitions in Poland in 1939 as early as January, 1942, albeit in vague terms. The President's attitude at Teheran is not known. Mikolajczyk later wrote that at the Moscow Conference of October, 1944, he learned that the United States had agreed to the Curzon Line.<sup>1</sup> Charles Bohlen recently asserted that Mikolajczyk was informed by Harriman that no agreement had been made by the United States at Teheran concerning Poland's boundaries.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, the State Department decided to support the Curzon Line prior to the Yalta Conference.<sup>3</sup>

The Polish question was reviewed by Stettinius and his assistants during the meeting in Marrakech. They advocated the Curzon Line as the eastern boundary of Poland, with the southern borders to include Lwow and some oil fields around that ancient Polish city. They did not favor extending the western border into Germany as far as the

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<sup>1</sup>Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland, 96.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 65.

<sup>3</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 41.

Neisse River. Concerning the political problem, they recommended the creation of a "government of national unity" which would include members from the five Polish political parties, including the Communists. Free elections were to be guaranteed.<sup>1</sup> On the morning before the first plenary session Roosevelt expressed agreement with the State Department proposals concerning Poland.

Germany was the first concern of the conferees, but on February 6, during the third plenary session, Roosevelt introduced the complex problem of Poland. The Western Allies were ready to compromise on the matter of borders in order to get a democratic and free government. Roosevelt opened the discussion by approving the Curzon Line, but he urged that the Russians leave Lwow and the oil fields in Lwow province to the Poles. He suggested the creation of a presidential council that would meet to form a provisional government from the five parties.<sup>2</sup> Churchill emphasized that the formation of a free, independent government in Poland was the most important aspect of the problem. Rather significantly, he had little good to say about the London Poles, and mentioned only three that he

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 41-42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 152.

considered reliable and honest. He added that the British felt that Russia was legally entitled to Lwow, but if they made a "magnanimous gesture to a much weaker power, Britain would admire and acclaim the Soviet position."<sup>1</sup>

Stalin made an impassioned reply, stating that:

I prefer the war should continue a little longer, although it costs us blood. . . . I am in favor of extending the Polish western frontier to the Neisse River.<sup>2</sup>

Stalin asserted that Poland was vital to Russia's interests because the Germans had used it as a corridor to attack Russia twice in the last thirty years, and added that the U.S.S.R. desired a strong, independent Poland. He said that it would be impossible to create a Polish government without the participation of the Poles, and continued by speaking very favorably of the Lublin Poles.<sup>3</sup> The question became temporarily deadlocked, and that evening Roosevelt wrote a letter to Stalin that became the basis for future talks.

In his letter Roosevelt emphasized the importance of reaching a solution on Poland because of public opinion. He suggested inviting to Yalta some Polish leaders from

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>3</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 154-55.



the Lublin government, and representatives from other political elements. If as a result of these Poles being present, they were able to agree on a provisional government in Poland, the President wrote that:

the United States Government, and I feel sure the British Government as well, would then be prepared to examine with you conditions in which they would dissociate themselves from the London government and transfer their recognition to the new provisional government.<sup>1</sup>

Roosevelt's letter makes it evident that American policy was to create a new provisional government; but the final agreement did not make that clear.

At the next plenary session Stalin reported that he had received Roosevelt's message only about an hour and a half before, but had succeeded in contacting the leaders of the Lublin Poles. Molotov then presented proposals which partially met Roosevelt's suggestions, to be used in case the Poles would not have time to get to the Conference. Molotov still insisted that the Western Meisse River constitute Poland's western borders, but he also suggested that "some democratic leaders from the Polish émigré circles be added to the Provisional Polish Government."<sup>2</sup> Because Molotov had offered to allow Polish leaders abroad to enter

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 158.

<sup>2</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 373.

the government, Roosevelt felt they were closer to agreement. But Churchill voiced his objection to extending the Polish border to the Western Neisse River. He stated that "it would be a pity to stuff the Polish goose so full of German food that it died of indigestion."<sup>1</sup> After further discussion the Polish problem was postponed until the next day.

Most of the fifth plenary session, held on February 8, was again devoted to the subject of Poland. A frank discussion ensued. The President and Churchill submitted counter-proposals to those advanced earlier by the Soviets. Neither statement indicated acceptance of the Neisse River as the western border. The British proposal provided for Polish leaders to consult together on the composition of the provisional government, and V. M. Molotov, Averell Harriman, and Sir Archibald Clark Kerr would talk with the leaders and report to their governments. That is what approximately was decided on later.

The Soviet delegates showed no signs of retreating from their position. Molotov declared that they could not ignore the Lublin government which enjoyed great prestige, and he added that the Polish people would not agree to change it. He requested that the question of enlarging

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 374.

the provisional government be considered in the future. Churchill realized that the Polish discussion was "the crucial point of the Conference."<sup>1</sup> Later Secretary Stettinius wrote the following note to the President: "Not to enlarge Lublin, but to form a new government of some kind."<sup>2</sup> There is no record of Roosevelt's reply, if any.

Although Stettinius did not think at the time that his note was indicative of any weakness of the Allied position, it is apparent now that it was. The last three words "of some kind" revealed in part the great problem facing the Western Allies who desired to establish democratic governments of a western nature in Poland and the Balkan countries. As a result of past internal strife which in most cases resulted in a dictatorship, there were few democratic elements in those countries from which a free government could be built. We have seen that the government existing in Poland was largely a dictatorship legalized by the constitution of 1935. And the number of prominent Poles in London considered by Churchill and Roosevelt to be truly democratic was surprisingly small. Roosevelt personally knew only Mikolajczyk of the London group. The Prime Minister was quoted as saying that the British

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 378.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 213.

had recognized the Polish government, but did not have an intimate relationship with it. "Mr. Mikolajczyk, Mr. Grabski and Mr. Romer," Churchill said, "he had found to be reliable and honest men."<sup>1</sup> This lack of Polish democratic leaders and institutions made the attempt by Churchill and Roosevelt to build a democracy in Poland based on western concepts extremely difficult.

Poland continued to be discussed during the remaining days of the Conference, during which negotiations the American and British delegates made a great effort to secure freedom and democracy based on western principles for the Poles. After Stalin had assured the Western leaders during the fifth plenary session that the Lublin government was very popular, the Polish question was once more referred to the Foreign Ministers for further study.

Stettinius announced at the Foreign Ministers meeting the next day that the American proposal for a presidential council would be dropped. The decision represented a major concession to the Soviets, because had the President's plan been accepted, the Communists would have had only one representative on a group composed of five members. But without a presidential council, the existence of the Lublin

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 153.

Poles greatly strengthened Stalin's bargaining power. The last sentence of the new American plan stated that the Ambassadors of the three countries would "report to their respective Governments on the carrying out of the pledge in regard to free and unfettered elections."<sup>1</sup> Eden warned that inability to settle the Polish question would likely become a source of difficulty between the Soviets and the British. He also emphasized the importance of forming a new government rather than merely adding to the present one in Poland. Molotov said that elections were the most important consideration, and mentioned that Marshal Stalin had suggested that the provisional period would last perhaps one month, depending on the military situation.<sup>2</sup> He indicated that the short provisional period was another reason for recognizing the present government in Poland. Eden agreed on the importance of elections, but he frankly informed Molotov that the British people would not consider the elections free if they were held under the present government. The Foreign Ministers then decided to postpone discussion of Poland until the next meeting.

Molotov presented two amendments much closer to the American draft when the afternoon session reconvened. He

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 226.

proposed that the Lublin government be reorganized on a wider democratic basis, with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself, and also from those living abroad. The three Foreign Ministers would consult in Moscow about how this would be done. In addition, he stated that the reorganized Lublin government would be pledged to hold free elections as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup> There still was not agreement, however, and the Foreign Ministers were instructed to study the proposals that evening after the plenary session ended.

But Molotov still refused to accept the last sentence of the American proposal, which charged the Ambassadors with the duty of observing and reporting the elections. There was a consensus concerning the rest of the plan. The troublesome last sentence was left for the Big Three to settle the next day. At the next plenary session, the President withdrew the sentence in dispute, and the Big Three approved the remaining part of the document. The plan provided that Molotov, Harriman, and Sir Clark Kerr would consult with the present Polish government and with Poles from abroad, with the view to the "reorganization" of the present government. Also, it was noted in the final agreement that, "this new government will then be called

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 382.

the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity."<sup>1</sup> Americans present at Yalta recognized that the agreement was subject to two interpretations. After reading the final draft, Admiral Leahy said to the President, "this is so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without ever technically breaking it."<sup>2</sup>

The question of Poland's borders had been left in abeyance during the intense discussions regarding the Polish government. Boundary questions were considered during the plenary session on February 10, the day before the Conference ended. There was general agreement on the Curzon

Line. No mention was made of what would constitute Poland's western borders because the American and British delegates still opposed extending it to the Western Neisse River. Some sources indicate that President Roosevelt was careful not to exceed his treaty-making powers, and the section on frontiers was purposely left vague.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 259.

<sup>2</sup>Leahy, I Was There, 316.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 113-14; Leahy, I Was There, 316.

We might review briefly the significance of the Polish negotiations. One important consideration is that Roosevelt and Churchill did everything in their power to insure a satisfactory settlement of the Polish question at Yalta. Roosevelt's first plan, calling for the establishment of a presidential council, would have obtained the representation of most of the major political parties and might have prevented a Communist dictatorship. Unfortunately, the final agreement was very different from the plan submitted by Roosevelt. The insistence of Stalin that the last sentence be omitted, which charged the Ambassadors with observing and reporting on the elections, was ominous. Yet it is improbable that Stalin at that time planned to establish a regime in Poland controlled by Moscow. He was insuring his freedom of action in case it was felt necessary to do so in the future. The great and overriding fact at the time was that the Red Army was liberating Poland. The Russians have established a kind of communism-colonialism system in much of the territory they liberated. Because of that, perhaps any agreement having as its aim a free and democratic Poland would have failed. Yet one cannot but feel that the failure of the Poles to make a success of democracy during the twenty years of freedom they had made the efforts of Roosevelt and Churchill to establish a democracy in Poland in 1945 infinitely more difficult, if not impossible.



## INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PROCESS OF ADJUSTMENT:

## FOUNDING THE UNITED NATIONS

There was relatively little discussion of the plans for a United Nations organization at Yalta. Yet the agreements reached concerning the proposed world organization probably represented the greatest achievement of the Conference. For while the major part of the work was done at Dumbarton Oaks in August and September of 1944, it was only because of American insistence at Yalta that an early date for the Assembly meeting at San Francisco was set. A consensus also was reached on the question of the veto. The Americans had to convince not only the Russians, but also Churchill, on both issues: the early date of the Assembly, and the matter of the veto. Vigorous action by the Americans was primarily responsible for the basic commitment of the Big Three to the concept of a world organization, and for precise plans to carry out that policy. Byrnes later wrote that the chief objective of the American delegation at Yalta was to obtain agreement on the Dumbarton Oaks proposals for the creation of an international peace

organisation.<sup>1</sup> Although such statements help cover up a woeful lack of preparation on the other issues, it seems probable that in the case of Roosevelt this was true. The fact that Roosevelt personally initiated the compromise plan on the veto in December, 1944, and his insistence during the Conference for an early meeting to establish a world body support this theory.

Much hearsay and ignorance has surrounded the veto. Actually, the veto as accepted by Stalin at Yalta, and later agreed upon at San Francisco, was entirely an American plan. After the deadlock at Dumbarton Oaks, President Roosevelt sent a compromise proposal to both Moscow and London on December 5, 1944. Stalin returned a generally negative reply. During the talks Hopkins conducted with Churchill in London, the Prime Minister made it clear that he was not sympathetic to the plan. But the issue was confused because of disagreement within the British delegation. During the discussions at Malta, it was apparent that Churchill had not as yet made a final decision on the veto question.<sup>2</sup> During an informal discussion on the first day of the Conference, Churchill seemed inclined to

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 24.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 62.

accept the Russian proposal of unanimity at all times. Eden and others in the British delegation prevailed on the Prime Minister to agree with the American compromise plan.

The American proposals at Yalta were essentially the same as those that had been sent to Moscow and London on December 5, 1944. The basic difference between the Russian and American viewpoints was that the former would prefer to be able to veto all substantive matter. The Americans held that if a permanent member of the Security Council was involved in a dispute that could be solved by peaceful means, that member should abstain from voting. The American objective was to permit any country to present its case in the Security Council, provided that the controversy could be settled by peaceful means. The discussion between Stalin and Churchill regarding the American plan has been widely quoted. The Prime Minister indicated his support of the proposal after using Egypt and the Suez Canal as an example of how the plan would work. Under the provisions, Egypt would have the right to present its case against the British in the Security Council, but any action could be nullified by the use of the veto.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 35.

Marshal Stalin stated that he needed more time to study the plan. Some have written that Stalin's unfamiliarity with the proposal that had been sent to him many weeks before indicated to the Americans the disinterest of the Soviets toward a world organization.<sup>1</sup> It is more probable, as Stettinius wrote, that they were in reality very interested in such an organization.<sup>2</sup> Stalin was primarily concerned with protecting the interests of Russia in case such a body was established. Churchill's insistence that the future world organization have no power over the British Empire was evident in his remarks concerning Egypt. The possibility is very remote that he would have agreed to a further weakening of the veto power. The American compromise proposal was prompted as much by Churchill's opposition as that offered by the Soviets. And whatever his unfamiliarity with the idea, Stalin seemed satisfied with Washington's plan after a day's study. Russia accepted the compromise on the following day.

Shortly after Stalin's acceptance of the veto formula, Molotov raised the issue of extra votes for the Soviet Union. The Soviets based their argument for extra votes

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<sup>1</sup>Leahy, I Was There, 395; Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 37.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 148.

on the assertion that Byelorussia and the Ukraine were autonomous states. Also, the fact that both had suffered grievous damage during the war was mentioned. This request for the Ukraine and Byelorussia, both provinces of which were heavily damaged by the Germans, to be represented in the world organization was an example of how internal conditions in Russia influenced her foreign policy. Had this connection been understood, American leaders might have been more sympathetic to Russia's proposals on reparations, or perhaps offered her a loan in return for which it is possible that the Soviets would have moderated their political demands. Most members of the American delegation were very much against giving the Soviets extra representation, and Sherwood wrote that Roosevelt went to Yalta determined to oppose the Soviet demand for additional votes.<sup>1</sup> His decision later in the Conference to support the Soviet request was an indication of his willingness to give in on some issues in order to insure the formation of a world organization.

Worried about adverse reaction in the Senate, Byrnes and Hopkins prevailed on Roosevelt to at least get Stalin's assurance that he would support an American request for extra votes in case such a request was made. The insurance

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 856.

clause was obtained from Stalin, but never used. Byrnes later admitted that public opposition to Russia's extra votes was not as great as he had foreseen.<sup>1</sup> In any event, Russia's willingness to give France a permanent seat in the Security Council certainly offset any advantage the Soviets might have gained by their two extra votes in the General Assembly.

President Roosevelt was extremely anxious to set an early date for the Assembly meeting where the international body would be organized. He first suggested late March or sooner.<sup>2</sup> That was obviously too early, and Roosevelt probably mentioned it as a bargaining point to insure that the meeting would be held before the end of the war. Despite the skepticism of both Stalin and Churchill, April 25 was later agreed upon as the date and San Francisco was selected as the site of the important meeting.

There was considerable discussion as to what nations would be invited to the Assembly meeting at San Francisco. The Soviets would have preferred to have their representatives from White Russia and the Ukraine included in the Assembly. Roosevelt remained opposed to their inclusion,

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 42.

<sup>2</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 359.

merely saying that we would support the proposal at San Francisco, and finally the matter was dropped. It was decided that only those nations that declared war against the Axis by March 1, 1945, would be invited to the meeting at San Francisco.

The discussion initiated by Stettinius concerning trusteeships was brief but violent. The Secretary hardly began when Churchill exploded. After saying that he did not agree with a word of the report, and that he would not have "the United Nations thrusting interfering fingers into the very life of the British Empire," he turned to Stalin and asked him how he would like to internationalize the Crimea as a summer resort.<sup>1</sup> Churchill was partly reassured when Stettinius explained that they had in mind only trusteeships over former League of Nations mandates, and dependent areas in the Pacific. The incident was significant in that Churchill's sensitivity revealed the generally weakened and defensive position of England at the time. It also emphasized Churchill's concern for limiting the powers of the future world organization.

President Roosevelt was the man who made the greatest contribution in forming the United Nations. Secretary Stettinius later wrote of Roosevelt's insistence on an

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 865.

early date for the Assembly to meet at San Francisco, and he added:

Had the three countries waited until the close of the war to draft the Charter, it is doubtful, because of the rapid deterioration of Russian-American and Russian-British relations, that the United Nations could have been formed.<sup>1</sup>

The statement could very well be true. Harsh critics of the Yalta Conference should not forget that decisions made there were probably instrumental in bringing about the formation of the United Nations.

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<sup>1</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 178.



## VII

### THE FAR EAST: JAPAN WAS STILL THE ENEMY

The last subject to be considered is the agreement regarding Russia's entrance into the war against Japan. Many people regard this topic to be synonymous with the Yalta Conference. And it is without doubt the most controversial section of the Yalta agreements. There are two general reasons why the Far Eastern agreement has been strongly criticized. The first is that it was a secret understanding that leaked out by accident at a later date. The American public has always been suspicious of secret negotiations, particularly since World War I. The second criticism of the agreement is more complex. The defeat of Chaing Kai-shek's forces and the resulting Communist victory in China was a catastrophe for the Western world. It was only natural for Americans to search for a reason for the Nationalist debacle. Some were certain that they had found the reason for Chaing's defeat in the agreements made at Yalta in 1945.

The conviction of Alger Hiss, who was a State Department consultant at Yalta, served to make people more certain that China had been "sold down the river." Then, when Red China entered the war against the United Nations forces

in Korea, criticism of the Yalta agreements reached a new high. Many irresponsible charges were made by men for reasons best known to themselves. But information made available recently concerning the negotiations at Yalta on the Far East make it possible to dispel the many myths that formerly shrouded that part of the Yalta agreement.

In a previous section the pre-Yalta statements made by Stalin relating to Russian entrance into the Far Eastern war have been reviewed. But these remarks did not constitute a formal commitment, in the opinion of Charles Bohlen.<sup>1</sup> Averell Harriman wrote that there was never any doubt in his own mind that the Russians would ultimately attack Manchuria. The critical question was whether or not they would come in early enough to save American lives. Harriman talked to Stalin about it as early as August, 1942, at which time the Marshal indicated that he would come into the war when he was in a position to do so.<sup>2</sup>

The most common theory held by those who criticize Yalta is that Roosevelt agreed to allow Soviet participation in the operation of the Manchurian Railroads, and made concessions in the case of Port Arthur and Dairen only

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 42.

<sup>2</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 6.

because he was in a sick and enfeebled condition at Yalta. Even a man as friendly to the President as Robert Sherwood wrote to that effect in 1948.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation presupposes that no previous negotiations of importance were carried on; that Roosevelt was confronted with the Soviet demands, and because he was tired and eager to get away he agreed to them, not realizing their implications. The supposition is not based on fact. Throughout 1944, on instructions from the President, Harriman discussed with Stalin Russian participation in the Japanese war. Although Soviet political objectives were mentioned in a general way on a number of occasions, it was only in December, 1944, that Stalin gave Harriman his objectives in detail.

In comparing Stalin's proposals of December, 1944, with the agreement concluded at Yalta, one finds the conditions altered considerably in favor of the Chinese. In December Stalin expressed the desire to lease Dairen and Port Arthur. In addition he proposed a Soviet lease on the Chinese Eastern Railway, which is the direct line from the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Vladivostok, and the South Manchurian Railway, which terminated at Dairen.<sup>2</sup> He assured Harriman that the Soviet Union would not interfere with

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<sup>1</sup>Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 867.

<sup>2</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 10.

the sovereignty of China over Manchuria. In the agreement made at Yalta it was provided that Port Arthur would be leased to the Soviets, but Dairen was to be internationalized. More important was the fact that the Manchurian Railroads were to be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese Company. That represented a considerable concession on the part of Stalin from his position of December, 1944. Most significant is the fact that these discussions occurred nearly two months before Yalta. The theory advanced by many that the President gave the Soviets dangerous concessions in Manchuria that had not been considered previously because of his sickened condition is immediately shattered.

The desire of the military to get Russia to enter the war against Japan at the earliest possible date was the basic reason for the agreement being negotiated. The memorandum given to the President by the Joint Chiefs of Staff of January 23, 1945, is the clearest evidence that such was the case. A summary of their argument is quoted below:

Russia's entry at as early a date as possible consistent with her ability to engage in offensive operations is necessary to provide maximum assistance to our Pacific operations. The United States will provide maximum support possible without interfering with our main effort against Japan.

The objective of Russia's military effort against Japan in the Far East should be the defeat of the Japanese forces in Manchuria, air operations against Japan proper in collaboration with United States Air Forces based in eastern Siberia, and maximum interference with Japanese sea traffic between Japan and the mainland of Asia.<sup>1</sup>

Future objectives and target dates were also listed.

Plans for the invasion of Kyushu-Honshu were to be continued; modified as necessary by the experience gained in the attack on Iwo Jima, scheduled for February 19, 1945. The heavy casualties of that island campaign no doubt reassured those who insisted upon the need for Russian participation in the final assault on the Japanese home islands. Talks between Secretary of Navy James V. Forrestal and General Douglas MacArthur on February 28, during which the General expressed a strong desire to get the Russians committed to an early attack against the Japanese in Manchukuo was confirmation that military leaders in the Pacific area strongly desired Russian support.<sup>2</sup>

As late as July, 1945, the military was planning a costly invasion of the main island of Honshu in the spring of 1946. Henry L. Stimson, who was then Secretary of War, described the operation in these terms:

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<sup>1</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 17.

<sup>2</sup>The Forrestal Diaries, 31.

The total U. S. military and naval forces involved in this grand design was of the order of 5,000,000 men; if all those indirectly concerned are included, it was larger still. We estimated that if we should be forced to carry this plan to its conclusion, the major fighting would not end until the latter part of 1946, at the earliest. I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties, to American forces alone.

The terms of the Far Eastern agreement were negotiated during the two special meetings between Stalin and Roosevelt. The three Americans present were President Roosevelt, Averell Harriman, and Charles Bohlen, the latter acting as interpreter. Of the Soviet delegation only Stalin, Molotov, and the Russian interpreter were present. Bohlen and Harriman have provided a record of the discussions.

The Far East was first considered during a short meeting on February 8. No document was involved, and according to Bohlen, Stalin said to Roosevelt, "you are aware of my views from my conversation with Ambassador Harriman."<sup>2</sup> The President replied that he was. Stalin contended that those proposals should be accepted. Roosevelt replied to the effect that there would be no trouble concerning the Kuriles Islands and the return to Russia of Southern

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<sup>1</sup>Stimson and Eundy, On Active Service in Peace and War, 619.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 27.

Sakhalin. He said that while he could not speak for Chiang Kai-shek, he believed that Dairen might become a free port, and the Manchurian railroads operated jointly. The President and Stalin then discussed the internal situation in China, and Stalin reiterated his recognition of the need for a united China under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership.<sup>1</sup> Stalin suggested that a written agreement be arranged.

Two days later (February 10) Harriman and Molotov discussed the details of the understanding. At that time Harriman re-emphasized that Roosevelt thought the ports should be internationalized, and that the railroads should be jointly operated instead of being leased as Stalin had demanded formerly. Harriman reported the conversation to Roosevelt later in the day, and the President instructed Harriman to explain his views to Molotov again, which he did.<sup>2</sup>

Roosevelt and the Marshal met later during the same day. Stalin agreed to the President's modifications quoted above except in the case of Port Arthur, which he said must be leased since it was to be a naval base.<sup>3</sup> Under questioning by Senator Ferguson, Bohlen stated that there

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<sup>1</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

was no attempt at that meeting to mitigate the Soviet demands.<sup>1</sup> But we have seen that as a result of earlier talks between Harriman and Molotov, the original Soviet demands were modified considerably. At the close of that meeting, Harriman asked Stalin whether he would undertake to write out the further revisions, and he replied that he would.

In a fine study of this period, Herbert Feis writes that the draft prepared by the Soviets contained two new terms which were objectionable. Concerning the commercial port of Dairen, which was to be internationalized, the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union were guaranteed. Similarly, the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union were assured on the matter of Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South-Manchurian Railroad.<sup>2</sup> Feis adds that the practical application of the terms pre-eminent interests was never talked out. Differences of opinion arose later between Russia and the United States over the interpretation of those phrases. Roosevelt accepted them without further argument. His willingness to do so came probably from the understanding that the agreement was of broad political scope and that its final interpretation would be determined

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 35.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Feis, The China Tangle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 247.



by the state of political affairs after the war. Yet of all the understandings reached regarding China, the two sentences which guaranteed the pre-eminent interests of the Soviets were politically the most dangerous, and most open to criticism. For it left Soviet rights ill-defined but with implications of broad power.

There was apparently no American interpreter present when the agreement was drafted. The part that provided for the claims of the Soviet Union to be "unquestionably fulfilled" has also been heavily criticized. But the phrases that stated that the agreement would require the concurrence of Chiang Kai-shek, and indicated that the Soviet Union was ready to conclude a pact of friendship and alliance with the Nationalist government, would seem largely to offset the effect of the sentence in question. Bohlen stated that he did not believe the absence of an American interpreter when the agreement was drafted was important, as the language was clear. Bohlen also argued that if Chiang had refused, there would have been no way that Roosevelt could have enforced the agreement, except as it regarded Japan.<sup>1</sup> It did not have the force of a treaty; but Stalin probably felt relatively certain that the provisions would be carried out since Roosevelt agreed to seek the concurrence of the Chinese.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 48.

Only by the work of officials who toiled through the night were the final papers prepared by February 11, the last day of the Conference. Two days before, Churchill and Stalin discussed briefly Russian aims in the Far East, and Churchill expressed sympathy with Stalin's desire to make good Russia's losses of the Russo-Japanese war. The Prime Minister endorsed the Far Eastern agreement, but later disclaimed any responsibility for it.<sup>1</sup> After the Soviets presented the final text, Harriman showed it to General Marshal and to Admirals Leahy and King, requesting them to read it carefully.<sup>2</sup> None had criticism. During the luncheon on February 11, the Big Three signed the final formal papers, including the Far Eastern agreement.

The negotiations concerning the Far East at Yalta took relatively little time, but the agreements reached were not the result of sudden decisions by the President. Instead of acquiescing to Stalin's demands at Yalta, Roosevelt sought and obtained considerable modification of original Soviet requests. The much criticized State Department was not a factor in reaching an agreement on the Far East.<sup>3</sup> A brief consideration of the effect of the agreement on subsequent events in Asia will be given later.

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<sup>1</sup>Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 390.

<sup>2</sup>Feis, The China Tangle, 248.

<sup>3</sup>Concerning the charges made against Owen Lattimore, Herbert Feis, who had access to official documents, concluded that no treason was involved in our relations with China.

The subject of Alger Hiss and his influence on the proceedings at Yalta does not fit in any particular section. But because people have attempted to associate him with the agreements concerning China, his actions at Yalta will be discussed in this connection. Many extreme views gained acceptance after the conviction of Hiss for actions in the late thirties, and after the Communist victory in China, which many observers attributed to Yalta. People were certain that Hiss had somehow exercised his influence on the President at Yalta in order to further Communist designs after the war. Perhaps the wildest charges were made on the floor of the Senate. In referring to the Yalta Conference, Senator Capehart spoke of an occasion when a bitter dispute raged over the issue of Russia's extra votes, and he stated that thirty conferees left the room. Later Hiss and Roosevelt supposedly came out of the room and Roosevelt said: "I know I shouldn't have done it. But I was so tired when they got a hold of me."<sup>1</sup> The Senator surmised that it could have been only the Russians and Hiss who "got a hold of him." He then inferred ominously that the same thing happened at other times.

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<sup>1</sup>Congressional Record, 81st Cong., 2d Sess. (1950), 756.

The facts show that Senator Capehart was mistaken as are the many others who maintain that Hiss engineered a sell-out to the Communists at Yalta. The position that Hiss held at the Conference was deputy director, Office of Special Political Affairs. As such he was the advisor to Stettinius on problems relating to the organization of the United Nations. There is no evidence that indicates he influenced the American position on any other question. Incidentally, the notes taken by Hiss while at Yalta were examined by representatives of the Internal Security Subcommittee. The only reference to the Far East was a memorandum stressing the importance of attaining Communist unity with the Kuomintang in the war against Japan. However, it was not verified whether Stettinius or Hiss prepared it. To make it even more innocuous, Hiss had pencilled a note on the corner of the page which read: "Bohlen says the Pres. has already taken this up with Stalin."<sup>1</sup> Stettinius wrote that the State Department was not a major factor in the Far Eastern agreement.<sup>2</sup> In 1951, Harriman asserted that neither Secretary of State Stettinius nor any of his advisors, except for Charles Bohlen, took part

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Institute of Pacific Relations, Internal Security Subcommittee, 82d Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), 5484.

<sup>2</sup>Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, 94-95.

in the negotiations concerning Russia's entrance into the war against Japan. Harriman added: "Any suggestion to the contrary is utterly without foundation in fact."<sup>1</sup>

Bohlen recently stated regarding the activities of Hiss:

I can testify under any form of oath necessary that he was not present at any of these meetings between Stalin and President Roosevelt, and as far as I am aware, he knew nothing whatsoever about this far eastern matter.<sup>2</sup>

In all probability, Hiss never learned of the Far Eastern understanding until it was known generally by the members of the State Department many months after Yalta. There is not a shred of evidence to indicate that he could have possibly influenced the terms of the agreement.

The role he played regarding other issues is more difficult to determine. He was an advisor to Stettinius, and was aware of the State Department policy on all the questions considered at the plenary sessions, which he attended. Stettinius usually conferred with Hiss and the other members of the American delegation in the morning, before the meeting of the Foreign Ministers. Those meetings were general discussions during which procedural matters were considered, rather than policy. Bohlen stated that

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<sup>1</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 20.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 40.

he never heard Hiss express an opinion on Poland or the Far East during those discussions, and as far as he could remember, Hiss confined his remarks to matters concerning the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> Bohlen further testified that he never heard Hiss give Stettinius any advice "that was contrary to the agreed American position."<sup>2</sup>

The most vicious type of accusations have been made by men who have attempted to picture Hiss influencing the tired President to make decisions inimical to America's interests. There have been many statements made similar to those of Senator Capehart quoted above. "I am absolutely certain that Hiss never saw President Roosevelt in a capacity of advisor to him," Bohlen testified, "and never had any interviews with him except that first one when the President met the whole delegation before the opening of the Conference."<sup>3</sup> Senator Capehart was speaking from prejudice and without accurate knowledge; Bohlen spoke from experience.

The American policy on most of the problems that were dealt with during the Conference was well established before the meetings were held at Yalta. Only in a few cases were

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 58.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 20.

those policies modified during the Conference. Whether or not Hiss was in contact with the Soviets when the Conference was held is not known. If he advised the Soviets in advance as to the position of the United States on the various questions it would have aided them. But the record shows that in no way did he influence the understanding reached concerning the Far East.

PART FOUR

CONCLUSIONS



# I

## ANALYSES AND CRITICISMS

Several positive results were achieved by the Western powers at Yalta. Only some of these have been generally recognized. The agreements that failed are more obvious than those that were successful and have been accepted. Some of the understandings reached at Yalta, most notably concerning the Far East for example, have been used to explain defeats suffered by the West that largely resulted from other factors. Also, the fact that a policy breaks down in later years does not necessarily mean that it was wrong at an earlier date. Factors beyond the control of the negotiators at Yalta influenced the later history of some of the agreements. Thus the agreements made at Yalta were not responsible for the communization of large areas in Europe and Asia as is frequently charged.

Failure to understand the great strain under which leaders work during a war, and their many responsibilities, is the greatest cause for error in judging wartime conferences. If one considers the worst that could have happened at Yalta--the disruption of the alliance against Hitler, and resulting chaos in the world--the failures of the Conference

do not seem so serious. But the wartime alliance against the remaining Axis Powers was preserved, and an early victory was assured not only in Europe, but also in the war against Japan. Whatever the outcome of the atomic bomb experiments, Stalin's agreement to declare war on Japan within three months after the conflict ended in Europe promised victory in the struggle against Tokyo with a minimum of American casualties. The alliance of the two Western Powers with Soviet Russia was not based on a long period of friendship, but on the contrary developed only out of mutual interest, and that common objective was victory in the war. There was a very wide area of disagreement between them in 1941, when they were forced into close cooperation as a result of their desperate fight against a common enemy. The maintenance of the alliance and the insuring of order in the closing stages of the war must be regarded as valuable accomplishments.

The success of the Western delegates, in this case mostly the British, to gain for France representation on the German Control Commission and a permanent seat on the Security Council also proved important. France assumed an important role in the years following the war, when Washington felt compelled to organize a military alliance composed of the Western European Powers. The unity of

the West has been sorely tried since Yalta; and it is quite conceivable that if the British and Americans had been unable to restore France to her former big-power status, that nation would have become an even less willing ally than she did.

Perhaps Stalin used the issue of French participation in the occupation and control of Germany as a bargaining point. After all, France had been known traditionally as a world power. But while it is impossible to say definitely what motives Stalin had for his opposition, it seems probable that they were in part genuine. France contributed little toward winning the war, and Stalin judged countries by their material strength. Whatever the reasons were for Stalin's prolonged opposition to granting France big-power status, the success of the Western delegates in obtaining his agreement was an important achievement.

There is no doubt but that the agreements made at Yalta greatly aided the establishment of the United Nations Organization. Much planning for an international association had been done prior to Yalta, and it is impossible to state categorically that negotiations at the Conference were primarily responsible for its being established. Yet it would be impossible to deny that great strides were made, and that certain understandings reached contributed greatly

to the United Nations becoming a reality. The insistence of Roosevelt, despite the apathy of Churchill and Stalin, for an early organizational conference at San Francisco was extremely important.

Many misunderstandings occurred shortly after the Conference ended. Friction resulting from Soviet action in Rumania, and the Berne incident in which Stalin accused his Allies of making secret agreements with German army leaders in Italy, developed in March.<sup>1</sup> The decision not to send Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, but a lesser official to San Francisco caused ill-feeling. The abrupt ending of Lend-Lease shipments to Russia in May increased Soviet suspicions. Relations had reached a tense stage when Hopkins flew to Moscow late in May. The number of disagreements continued to grow, and it is quite conceivable that had the Assembly met later, as Churchill and Stalin wished, the tension that had developed would have made agreement impossible. Although subsequent difficulties arose, the discussions about the power of the veto no doubt contributed greatly to the final settlement. Those who believe that world peace is attainable through the controls exercised by an international organization must feel indebted to the members of the American delegation who contributed so much toward building such an organization at the Yalta Conference.

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<sup>1</sup>Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, 52-57.

The Western delegates were able to get a statement of principles on the record, which was important. "The one great thing accomplished by our constant efforts during and since the war," asserted Harriman, "is that we have firmly established our moral position in the world."<sup>1</sup> A great effort was made by Roosevelt at Yalta to reach a solid and firm accord with Stalin. In the years after 1947, when continued unity among Western nations became imperative, this moral position which made Western unity easier to maintain, has proved valuable.

The failure of American delegates at Yalta to formulate an adequate reparations program was a fundamental error. But it was not a conscious mistake. Furthermore, it is not certain that diplomatic action at Yalta could have prevented the deterioration of relations that followed. For much of the world tension present since 1945 has been due to the clash of two economic and social systems that would be present had there been no Yalta Conference. The continuation between the wars of a socialist system in Russia presented a challenge to the West in the post-Yalta era. During part of the inter-war period western capitalist nations suffered from an extremely disastrous economic

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<sup>1</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 53.

depression, and the fears of another down-turn no doubt increased this anxiety.

Arnold J. Toynbee, one of the world's most well-known historians, recently explained this situation. "For the first time since the sixteenth century," wrote Toynbee, "the West has again found itself threatened with spiritual disintegration from within as well as with an assault from without." "It looks as if, in the encounter between Russia and the West," he continued, "the spiritual initiative, though not the technological lead, has now passed, at any rate for the moment, from the Western to the Russian side."<sup>1</sup> Toynbee's views must be considered in order to understand one of the reasons for the failure to maintain the accord reached at Yalta.

Some causes for what the West has considered violations of the understandings reached at Yalta may be found in reviewing Russia's pre-war relations with the rest of the world. The exact extent to which Stalin was influenced in the post-Yalta era by the hostile diplomacy displayed by the West toward Russia during the two previous decades is of course impossible to determine, but it must have been a factor. Stalin's two allies at Yalta ruled nations

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold J. Toynbee, "Russia and the West," Harpers, CCVI (March, 1953), 58.

that had previously sent troops into his country to overturn the regime that he now headed. Later, in 1932, the Soviets took the initiative in proposing to limit Japanese aggression in Manchuria, but their offers were spurned.<sup>1</sup> Then when Hitler first demanded concessions from Czechoslovakia (1938) Soviet offers to join England and France to prevent further Nazi aggression were ignored or only slightly considered.<sup>2</sup> Stalin's efforts to block Russia's Baltic approaches from a possible attack by Hitler were bitterly assailed in Britain and the United States.<sup>3</sup> Although it by no means absolves Stalin of all his later acts, the West's failure during the 1930's to respond to Soviet offers aimed at limiting Japanese and German aggression must have been factors that made him take extreme methods to insure Russia's future safety.

In Fischer's book, The Life and Death of Stalin, the Soviet leader is considered to be almost the sole violator of the accord reached at Yalta.<sup>4</sup> Fischer writes that Stalin

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, American-Russian Relations, 227; R. P. Browder, The Origins of Soviet-American Diplomacy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), chap. III, "The Far Eastern Catalyst."

<sup>2</sup>Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 294.

<sup>3</sup>On the Soviet origins of the war with Finland see World Politics, January, 1954.

<sup>4</sup>This book is primarily a critical biography of Stalin rather than an historical analysis of the period.

acted quickly in Poland and the Balkan states in violation of the Yalta agreements because he was apprehensive of the advance of Western armies. He adds that it was due to those aggressive acts that the attitude of Harriman and other American officials changed in the spring and summer of 1945 to pessimism regarding future relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> Fischer implies that due to the mechanics of the Soviet state, Stalin had to produce disagreement after the war. He argues that a dictatorship such as the Stalinist regime requires continued tension, and that Stalin deliberately fostered a feeling of fear and dislike of the West among the Russian people. "Stalin tries to give his people a sense of urgency, of emergency. Relaxation would be fatal to a dictatorship," Fischer writes.<sup>2</sup>

But a close examination of the record reveals that failure of the Yalta agreements and the subsequent deterioration of relations cannot be explained solely by Soviet intrigue. The reasons for this can only be understood by considering the terrible devastation of Russia in 1945, and the character of the agreements reached by Churchill and Stalin in October, 1944. Stalin's position in 1945 was difficult because of the pressing need for aid in

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<sup>1</sup>Fischer, The Life and Death of Stalin (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 215-16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 231.



Russian reconstruction. Hence he strived to maintain friendship with the West. For only by acting in accordance with previous agreements could he hope for economic aid from America. But when Washington disregarded the Churchill-Stalin agreement and protested Soviet action in Rumania, which paralleled earlier interference in Greece by the British, friction was certain to result.

To further complicate Stalin's position, Communist movements in Yugoslavia and China arose which he could not control, and whose actions inevitably led to friction. The assurance of adequate economic aid from America would have lessened Stalin's concern in eastern Europe and particularly in Germany, where the most serious disagreement occurred. Washington's policies after Yalta precluded reaching an agreement with Soviet Russia. But such an accord would have had a formidable obstacle in the great chasm that separated the two social and economic systems.

That Stalin still hoped for American aid in August, 1945, is shown by his statements to Eisenhower when he visited Moscow:

There are many ways in which we need American help. Likewise we must get your technicians to help us in our engineering and construction problems, and we want to know more about mass production methods in factories. We know that we are behind in these things and we know that you can help us.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, 461.

Equally significant was Eisenhower's comment regarding the conversation:

This general trend in thought he pursued in many directions, whereas I had supposed that he would content himself merely with some general expressions of desire to cooperate.<sup>1</sup>

But no American help was offered, and when Russia's request for a \$6,000,000,000 loan was "lost" in the State Department for a year the American policy was clearly revealed. Washington's only tool for maintaining the accord reached at Yalta was not given serious consideration.

Evidence that Stalin unsuccessfully tried to force Communist Parties in Yugoslavia and China into coalition governments has recently appeared. The Stalin-Churchill agreement of 1944 arranged for influence in Yugoslavia to be divided equally. In a conversation with Tito late in 1944, Stalin revealed that he wished to abide by his agreement with Churchill. The session was stormy as Tito openly disagreed with Stalin when he proposed compromising with the bourgeoisie in Serbia. Tito relates that the talks proceeded in a painful atmosphere, and when Stalin assured him of the need to reinstate King Peter, "blood rushed to my head that he could advise us to do such a thing."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, 462.

<sup>2</sup>Vladimir Dedijer, Tito (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 233.

But Stalin found that he could no more control Tito in 1944 than at a later period. During a meeting in 1948, Stalin admitted to the Yugoslav Foreign Minister Edvard Kardelj that he had advised the Chinese Communist leaders when they came to Moscow after the war, to seek a modus vivendi with Chiang Kai-shek. "We told them bluntly," said Stalin, "that we considered the development of the uprising in China had no prospect . . . that they should join the Chiang Kai-shek government and dissolve their armies."<sup>1</sup> It was another instance in which Stalin attempted to discourage Communist revolutions abroad in order to minimize conflict with the West.

Thus Stalin faced ironic difficulties in the period following Yalta. His action in Europe, in consequence of the October, 1944, agreement, inevitably led to friction with the United States when Washington's interpretation of the Yalta Declaration failed to consider previous agreements and British action taken in accordance with them. As Stalin's prospect for economic aid decreased, he was encouraged to take other measures to satisfy Russia's present needs and future security. He exacted heavy reparations

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<sup>1</sup>Dedijer, Tito, 322. This episode is also quoted in: Deutscher, Russia: What Next? 107. For statements made by Stalin and related by George F. Kennan to the effect that the Soviets were not interested in China after the war see: U.S. Congress, Senate, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1562.

from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Finland.<sup>1</sup> This action was certain to make it harder to install Communist regimes, and strongly suggests that Stalin chose to sacrifice those future possibilities in order to attain current needs. By discouraging the Communist Parties in Yugoslavia and China, and by acting in Europe along nationalistic rather than revolutionary lines, Stalin was obviously trying to avoid a major crisis with the West. It is one of the supreme ironies of recent times that Stalin, who has been considered the creator and sponsor of Communist revolutions in Europe and Asia, tried very hard to force Yugoslav and Chinese Communists into coalitions with the bourgeois governments. And by doing so, he renounced the theory of violent revolution. It is obvious that the failure to maintain the accord reached at Yalta cannot be explained solely by deliberate violation on the part of Stalin.

But even had the victorious allies been able to construct an edifice of world peace in which such complicated and explosive issues as the nature of governments in southeastern Europe and the amount of reparations been reconciled, it is possible that it would have shattered on the Polish question. There are many reasons why agreement on Poland

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 537.

was so difficult to achieve. One apparent factor was the absence of Polish leaders who were truly democratic and who could have furnished a nucleus around which Churchill and Roosevelt could build a liberal, democratic government. There were some able Poles in the London government such as Mikolajczyk and Tadeusz Romer, but they were not typical. Deutscher described the Poles in London as "a motley coalition of half conservative peasants, moderate Socialists, of people who could not by any criterion 'eastern' or 'western' be considered democrats."<sup>1</sup> He added that the core of its administration consisted of followers of the former Polish dictators Pilsudski and Rydz-Smigly, and that with only a few exceptions the leaders were possessed by that Russophobia which had been a fundamental Polish policy for so long. In addition, Churchill and Roosevelt did not have close relations with the London Poles, and Roosevelt knew only Mikolajczyk. The nature of the pre-war government largely precluded the possibility of there being many liberal, democratic leaders to take the reins of power in 1945.

Soviet treatment of the Poles during the war increased their hostility, and made it even more difficult to construct a government friendly to Russia which was also

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<sup>1</sup>Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, 521.

non-Communist.<sup>1</sup> And later the Soviets used force and brutality during 1946 in order to gain control of the government at the first general election held in January, 1947. The reports of Mikolajczyk and the American Ambassador to Poland Arthur Bliss Lane thoroughly document this.<sup>2</sup> But most of the Soviet intrigues began after it was apparent that the Grand Alliance was changing to the Grand Enmity. Even those most biased against the Yalta Conference should recognize that factors beyond the control of the Western delegates rather than the Yalta agreement were responsible for the final outcome.

Even in Czechoslovakia it is not certain that the Russians were responsible for the successful Communist revolution. Robert Bruce Lockhart, who was in intimate touch with Eduard Benes and Jan Masaryk during the final days of the Czechoslovak Republic, wrote of the Communist coup in the following terms:

Given that the revolution was the accidental result of the opposition's initiative--and I think that is the correct interpretation of events--it followed that Russia neither instigated the action nor chose the moment. . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For an account of the brutal treatment suffered by the Poles who were sent to Russia during the early years of World War II see: The Dark Side of the Moon, With a Preface by T. S. Eliot (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).

<sup>2</sup>Arthur Bliss Lane, I Saw Poland Betrayed (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1948), 278-79; Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland, 237-39.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Bruce Lockhart, "The Czechoslovak Revolution," Foreign Affairs, XXVI (July, 1948), 644.

The subject is controversial, but to explain the Communist victories as being solely the result of Russian intrigue is to simplify the problem and to miss one of the primary reasons for the post-war developments in Europe. Communism received support from great numbers of people in Europe, one example being that of France where the Communists polled the largest number of votes of any other party in the first French election after liberation.<sup>1</sup> Many factors contributed to the failure of the Yalta agreements in Europe, but the strength of communism combined with the absence of a satisfactory alternative was a fundamental cause.

In judging the American and British action at Yalta, it is important to consider Stalin's view of the future. He encouraged, for example, Yugoslav and Chinese Communist leaders to enter coalitions with the traditional governments. This strongly suggests that he was striving to act in accordance with the agreements made in 1944 and 1945. In addition, his political demands in Europe indicate that he had no intention of establishing Communist regimes in the area liberated by the Red Army. He exacted heavy reparations from most of the states in southeastern Europe as well as Germany. Stalin's absolute decision to incorporate that

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon J. Wright, The Reshaping of French Democracy (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1948), 95.

part of Poland east of the Curzon Line alienated not only the conservative Poles, but those of the left-wing also. In addition, his insistence despite Allied protests to establish the western border of Poland at the Western Neisse could not have but embittered the Germans. None of those acts can be reconciled with the theory that at the time of Yalta he planned to establish and control Communist governments in the liberated areas of Europe and Asia. It appears that only after relations with the West deteriorated later in 1945, did Stalin act to consolidate his position. As he had neither concrete plans nor a time table at Yalta for installing Communist governments in Europe and Asia, the Western representatives could not be expected to foresee the later developments.

The developments in Poland and southeastern Europe after Yalta were resented and disliked by most Americans, but as their interest did not become directly involved, public expressions of irritation at the results did not continue. The Far Eastern agreement did not prejudice the American position, yet it became the object of bitter controversy. Much has been written on the effect that the Far Eastern agreement supposedly had on post-war events in China. It is not necessary to investigate in detail the different views that have been expressed regarding



the problem. The agreements were not the result of sudden concessions given by a tired President, and the saving of American lives was the primary consideration of those who negotiated the arrangements for the combined attack on Japan.

In a particularly bitter condemnation of American action at Yalta, William C. Bullitt later maintained that "it was by his concessions to Stalin's desires in the Far East that the President most gravely endangered the vital interests of the United States." Explaining why the agreement was unnecessary, he asserted that:

anyone who understood the depth of Stalin's desire to seize Manchuria and Korea and to Communize China, knew that no power on earth could have prevented him from declaring war on Japan at the last minute. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Bullitt ignored the wartime situation and the basic reason for the agreement being made. "Because of their ambitions in the east, there was never any doubt in my mind that the Soviets would attack the Japanese in Manchuria in their own due time," wrote Harriman in 1951. "The question was," he added, "whether they would come in early enough to be of any help to us and to save American lives."<sup>2</sup> The time

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<sup>1</sup>William C. Bullitt, "How We Won the War and Lost the Peace," Life, XXV (September 6, 1948), 88.

<sup>2</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 6.

factor was considered by the military to be vital, as very extensive operations had been planned in case the atomic bomb was not used. The Soviets would have had a much freer hand in Manchuria and China if the United States had been forced to carry on a long, costly struggle against Japan without their aid. And such was the outlook at Yalta unless an agreement for early Russian participation in the Japanese War was effected.

The participation of the Chinese Communists in the military conflict in Korea caused a violent reaction in the United States against the government of Mao Tse-tung. A re-examination was made of our Far Eastern policies during and after the war. Observers of one political orientation contended that Chiang Kai-shek's defeat was due to the agreements made with Russia at Yalta which allowed the Soviets, subject to Chinese approval, certain rights in Manchuria. The record does not reveal that Russian troops fought against the Nationalist forces during the Chinese Civil War. Therefore, the only way that the Russians could have assisted the Chinese Communist armies was to provide them with weapons. Crucial to this point was the testimony during the MacArthur hearings of Major General David H. Barr, who was chief of the Army Advisory Commission in Nanking, China in 1948. In response to a question about a statement he had made previously, General Barr replied:

I stated that, in my opinion, the Chinese never lost a battle, during my time in China, through lack of arms or ammunition. I am still of that opinion, and I am willing to discuss any particular battle that anyone wants to discuss.<sup>1</sup>

Asked why they lost, he replied that the principle reason was lack of spirit. Vice Admiral Oscar Charles Badger, who was in China in 1947 and 1948, apparently did not agree completely with General Barr, but he did say that the failure of the Nationalist government to plan and organize was a basic reason for their defeat.<sup>2</sup> As in the case of the east European countries that were occupied by the Soviets, the weakness of the traditional government was an important factor in the failure of the objectives of the Western statesmen. The failure in China was all the more striking because the Soviets did not occupy a predominant position, and did not participate directly in the overthrow of the Chiang Kai-shek regime. This criticism of the Nationalist government must be tempered by considering the formidable problems confronting it after V-J Day. Of these problems, Feis writes that there was almost a complete absence of trade, that ninety per cent of China's railway equipment was destroyed, and that there was extreme inflation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, The Military Situation in the Far East, 81st Cong, 2d Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951), 2960.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2751.

<sup>3</sup>Feis, The China Tangle, 355.

But the fact remains that inability of the Nationalist government to resolve the many problems facing China was instrumental in bringing about its downfall.

Stalin's price for entering the war against Japan might have been much greater. The demands were based on Russia's rights in Manchuria before the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Concerning the likely requirements for getting Russia into the war in the Far East, Admiral Badger testified that speculation among the personnel stationed in the Far East indicated that Stalin's demands would be in three general categories. The consensus of opinion was that he would demand all three, but if not, Soviet control of a belt extending to the Persian Gulf would be Stalin's primary objective. Control of the Dardanelles and definite rights to the adjoining land would be his second choice, and the use of the Manchurian railroads and control of Dairen and Port Arthur would probably be the third choice. Admiral Badger added that many people were surprised when Soviet demands pointed only to the third, and that it was greeted with considerable relief, as being the lesser of three evils.<sup>1</sup> The question of the revision of the Montreux Treaty was suggested by Stalin at Yalta,

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, The Military Situation in the Far East, 2731.

but no action was taken. Stalin was in a strong bargaining position in February, 1945, and he conceivably could have obtained many more concessions in return for entering the war against Japan.

The treaty that was concluded between Stalin and the Chinese Nationalist Foreign Minister T. V. Soong, on August 14, 1945, was widely hailed as a great diplomatic victory. It was negotiated within the framework of the Yalta agreement, and Harriman wrote regarding the treaty: "at no time did Soong give me any indication that he felt the Yalta understanding was a handicap in his negotiations."<sup>1</sup> George F. Kennan wrote that the Chinese "had asked us, long before Yalta, to help them to arrange their affairs with the Soviet government." He added that "they later expressed themselves as well satisfied with what we had done."<sup>2</sup> When Soong had conferred with Stalin in July, he was not so fortunate. At that meeting Stalin submitted proposals that went considerably beyond the terms of the Yalta Accord. The arrangements in effect would have given control of Manchuria to the Soviets. A military zone in the area surrounding Dairen and Port Arthur was demanded.

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<sup>1</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 44.

<sup>2</sup>George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 85.

In addition the Manchurian railroads and connected enterprises were to be owned by the Soviet Union. The Chinese, backed by Washington, refused these demands.<sup>1</sup> The treaty in August was along the lines of the Yalta Accord, and the incident indicates that the American action at Yalta aided the Chinese in their negotiations with the Soviets.

In judging the Far Eastern agreement, the nub of the problem is whether or not it was instrumental in bringing about the defeat of the Nationalist forces. The views of General Barr indicate that Soviet assistance in material was not the primary reason for the Communist victory. It is obvious that the nature of Chiang's government was crucial in determining its downfall. General Joseph Stilwell's critical description of the Nationalist government as being loaded with graft and corruption and headed by an "unbalanced" man, was colored by his personal dislike of Chiang.<sup>2</sup> But General Barr's report to the army on November 16, 1948, described the Kuomintang in very similar fashion. Explaining why the Nationalists were suffering defeats, he referred to "the complete ineptness of high military leaders and the widespread corruption and dishonesty throughout the armed

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<sup>1</sup> Peis, The China Tangle, 317-19.

<sup>2</sup> Theodore White (ed.), The Stilwell Papers (New York: William Sloans Associates, 1948), 316-20.

forces. . . .<sup>1</sup> That internal reforms which would have gained popular support for Chiang's government would have been the only way to prevent the Communist victory is rarely mentioned. It is almost certain that the Russians would have entered the war against Japan sometime, and they might have gained a stronger position in China if no earlier agreement had been reached. Testifying concerning Yalta Bohlen said: "I think the Communist conquest of China is one thing, and the terms of the treaty another."<sup>2</sup> The facts justify his statement.

It may be helpful to consider some phases of the public debate over Yalta in the light of this review of the record. "I believe that the verdict of history on the Yalta agreement," said Patrick J. Hurley in 1951, "will mark it as both immoral and cowardly."<sup>3</sup> Hurley was speaking particularly of the Far Eastern agreement. Harriman later corrected several misstatements made by Hurley during his testimony before a Congressional Committee, when Hurley said that Roosevelt requested him to go to London and Moscow and

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<sup>1</sup>United States Relations With China With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, Based on the Files of the Department of State (Washington: Division of Publication, 1949), 358.

<sup>2</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 49.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, The Military Situation in the Far East, 2841.

try to ameliorate the Yalta understandings.<sup>1</sup> Hurley's description of Yalta as being cowardly and immoral can also be questioned.

The military situation in Europe as we have seen was very favorable to the Russians when the Conference convened. In February, 1945, there were about 199 divisions opposing the Russians on the eastern front, while only some 66 German divisions were fighting the forces of Eisenhower.<sup>2</sup> As they were so greatly inferior to the Russians in Europe and were committed to what appeared to be a long, costly war against Japan, the Western delegates were clearly in no position to force the Soviets on any issue. Even so, it is most difficult to cite any one instance in which Roosevelt submitted to Stalin's demands because of cowardice. Hurley probably referred to the fact that the Chinese were not represented at the time the Soviets were given certain rights in Manchuria when he called the Yalta agreements immoral. There is no doubt but that the President would have preferred to have a Chinese representative present, and moreover Harriman says that Roosevelt had consulted Chiang prior to the Conference about some of the provisions of the agreement.<sup>3</sup> But to Roosevelt and the other Western

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<sup>1</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 27.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Harriman, Our Wartime Relations With the Soviet Union, 25.



delegates American lives seemed at stake, and Hurley might well have asked himself if it would not have been less moral to have failed to do everything possible to reduce American casualties.

One frequently hears that the American delegation appeased Stalin at Yalta. Hopkins and Roosevelt are usually described as having been the arch-appeasers.<sup>1</sup> Webster defines appease as meaning to quiet; to satisfy; or to pacify. None of these words accurately describe Soviet Russia's actions since Yalta. Associated with international diplomacy the term has been cheapened and misused to the extent that those who use it probably do not have a clear idea of what they do mean. Presumably what is meant is that concessions are made to a country in order that it will be quieted or satisfied. Vital to this argument is the claim that the concessions were unnecessary, and that the position of the country in question was such that it was capable of preventing the action from taking place.

It is difficult to cite any examples in the Yalta agreements where the above definition would apply to the

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<sup>1</sup>Although there could be many more references, two are cited below. The second book is not recommended as a reliable study of the period. They are: William Henry Chamberlin, America's Second Crusade (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), 206; John T. Flynn, The Roosevelt Myth (Garden City Books, 1949), 592.

action of the American delegates. In the case of Poland and the Balkan states, it was a matter of the West wishing to gain concessions where Soviet armies were in control. The West's position in Germany was not compromised in any way at Yalta, as the location of the occupation zones had been outlined prior to the Conference. The veto has been misunderstood by many, but as Sumner Welles, an acute observer of foreign affairs says, it is probable that the United States Senate would not have accepted a further weakening of the power to veto action involving American troops.<sup>1</sup> The Far Eastern agreement is regarded by some to have been unnecessary and largely responsible for the subsequent developments in China. At the time it seemed a military necessity, and furthermore the views of General Barr strongly suggest that the Communist victory in China was largely due to the weakness of the traditional government, rather than previous negotiations. Few observers, considering all the factors involved, would say that Stalin was appeased by the West at Yalta as the term is defined above.

Perhaps the most common epithet hurled at the Yalta conference is the noun "Munich."<sup>2</sup> The analogy is poor.

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<sup>1</sup>Sumner Welles, Seven Decisions That Shaped History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 185.

<sup>2</sup>A calm appraisal of the Yalta Conference is given in: Rudolph A. Winacker, "Yalta--Another Munich?" The Virginia Quarterly Review, XXIV (Autumn, 1948), 529 ff.

Only a few comparisons between the two events need to be made to demonstrate the lack of valid comparison. In 1938, Hitler did not control the territory in question, whereas in 1945 Stalin in large part did. At Munich the Western statesmen agreed to grant Hitler a portion of another country; at Yalta the Western delegates attempted to modify the control Stalin already exercised in certain areas. Those who met at Munich were anything but allies, but the participants at Yalta had been associated in a great war for four years, during which most of the military promises, particularly those of the eastern Ally, had been kept.

The most important difference between Munich and Yalta, however, lies in the basic character of appeasement in the realm of international politics. At Munich the Western powers gave in to Nazi Germany without making any serious effort to align themselves with the Soviet Union against Hitler. This availability of a potential ally was nonexistent at Yalta, even had the purpose been to contain the U.S.S.R. To confuse negotiations between all the major powers involved in a given situation, which was the case at Yalta, with the kind of arrangements effected at Munich is to confuse the issues beyond recognition.

The inevitable question is: "Just how important was the Yalta Conference and where should it be ranked in the

annals of American diplomacy?" There was some reason for the optimism felt by the Americans as the grueling seven-day Conference came to an end. The Soviets had agreed to joint control in the liberated areas; an understanding was reached on the troublesome veto question; and Roosevelt had relieved the anxiety of the military by negotiating an agreement with Stalin to enter the war in the Far East soon after Germany was defeated. It is apparent now, in 1954, that they were over-optimistic. But the fact that Stalin also misjudged the situation and was in substantial accord with the agreements makes the miscalculations of Western delegates more understandable. Before anyone could criticize the American participants too much he would have to successfully refute the following statement made by Bohlen:

I believe that the map of Europe would look very much the same if there had never been the Yalta Conference at all.<sup>1</sup>

From the evidence previously presented it would seem that the Communist victory in China was influenced very little, if at all, by the negotiations at Yalta. Those facts do not vindicate all the action taken by the Western representatives. Very little understanding of economics was possessed by the Americans, which resulted in no adequate plans being made to aid Europe and particularly the

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Nomination of Charles E. Bohlen, 34.

U.S.S.R. in vitally needed reconstruction. Also, more experienced advisors would probably have recognized better the strength of revolutionary forces in Europe, and designed their policies in the light of such knowledge. In spite of the inadequate knowledge of the American delegates, more good than harm was done at Yalta. The Conference did little to alter subsequent political events in favor of either the West or the U.S.S.R. But negotiations at Yalta were vital in establishing the United Nations, which remains the concrete example of what was accomplished.

Although there has been a reaction against the traditional order in the West, it is evident that those who chose the alternative offered by the Russian Communists have not reached the millennium. Evidence indicates that although Stalin was responsible for achieving many economic gains for the Russian people, at the time of his death in March, 1953, the regime which he headed had become a cruel police state, with liberty stifled, and all power concentrated in the hands of a few. But the list of recent failures of governments in the world is not confined to Soviet Russia. One could first mention the failure of Western statesmen to reach agreement with Soviet Russia which would have been the best way to deter the terrible

forces of German and Japanese militarism. Those forces were allowed to grow because of the tragic collapse of the economic structure of the West during the 1930's. The crisis of the mid-twentieth century has not been solved, and many of the agreements made at Yalta have failed. But that has been due to the failures of world societies in general, not the Yalta agreements nor those who negotiated them.

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