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Postwar American Government Attitudes towards the German
Social Democratic Party, 1945-1948

by
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Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
M.A. degree in History.

Universite d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa



Karl Kulesa, Ottawa, Canada, 1989.

To my parents Manfred and Margareta, those eternal
non-believers who more than anyone I have ever known were willing
to endure a contradiction.

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PREFACE

This thesis on American perceptions of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) is about the quality of American foreign policy performance following the end of the Second World War. American attitudes and policies vis-a-vis the SPD and its political outlook were interesting to examine, because they revealed surprising insights about American officials and their ability to analyze German politics accurately. Trying to grasp the complex nature and the subtle details of the SPD's political program, American officials were faced with a unique challenge. Admittedly, the party's eclectic blending of anti-communism, socialism, fervent nationalism and spirited defense of German unity and independence, its inspired advocacy of democratic values in the midst of its own rigidly authoritarian party structure initially baffled many American newcomers to the German scene. Yet it has become clear that despite some initial mistakes early in 1945 and the shortcomings that have continued to taint the occupation of Germany, most American officials came to understand even the subtleties of German realities. At the very least, American officials learned to adapt their policies to incorporate the SPD's powerful role as a major political force in Germany.

Any effort to shed light upon any aspect of German-American relations in the postwar era, needless to say, could not have been completed without the help of many others. A few should be singled out. The time some of my colleagues spent reading successive drafts was greatly appreciated. I also wish to thank Professor Brian Villa at the University of Ottawa History Department.

INTRODUCTION

In Germany, amongst the most difficult challenges American occupation officials faced in 1945 was defining their policies toward the socialist reform program of Kurt Schumacher, leader of the postwar Social Democratic Party (SPD), as well as the challenges implicit in his spirited advocacy of a new German nationalism so quickly after the war.¹ Our understanding of this question has been greatly influenced by the work of Lewis J. Edinger, Schumacher's principal biographer in the English language. One of his basic assertions is that a growing polarization developed between Schumacher and American policy makers, leading the former to contemplate the necessity of frustrating "Schumacher's drive for power if United States interests were to be protected."²

Edinger's assessment does not account for the subtleties of American policy toward the SPD as it evolved between 1945 and early 1949. In the early occupation period from 1945 to early 1947, American policy makers found it useful to cooperate with the SPD. In fact, they realized that a policy of neutralizing the SPD after 1945 would have been counterproductive. They initiated a policy of carefully assisting the SPD's struggle against the German Communist Party and subsequently the Soviet-backed Socialist Unity Party (SED). Admittedly, between 1947 and early 1949, American relations with the SPD began to cool noticeably. Strong differences between the SPD and the American government about a future West German government are largely to blame for this deterioration. It is evident that after 1947 the American government was becoming increasingly antagonistic toward the notion of a Social Democratic government. But even during this period, the American government continued to appreciate the useful role the SPD had previously played. The SPD, after all, was not only solidly anti-communist but also by far the most

¹. See: Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, The Limits of Power -- The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954, New York: Harper & Row, 1972, pp. 127/8.

². Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher -- A Study in Personality and Political Behavior, Stanford, Ca.: Stanford U. Press, 1965, p. 186.

popular of German left-wing parties. Where possible, cooperation, not confrontation, with as powerful a political force as the SPD thus remained the preferred policy of the American government in Germany.

Speculations nevertheless persist that during this period 1947 to 1949, American actions against the SPD were decisive in preventing the party from forming the first government of the West German state. It could be argued, however, that in 1949, with or without American interference, the SPD's prospects for winning in the federal elections were slim. For this reason, American interference was not required. The SPD's largely working class constituency was not strong enough carry it into office. Between 1945 and 1948, early election results in the Western zones of occupation foreshadowed the inability of the SPD in 1949 to garner the majority needed to form the first West German government.

The American government's overall ambivalence toward the SPD can be understood if it is viewed as having been governed by American perceptions of their country's national interests. Growing East-West tensions throughout the postwar era obliged American policy makers not infrequently to arrive at decisions consistent with American strategy; decisions, however, which at the same time were bitterly resented by most Germans. For what was in American self-interest was not necessarily in the interests of Germans themselves. Most conspicuously, the division of Germany was a decision Germans have found difficult to accept until the present day. But after 1945, deprived of its own sources of power, Germany was in no position to challenge the occupying forces. German historian Hans-Peter Schwarz concurs:

Despite all the good intentions of American foreign policy makers not to violate the self-esteem and independence of the community of states on the continent [Europe], they were, nonetheless, aware of their newly acquired role as Western Europe's predominant power. And they did not hesitate to make use of this fullness of strength.²

This tragedy had its roots in the new position as a world power the United States acquired as a result of the Second World War. By 1945, the fate of the United States, whose citizens had often in the past clung stubbornly to

². Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik—Deutschland im Widerstreit der Aussenpolitischen Konzeptionen in den Jahren der Besatzungsherrschaft, 1945-1949, Stuttgart, F.R. Germany: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1980, (2nd. ed.), p. 90.

illusory notions of isolationism, had become irreversibly linked to events performed in the game of international politics. American statesmen were profoundly convinced at the end of the Second World War that it was their duty to create a new world order that could provide for the nation's security. Former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson later defined that imperative as requiring the maintenance of:

as spacious an environment as possible in which free states might exist and flourish. Its method was common action with like-minded states to secure and enrich the environment and to protect one another from predators through mutual aid and joint effort.⁴

By the end of our period in 1950, Lt. General Lucius D. Clay, former American Military Governor in Germany, could describe American goals with somewhat greater precision.

The American people have a huge stake in peace. Twice within the century,..., we have given of our lives and our resources to prevent the domination of Europe by force. We recognize that a threat to freedom anywhere is a threat to our own freedom. We remain determined that free people shall not be enslaved by alien dictatorship. To this end, in time of peace we are giving substantially of our own resources at real sacrifice to rebuild a Europe in which the economic and, we hope, the political co-operation of the independent and peace-loving countries will soon make the threat of aggression remote.⁵

But while American officials could agree on the larger objectives of American foreign policy, on lesser issues such as German political parties, and more specifically the SPD, differences persisted. The result of differing perceptions was inconsistency in dealing with the SPD. Whereas State Department officials thought they had little to fear from the SPD and thus entertained fewer reservations about dealing directly with SPD functionaries, Clay's military government avoided contact with functionaries from all German political parties where possible.

Between 1945 and 1948, the relationship between the American occupation forces and the German political parties unfolded in roughly three stages to be discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively. During the first stage from the earliest days of the occupation in April, 1945 to the first German municipal elections in the postwar era held in spring, 1946, American officials sought to reestablish order. At first, all political activity, for

⁴. Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, New York: Norton & Co, 1966, p. 725.

⁵. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, Melbourne: W. Heinemann, 1950, p. ix.

fear of unrest, was prohibited. As unrest failed to materialize, American officials gradually eased restrictions on political activity until parties were formally invited to organize themselves in late summer 1945. The second stage from 1946 to 1947 saw an escalation of the great powers' contest for political influence in Germany. Here American officials intended to use the moderately left-wing SPD as a counterweight to the radical Soviet-backed German Communist Party and the Socialist Unity Party founded in early 1946. During the final stage from Spring 1947 to the final debates for the creation of a West German state in early 1949, American perceptions of the SPD began to change toward a more negative outlook. The beginning of this period in 1947 was marked by U.S.-Soviet inability to resolve their differences over Germany thus greatly diminishing hopes for a future united Germany. In 1949, the creation of a West and East German state put to rest whatever hopes for unity had persisted until then. It was also in this period, with the Communist Party decisively defeated in successive elections since 1945 and the Socialist United Party (SED) restricted to the Soviet Occupation zone, that the SPD found its appeal to American German policy planners greatly diminished. With the Communists out of the way in what was likely to become the future West German state, the left-leaning SPD was itself regarded with greater suspicion by American policy planners.

In the end, American policy towards the SPD, however subtle and varied, was not supportive. To Washington, Konrad Adenauer's rapidly emerging pro-Western stance seemed preferable to Kurt Schumacher and his overtures in public, at least, to German independence and socialism. Initially, the party was useful in the post-1945 denazification and democratization process by supplying personnel with a clean, anti-fascist record, and later in the defense against communism in the Western occupied zones. Here the democratic, reformist nature of the SPD's agenda was evidently welcome. But the alliance between party and occupation remained an uneasy one. The following study will demonstrate why American officials preferred to see the first West German government not represented by the volatile leadership of the Social Democrat Kurt Schumacher, even as these officials frequently discovered compelling reasons for utilizing the SPD's many qualities.

The importance of this question to Germans is great. For the belief has grown into a widely held dogma that the American government tried to inhibit the political resurgence of the SPD. What little evidence there exists to substantiate these charges later gave rise to speculations that the American government shared some responsibility for the string of Social Democratic election defeats throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. It could be argued more persuasively however that these failures were primarily the result of the party's inability throughout to extend its appeal beyond the working classes and their sympathizers. It was not until the SPD's Godesberg Program of 1959 introduced drastic changes, removing many of the party's most basic socialist tenets from its agenda, that the party was able to broaden its appeal among German voters. The party's woes in the 1945 to 1949 were as much due to internal problems as to American interference. Even in 1949, the party was still far removed from becoming the people's party (Volkspartei) Kurt Schumacher had thought it could be.

CH. I U.S. DECISION MAKERS

The Allies were not, as Robert E. Sherwood argued, "...ill prepared for the cataclysm of sudden total victory."¹ The United States government, at least, had begun preparing for the occupation of Germany ever since the American nation had entered the war in late 1941. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's much cited comment that he disliked "making detailed plans for a country which we do not yet occupy" may accurately illustrate his personal views, but fails to adequately reflect the attitude of many U.S. bureaucrats.² Secretary of State Cordell Hull spent hundreds of hours not only with his own staff but also the War Department planning Germany's future. Historian Harold Zink agreed that "the unique feature of the occupation of Germany lay not in its casualness, but in the elaborate preliminary preparations and efforts to plan."³

The United States in 1945 was not engaging for the first time in the military occupation of foreign territories. As early as 1846, the American army had occupied parts of Mexico. Further experiences, albeit at home, followed after the American Civil War in 1865. The Spanish-American war led American troops to Cuba and the Philippines. Finally, there was a brief stint in the Rhineland in 1918. But Hajo Holborn is correct when he states that "all these earlier experiences of the U.S. Army were dwarfed by the gigantic and enormously complex tasks posed by World War II".⁴

¹. Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins -- An Intimate History, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, p. 818.

². For full quote see: Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull-- Vol. II, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948, p. 1621. (Roosevelt's reluctance to spell out specific policy goals was more likely designed to preserve vital Allied unity during the war. Nothing was more likely to threaten unity than attempts to impose post-war policy during war-time. Historian Hans Peter Schwarz has somewhat inappropriately termed Roosevelt's attitude America's "policy of postponement".)

³. Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull -- Vol. II, New York: MacMillan Company, 1948, p. 1602. Also: Harold Zink, The United States in Germany, 1944-1955, Princeton, N.J.: D. van Nostrand Company, 1957, p. 5.

⁴. Hajo Holborn, American Military Government -- Its Organization and Policies, Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1947, p. 2.

Roosevelt himself set the stage when he created the Advisory Committee on Post-War Problems only one month after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Its chairperson was the then Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles. Cordell Hull had already founded before U.S. entry into the war the Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations. As early as January 1942 then, both committees discussed the possibility of dividing Germany after the war. Other options also debated included the permanent neutralization of German military and economic prowess permanently while fostering the creation of democratic institutions.⁵

Anticipating future military occupations the War Department founded in 1942 the School of Military Government at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Other centers such as Fort Custer in Michigan and the Civil Affairs Training Schools (CATS) on university campuses were created to prepare officers for military government. On 1 March 1943, the War Department established its most important post-war planning body, the Civil Affairs Division (CAD). CAD was the immediate response to the difficulties in civil administration encountered during the North African campaigns. Its creation reflected the War Department's need to separate military from civil affairs planning. This new body was to act as an intermediary between military government and civilian agencies. In time, however, CAD would emerge as the single most important post war policy planning body within the War Department.⁶

The Treasury Department was also involved in post war planning for Germany. Headed by the crusading Henry Morgenthau, it soon lost ground, however, to the two other departments. The famous Morgenthau Plan which envisaged the "pastoralization" of Germany's economy made a spectacular appearance at the Second Quebec Conference of the Allied powers in September 1944. The plan came to naught after Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and Secretary of State

⁵. Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay und die Amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik -- 1945-1949, Stuttgart, F.R. Germany: Klett-Cotta, 1987, pp. 30/31. (Krieger's monograph will likely emerge as one of the most controversial contributions on this topic in recent years. He goes to great length in challenging many established assumptions on the occupation era. The remarkable wealth of sources examined and a forcefully presented argument will make his view all but impossible to ignore.)

⁶. Hajo Holborn, American Military Government..., pp. 7/8.

Cordell together with British prime minister Winston Churchill made a concerted effort to have it abandoned. Once Roosevelt understood how little both Europe and the United States could afford to see Germany permanently weakened, he openly regretted ever having endorsed the plan.⁷

The two American government agencies most associated with postwar policy planning and occupation of post-war Germany were the Departments of War and State. Upon Germany's surrender on 7 May 1945, the War Department became the administrator of the American occupied zone, whereas the State Department was to engage in long term planning for a future Germany.⁸ But the lines of jurisdiction were never clearly drawn. Notions whereby the War Department merely executed the State Department's decisions did not match reality. Both departments, in fact, vied to dominate American policy making for Germany during and after the war. In an effort to end the struggle for influence, the State and War Departments eventually opted for the time proven method of a joint committee. The State, War, and Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) worked to put the finishing touches on a postwar policy directive for Germany. The final product was the much maligned Joint Chief of Staff directive JCS 1067, first implemented in May 1945.⁹ In its revised form it remained the policy guideline for American occupation forces until 1947 when JCS 1779 officially replaced it.¹⁰

Founded in December 1944, SWNCC officially came about because the Joint Chiefs of Staff would not allow civilian agencies such as the State Department to sit on their own military committees. The underlying motives behind the War

⁷. Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation of Germany: The Washington Controversy", in Harold Stein, American Civil-Military Decisions--A Book of Case Studies, Birmingham, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1963, p. 382.

⁸. A worried Roosevelt had already insisted late 1942 on maintaining such a division. Stimson and Hull, in turn, gave their assurances that this division would be adhered to. See: Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation of Germany: The Washington Controversy", p. 320.

⁹. Subsequent chapters will give a more detailed discussion of JCS 1067 and other official documents. JCS 1067 and others set the tone for future American standards vis-a-vis German political activity.

¹⁰. Harold Zink, The United States in Germany, 1944-1955, pp. 90-92. (According to Zink, several coordinating committees guided the Joint Chief of Staff's policy making. OMGUS, in turn, was bound to follow JCS policy decisions.)

Department opposition was not organizational and procedural but a fundamental difference of view about respective roles in the formulation and execution of policy.¹¹ The War Department was intent on establishing their own administrative prerogatives for the future control of Germany.¹²

But soon it became evident that the War Department could not administrate without invariably determining policy as well.¹³ At first, the State Department could not send policy instructions on German domestic affairs directly to OMGUS. Instead, it first had to deliver them to the War Department headquarters in Washington. Only if the latter approved the content, would the State Department instructions be forwarded via the War Department to OMGUS.¹⁴ The State Department had to learn to cooperate with the War Department before it could effectively influence policy for Germany.¹⁵ If policy differences between the two departments persisted, frequently they were fuelled by differences over their respective departmental prerogatives.

Because of persisting inter-departmental differences, individual U.S. government officials were afforded the opportunity to play a more decisive role in shaping policy both during Roosevelt's and Truman's administrations. The numerous officials huddling around Roosevelt, vying for influence, are noteworthy. Henry Morgenthau whose Treasury Department was not even officially involved in foreign policy making, for a few months threatened to steer the course of the United States' German policy. Harry Hopkins, whom Roosevelt had appointed as his special assistant during World War II, remained until his death one of the most powerful political figures in the United

¹¹. Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation of Germany: The Washington Controversy", in Harold Stein, American Civil-Military Decisions, pp. 331-332.

¹². Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation...", p. 347.

¹³. Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation of Germany: The Washington Controversy", in Harold Stein, (ed.), American Civil-Military Decisions — A Book of Case Studies, Birmingham, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1963, pp. 358-360.

¹⁴. Dorte Winkler, "Die Amerikanische Sozialisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1945-1948", in Heinrich August Winkler (ed.), Politische Weichenstellungen im Nachkriegsdeutschland, 1945-1953, Göttingen, F.R. Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979, pp. 93/4.

¹⁵. Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation...", written in 1963, still provides the best account describing the war time process between State and War Department by which they eventually learned to work together.

States government. Although he represented neither a constituency nor any government agency, he exerted astonishing influence on the White House decision making process.¹⁶

Under Roosevelt's successor, Truman, one of the most important members of the inner circle of possible advisers on German questions was Secretary of State James F. Brynes (1945-1947). Other important figures Truman consulted on foreign affairs were the Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Joseph E. Davies, and Secretary of the Treasury, Fred M. Vinson. But the one man Truman trusted more than anyone else was General George C. Marshall. He acted as Truman's Chief of Staff of the Army, Secretary of State from 1947 to 1949, and, finally, Secretary of Defense. Marshall's Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett was also a central figure in Truman innercircle. Truman and these two men supposedly so trusted each other that agreements and decisions only rarely needed to be recorded in writing.¹⁷

Lt. General Lucius D. Clay administered the American Zone first as Deputy Military Governor and then as Governor between 1945 and 1949.¹⁸ But German historian Wolfgang Krieger has recently questioned Lt. General Lucius D. Clay's contribution to American policy making in Germany. Krieger rejects descriptions of Clay as "proconsul" or even one of the "founding fathers" of the German Federal Republic.¹⁹ Clay's failure to shape American policy became apparent in 1948 when both the State and War Department agreed to allow the

¹⁶. See Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins..., pp. 1-13. Sherwood explains why Hopkins was such an important figure in the Roosevelt administration.

¹⁷. See: Herbert Feis, From Trust to Terror - The Onset of the Cold War 1945-1950, pp. 16-21. See also: Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay und die Amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik, 1945-1949, Stuttgart, F.R. Germany: Klett-Cotta, 1987, p. 19. (But Krieger also warns about the dangers of attributing too much decision making power to any one individual)

¹⁸. Clay ran the administration of the American zone even as Deputy Military Governor. Supreme Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Military Governor General Joseph T. McNarney had little time for administrative questions. The latter devoted most of his time overseeing the withdrawal of American troops. Both were also involved in the planning of an effective security system. In other words, military considerations dominated their minds, leaving Clay to rule Germany. See e.g: Harold Zink, The United States in Germany..., pp. 67/8.

¹⁹. Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay und die Amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1945-1949, p. 20.

French to integrate the Saar economy into their own and to draw more coal from the Ruhr area than initially envisaged. Clay was opposed to this step. Krieger suggests that Clay's role in Germany was not revoked at the time only because his considerable administrative skills and his ability to communicate with the Russians made him indispensable.²⁰ But even if the administrative side of his military government was solidly under his control, his influence on American policy making for Germany quickly waned. If indeed the War and State Department frequently acted independently of Clay, then his policy statements are reduced to revealing insights into his personal frame of mind, while supplying precious little evidence for illustrating over-all American policy in Germany.

The question remains who dictated policy inside Germany? Circumstances obviously played an integral part. The East-West conflict, the tremendous costs of maintaining the occupation, the American public and the United States Congress, and finally growing German restiveness regarding the occupation often determined the general directions taken. But on particular issues such as German political parties, for example, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), perceptions and policies entertained by individual War (OMGUS) and State Department officials remained crucial.

American officials from both Departments carefully observed political activity in Germany. Their observations produced numerous policy recommendations, the conclusions gradually growing more sophisticated as the Office of the Military Government of the United States (OMGUS) began settling in. Assisted by the State Department's Political Adviser (PolAd) Ambassador Robert D. Murphy, OMGUS analysts prepared thousands of reports, ultimately revealing a precise

²⁰. Wolfgang Krieger, "Was General Clay a Revisionist? Strategic Aspects of the United States Occupation of Germany", in Journal of Contemporary History, Vol.18, No.2, April 1983, pp. 173, 170. Krieger is not alone in challenging Clay's Soviet stand. Others before have wondered aloud whether Clay did not ultimately adhere longer than hitherto recognized to the view that a superpower agreement over Germany could still be obtained. See: Jean Edward Smith, "The View from USFET: General Clay's and Washington's Interpretation of Soviet Intentions in Germany, 1945-1948", in Hans A. Schmitt, (ed.), U.S. Occupation in Europe after World War II, Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978, p. 68.

and thoughtful understanding of the German political arena.²¹ One office alone, the Opinion Survey Section, belonging to the Intelligence branch at OMGUS produced 194 reports on German public opinion between 1945 and 1947, varying from two to 71 pages in length.²²

CAD directors at OMGUS' Civil Administration Division, first led by Henry Parkman, demonstrated an astonishing degree of understanding of German politics. Another top OMGUS official Edward H. Litchfield, the dynamic director of Governmental Affairs, and his staff followed Germany's parties on their path to political maturity.

Men such as Parkman and Litchfield made concerted efforts to understand the details of German politics. They learned to distinguish between the public announcements party leaders made and their actual views of American occupation policies; distinctions apparently not always appreciated at the higher echelons of the American government.²³

Eminent scholars such as Carl J. Friedrich, Henry L. Bretton, James K. Pollock, Harold Zink et.al. eagerly offered their services to the U.S. occupation authorities. This experiment in social engineering, the creation of a new state backed by the most powerful nation on earth, presented an irresistible temptation for these intellectuals. Friedrich considered himself an "avowed partisan of progressive democracy". In 1948, Carl J. Friedrich's

²¹. The Political Affairs Division officially answered to the State Department. But Clay's presumably tight rein, stifled any attempts Murphy might have made to steer an independent course. see: Harold Zink, The United States in Germany, 1944-1955, p. 33. Robert D. Murphy himself argues that their "mutual confidence" and "harmonious partnership" helped avert the kind of inter-departmental disputes normally to be expected under the circumstances. see Robert D. Murphy, Diplomat among Warriors, Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1964, p. 291.

²². Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, Public Opinion in Occupied Germany -- The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1970, p. 8. (Beginning on 27 December 1945, this section interviewed 1,000 persons in 80 communities during its first survey. By April 1947, the sample would cover roughly 3,000 persons in 241 communities. One outside observer reportedly described the sampling procedure as being of "the highest order", p. 5.)

²³. There exist records of conversations between OMGUS and party leaders, including Kurt Schumacher. Generally OMGUS officials were aware of what Hans-Peter Schwarz so aptly termed "Schumacher's dilemma". The SPD needed the Western alliance but Schumacher also realized that his visions of social democracy would remain largely unfulfilled in the process.

American Experiences in Military Government in World War II contained articles scholars who at one point had been members of American military governments either in Asia or Europe. In Friedrich's words, these scholars shared "a general outlook which [derived] from American intervention abroad a positive obligation to forward the forces of constitutional democracy with its social progress and civil liberties."²⁴ Whatever their shortcomings, incompetent or ill-prepared they were not.²⁵

The War and State Departments were not, however, the only American agencies that had been prepared for Germany's collapse. The Office of Strategic Studies (OSS), founded in summer 1941 and later placed under the supervision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, became an indispensable source of intelligence before 1945. Headed by Col. William "Wild Bill" Donovan and his outlandish cast of scholars and capitalists²⁶, the OSS would be the first Allied intelligence agency to penetrate successfully behind German enemy lines. The over two hundred OSS agents eventually able to pierce the German heartland during the war encouraged the growth of a German underground movement, but also prepared extensive reports describing the German political situation. They contained brief biographical data not only on major war criminals but also on the German underground movement. The American Military Government could subsequently distinguish more easily between former Nazis and politically more reliable Germans.²⁷ During the war the OSS employed such distinguished scholars as the historians William Langer, Arthur M.

²⁴. Carl J. Friedrich, American Experiences in Military Government in World War II, New York: Rinehart & Company, 1948, p. viii.

²⁵. OMGUS had at one point 12,000 employees. Most of these probably were not ideally suited for administering Germany. But as far as officers assisting in policy research were concerned, the quality was frequently very high. One unfortunate problem was that officials were limited to one-year contracts; Clay only rarely was able to obtain extensions. (The high turnover, furthermore, made this author's life miserable by making it very difficult to maintain a clear overview of OMGUS personnel at any given time.)

²⁶. Donovan's preference for left-wing intellectuals as analysts and capitalists as administrators at the OSS is discussed in: R. Harris Smith, OSS -- The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency, Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1972, p. 15.

²⁷. Joseph E. Persico, Piercing the Third Reich -- The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents during World War II, New York: The Viking Press, 1979, p. 334. (The Allies expected bitter German resistance, but were overwhelmed to find complete apathy to be the prevalent mood in conquered Germany. A number of OSS reports in late 1944 describe precisely the latter state of mind, but apparently were not considered by the responsible authorities.)

Schlesinger, jr. and German Philosopher Herbert Marcuse. While most intellectuals were employed at the "Ph.D. studded" Research and Analysis Branch, the administration included members of such powerful families as the Mellons, Vanderbilts and J.P. Morgan.²⁸

The OSS continued its operation for several months following the end of the war. But President Harry Truman, distrustful of secret services in general, was eager to dispose of this peacetime "Gestapo"[sic] and on 20 September 1945, he closed the agency. Dispersed among other agencies, the State Department took over the OSS Research and Analysis Branch, whereas the War Department incorporated the Secret Intelligence and Special Operations branches. A small rump, the Strategic Services Unit (SSU) continued the OSS mission to Germany until it too was closed on 31 December 1945. In 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency was created to replace the OSS.

In time, the War and State Departments adopted many informal arrangements that allowed them to cooperate more effectively. The War Department's OMGUS was led by military officials, but had a large civilian staff consisting mostly of the State Department and Foreign Service personnel. Some Military Government officials were civilians employed on short-term contracts. It was often difficult to differentiate between Robert Murphy's PolAd and the regular staff at OMGUS.²⁹ An OMGUS document may thus have reflected the views of a State Department official. President Harry Truman initially recognized the State Department's leading policy role in the German occupation, but was equally quick to point out that "the State Department doesn't have a policy unless I support it."³⁰ Besides the President, the War (later Defense) Department,

²⁸. There appears to be some debate as to whether the OSS actually made policy as well. R. Harris Smith at least seems to think as much. See: R. Harris Smith, *OSS*, p. 23. Robert G. Neumann, on the other hand, argues differently in "Political Intelligence and its Relation to Military Government", in Carl J. Friedrich, (ed.), *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II*, pp. 80-82. (He describes the attempt to organize intelligence gathering under an OSS umbrella as problematic. Not only did OSS and other military commands fail to communicate very effectively but there appears to have been strong differences over purpose and function between OSS Washington headquarters and its field officers in Europe. These were two problems which supposedly became much worse after the war.)

²⁹. Harold Zink, *American Military Government...*, p. 33.

³⁰. cited in: Barry Rubin, *Secrets of State -- The State Department and the Struggle over U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, (paperback ed.), p. 52.

the National Security Council, and the CIA also contributed to an erosion of the State Department's monopoly on German policy making.³¹

Nor was German policy making confined merely to the United States. The United States also had to work closely together with its major Allies. During wartime, the Big Three, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, failed to agree on general postwar German policy. Further down the scale, the Combined Chiefs of Staffs (CCS), consisting of the U.S. JCS and the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, were instructed to formulate joint German occupation policy for military government. The result of their efforts was CCS 551 which was implemented in May 1944. Subtitled "Combined Directive for Military Government in Germany Prior to Defeat or Surrender", CCS 551 was designed mainly to assist in the execution of military operations. While explicitly discouraging political activity, its paramount political concern was the "purely negative one of destroying Nazism."³² JCS 1067 eventually superseded CCS 551 in the U.S. occupation zone when individual zones of occupation were formed in the wake of the Allies' failure to jointly govern a defeated Germany. The creation of independently governed zones of occupation was not the design of either the War or the State Departments. Instead, it was the inevitable outcome of Allied disunity.

Long-term plans involving larger questions such as German reunification and Germany's future role in the international environment required more than State or War Department approval. The White House, U.S. Congress, former Allies, and ultimately even German public opinion were powerful influences. But regarding German domestic affairs in the U.S. zone of Germany, the War and State Department enjoyed more independence in policy making. Issues not posing any threat to national security were decided by OMGUS and State Department officials. Washington decided whether or not to permit political activity, but the two determined the direction this political activity would take. They could prohibit political organization, indirectly endorse one group, or neutralize another. The Bavarian Royalists, for example, were

³¹. Barry Rubin, Secrets of State..., p. 253. (The NSC designed as a body involving all relevant departments only evolved with Henry Kissinger truly as the "executive manager of foreign policy.")

³². Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation...", p. 329.

dissolved, while the SPD in Berlin was supported to stem the SED offensive to become the only viable left wing alternative in Germany. In 1945, during a now famous incident, a lesser American military official in Bavaria was able to replace acting Minister President Fritz Schaeffer with the Social Democrat Wilhelm Hoegner."²²

It is therefore appropriate to limit examination of American perceptions of the German Social Democratic Party, in general, to those views expressed in the War and State Department. Even if they did not always have the last word on policy, they were the major government representatives inside Germany and were guaranteed a virtual monopoly on observing and describing the German domestic scene. They analyzed the SPD; their representatives in Washington decided whether the picture painted fit the over-all scheme of American foreign policy. As will be seen, differences between American officials on individual issues such as socialization and what to make of the SPD's relationship with the British Labour government persisted. But once in place, over-all U.S. policy on the SPD did not waiver.

²². Fritz Schaeffer was investigated as part of the denazification procedures. Hoegner's anti-Nazi credentials were indisputable. The problem was that the SPD had never had a stronghold in the generally conservative Bavaria. Nor was Hoegner very popular both with the wider population or even inside his own party. Neither consideration could prevent this official from taking such a decision.

CH. II EARLY AMERICAN VIEWS ON SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ACTIVITY (1943-1945)

On 7 May, 1945, Germany officially surrendered. But Kurt Schumacher's home Hannover had been occupied by American forces as early as April. Although gravely ill as a result of eleven years spent in Nazi concentration camps and in defiance of the surrounding turmoil, Schumacher proceeded to reestablish contact with the remnants of the once formidable German Social Democratic party. On 19 April 1945, he opened the "Buro Dr. Schumacher" from which he would run the party's affairs until nationally organized political parties were authorized in 1947. In summer 1945, he gave a speech outlining the nature of the role he intended his party to play in the future. The strength of his language so early after the war, had to surprise anyone unfamiliar with the historical context under which social democratic leaders functioned in the immediate postwar era.

The Social Democratic party cannot and will not maintain, that her fight for the formation of the Weimar Republic in those years 1918 to 1933 was without flaws. But this no party on this planet can say about itself. In Germany, the mistakes of all other parties weighed more heavily and decisively...

...The Social Democratic party was the only party in Germany that never abandoned its policy of democracy and peace. That is why only this party can claim for itself that the promises of its policies have passed the test before the tribunal of history...

...The inherent necessity of every imaginable German policy forces social democracy and its leadership to place itself at the very forefront, assuming the right to take a predominant role in German politics.

...The Social Democratic party is guided by the political and social needs of the German workers. She cannot and will not be the autocratically ruled instrument of some victorious power... She is not Russian and not British, not French and not AMERICAN [my emphasis], but the representative of the new Germany.²

Schumacher's speech revealed his penchant for audacity and displayed elements of a fiery temperament. Those unaware of the meticulousness with which Schumacher prepared his public appearances, frequently thought him impulsive and dangerous.

Floriment Bontre from the French journal L'Humanite called him "a Nazi demagogue and nationalist who hates the French and refuses to acknowledge

². Kurt Schumacher, "Konsequenzen deutscher Politik — Aufruf, Sommer 1945", in Arno Scholz and Walther G. Oschilewski, (eds.), Turmwaechter der Demokratie — Ein Lebensbild von Kurt Schumacher Vol II — Reden und Schriften, Berlin: arani-Verlags GmbH, 1953, pp. 31-33.

German war guilt; a cynical man."² American Secretary of State Dean Acheson's appraisal of Schumacher was equally hostile.

.... Kurt Schumacher,...., combined a harsh and violent nature with nationalistic and aggressive ideas.... His ideas of sound policy for Germany was neutrality between East and West and evacuation of all foreign troops from German soil, thus winning Soviet agreement to the unification of Germany.... I told him that an attempt by the Social Democratic party to curry favour with the voters or the Russians by baiting the occupation would be given short thrift[sic].... If he believed that the occupation would tolerate an attempt to play the Western Allies and the Russians off against one another, he would find himself mistaken....³

But attacks by American officials were the exception rather than the rule.

The initial American refusal to permit political activity was not motivated by opposition in principle to political party development. But in early 1945, American forces had expected a large scale German resistance movement to materialize. To establish control within their zone was thus a more pressing demand. No unrest occurred, however. Numerous reports sent to Washington, instead, expressed grave concern about the prevailing state of apathy amongst the German population. German political apathy continued to bewilder American officials. Even after a certain measure of economic and political stability had been restored, the American authorities still appeared at odds to explain why Germans were loath to becoming too actively involved in politics.⁴

The first months of the occupation confronted American officials with a task more important even than the political reorganization of Germany. That task was to set up a workable Military Government. Even the controversial Article 9 of JCS 1067 delimiting political activity was part of the priority American military planners gave to the resolution of military and supply problems. These planners first wished to see the organizational structures and personnel of the military government firmly in place. It was only after OMGUS had begun functioning more smoothly that American planners were prepared to divert more

². Cited in Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher...., Appendix D, p. 328.

³. Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, pp. 340-341. (Acheson continued to say that "when death relieved the Social Democrats of Schumacher's leadership, the party rapidly resumed a constructive role in German political life.")

⁴. American government documents initially conveyed a sense of bewilderment until they fully understood that Germans, ill-fed and war weary, simply no longer had the will to resist.

time and energy to the democratization of Germany.⁵ JCS 1067 stipulated in April 1945 that no "political activities of any kind shall be countenanced unless authorized by you [the military governor]."⁶ Its wording can be attributed to the "somewhat suspicious attitude of the American military toward political parties in postwar Germany."⁷ Although top level military officials may have lacked proper political insight, OSS officials and most State Department veterans had a solid understanding of the German political situation as far back as the Weimar republic.⁸ But if military officials were not as well-informed at first, they too learned in time to appreciate of German political behavior.

Although misgivings about early political activity persisted in the early months, two reasons compelled the American military government to review its existing policies.⁹ A few Germans had begun organizing politically in defiance of military government orders.¹⁰ Political party activity was thus already a reality well before American officials legalized political parties. Secondly, the Soviets in their zone had begun encouraging greater German political activity. When on June 10, 1945 anti-fascist parties were allowed in the Soviet zone, American officials found it necessary to respond in kind.

⁵. Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika, 1945-1966, pp. 78/9.

⁶. "Directive of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation regarding Military Government (JCS 1067)", in Beate Ruhm von Oppen, (ed.), Documents on Germany under Occupation 1945-1954, London: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 19.

⁷. See: Harold Zink, The United States in Germany, 1944-1955, pp. 335/6. Also: 1) Conrad Latour and Thilo Vogelsang, Okkupation und Wiederaufbau — Die Tätigkeit der Militärregierung in der Amerikanischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands, 1944-1947, Stuttgart, F.R. Germany: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973, pp. 107/8. 2) Vera Franke Eliasberg, "Political Party Developments", in Gabriel A. Almond, (ed.), Struggle for Democracy in Germany, New York: Russell & Russell, 1965, p. 226. (Eliasberg argues that "different as they were, the policies of the four occupying powers had one result in common—they all hindered the spontaneous development of political organizations." I would argue, in contrast, that spontaneous organization was quite common. More obviously limited was formal political organization. On pp. 229/30, Eliasberg describes the political activity actually occurring. Perhaps, the difference is one of defining the term 'spontaneous'.)

⁸. Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay..., p. 86.

⁹. Democratization was part and parcel of American planning. The question of timing was, however, subject to considerable debate.

¹⁰. This quiet toleration was naturally restricted to those considered politically reliable. This included the occasional social democratic stirrings.

The stage was thus set for a popularity contest with the two superpowers vying to sway German public opinion and its political leadership. The race for "Germany's love" had begun.¹¹

The first impression American officials had obtained of German Social Democrats came with the wave of emigres arriving in the United States shortly after Adolf Hitler's takeover. The principal goal pursued by these and other members of the German left was to organize a popular front against national socialism. The socialist emigres' assumption was that failure to reconcile particularly the differences between communists and Social Democrats would make it impossible for Germany's left ever to become a credible opposition. They aimed, therefore, to unite and thus to strengthen the German left. Only then, these emigres concluded, could the various host countries, especially the United States and Great Britain, be persuaded to recognize the left as genuine representatives of a future Germany. But when even German socialists failed to agree amongst themselves, an alliance between socialists and communists became simply unlikely. These "divisive politics" ultimately cost the German left in the United States the respect and support of American labor and government.¹²

One early 1943 OSS report on German political emigration found the socialist movement divided on many important issues. On the one hand, the report acknowledged the "bitter strife between the German labor Delegation, an organization of prominent former Social Democratic officeholders, and the Neu Beginnen group...." But the report also expressed the belief that "there exists today a substantial unity among the German socialist groups in Sweden, Great Britain, and the United States on many of the major problems of postwar Germany." All agreed on the need for social revolution. The breakdown of Germany's heavy industry, the banking system and the break up of large estates were policies favoured by all German socialist movements in exile.¹³ But the

¹¹. Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay..., pp. 86-90.

¹². Albrecht Ragg, "The German Socialist Emigration in the United States 1933 to 1945", (Diss.) Loyola University of Chicago, January, 1977, pp. 477-480.

¹³. OSS Research and Analysis Branch, R&A No. 1568, The German Political Emigration, 3 December 1943, pp. iii-iv.

report stressed most emphatically the continued refusal by most socialist groups to cooperate with the German communists.¹⁴

These various socialist groups failed to attract significant support in American and British government circles. Emigre socialist groups lacked both funding and an adequate organizational structure. No one umbrella organization encompassing all socialists ever materialized; a problem which was clearly exacerbated by the socialists' enemy alien status and geographical dispersment all over the world.¹⁵

Individual emigres may have had some influence on opinions in the United States and elsewhere. Scholars such as Richard Lowenthal and Gustav Stolper published detailed plans for postwar Germany. The latter participated in the 1945 Hoover-Mission to study the German standard of living. Intellectuals such as the Austrian Saul K. Padover and Carl J. Friedrich contributed their insights. Padover held extensive interviews at the end of the war with surviving local German officials as well as former members of the German underground movement in occupied Germany before surrender. Partly because of his reports, it became easier after Germany's surrender to select reliable Germans to assist in the zonal administration. Friedrich acted as an adviser to American officials during the 1948 constitutional debates.¹⁶

It is difficult to judge the contribution of German socialist scholars in exile. It would appear that their influence on postwar planning remained marginal at best. This role, admittedly, changed considerably when emigres returned to Germany to assume leading positions in the various German provisional governments. Social Democrats such as Erich Ollenhauer, the wartime leader of the Social Democratic London group and later a member of Kurt Schumacher's innermost circle of advisers is one good example. Others

¹⁴. OSS, R&A No. 1568, p. 57.

¹⁵. OSS, R&A No. 1568, p. 1. (This report's states "after nearly four years of warfare the patterns of organization, thought, and activity among German emigres have sufficiently crystallized to permit SOME [my emphasis] kind of analysis." German socialist emigres were such a heterogeneous and divided group that studying, not to speak of uniting them, appeared nearly impossible.)

¹⁶. see: Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik..., p. 29.

included such American favorites as future Lord Mayor of West Berlin, Ernst Reuter, and Hamburg's future first mayor, Max Brauer. Social Democrats such as these made invaluable contribution to the creation of a new Germany. But their impact during the war on postwar planning was, in the final analysis, difficult to measure accurately.

In their wartime efforts to encourage subversive activity inside Germany, OSS officials pursued a twofold policy. First, the goal was to generate an effective opposition to the Nazi regime. A strong German underground movement could weaken the regime from within. Secondly, anticipating the disintegration of the Nazi state, American officials also worried that specially trained Nazi underground forces might emerge to disrupt Allied attempts to establish law and order. One way to counter this threat, American planners thought, was to carefully nurture an effective German opposition which could take over immediately after the war. If found acceptable by the German population, they could neutralize potential Nazi resistance. One OSS report noted:

The strength and vitality of the anti-Nazi underground are factors of the utmost importance in estimating, not only the probabilities of German collapse, but the direction of the postwar reconstruction of the German political system.¹⁷

In both instances social democrats and the trade union movement were singled out as the most viable means for destabilizing and replacing the Nazi regime. Allen Dulles, who worked from OSS' Bern office, later wrote that

when I was in Switzerland,..., I relied heavily on members of the German Social Democratic party and on other Socialists and trade unionists... I found in these groups devoted men and women willing to risk their lives for the restoration of liberty in Europe. No class worked more vigorously than they to protect the individual against the Nazis, and to try to atone for the ineffective and political mistakes of the left in pre-Hitler days."¹⁸

An OSS report in December, 1943 observed that some disgruntled workers were organizing "slow-downs, disturbances, strikes, sabotage, and even escapes from factories."

¹⁷. OSS, R&A No. ?, "The German Underground", p. 1. (The article supposedly was published in a journal(?) "The PW Weekly" on Dec. 31, 1943. Why it was therefore classified as 'secret', is a mystery to this author.)

¹⁸. Allen W. Dulles, Germany's Underground, New York: MacMillan Co., 1947, p. 97.

While acknowledging that the communists were the best organized, the report also registered the revival of Social Democratic youth groups.¹⁹ It observed that the German underground could hardly be described as a revolutionary force despite wide spread activity. Since the underground lacked a "comprehensive national organization", it was also not in the position to make forceful patriotic appeals against Hitler, because of the pervasive fear that the overthrow of the regime might imply national annihilation.²⁰ The concept of national liberation so effectively applied to stir up resistance in German occupied territories could not work in a nation such as Germany where its enemies had already decided on unconditional surrender. Many Germans, even if opposed to the regime, would actively resist because the alternatives under Allied occupation appeared worse. The National Socialist propaganda machinery found in 'unconditional surrender' an easy target for portraying the Allies as conquerors and not as the liberators, Allied propaganda wanted to project.

A civil affairs guide published by the War Department in July 1944 reiterated the notion that

...the establishment of law and order is conditioned upon the elimination of Nazism, which can be accomplished only through the indigenous political opposition in Germany itself. The opposition will be the greatest potential instrument for the destruction of German aggression.²¹

The guide also very accurately predicted an initial lack of "well-trained and disciplined organizations" to assist in postwar reconstruction. Political life would revive gradually, first on a local level but would eventually take shape in the form of national parties. Regardless of political differences, the major goal of most German politicians, whether conservative or socialist, would be to recover as soon as possible Germany's independence and to resist the dismemberment of the Reich.²²

¹⁹. OSS, R&A No. ?, "The German Underground", pp. ii-iii.

²⁰. OSS, R&A, No. ?, "The German Underground", p. v.

²¹. OSS, R&A No. 1655.1, Civil Affairs Guide — Policy toward Revival of Old Parties and Establishment of New Parties in Germany, 22 July 1944, p. 3. (Although published by the War Department, the report was actually prepared by the OSS Research and Analysis branch.)

²². OSS, R&A No. 1655.1, Civil Affairs Guide..., p. 5.

The old Social Democratic Party and the Communists were cited as the two left wing parties most likely once again to dominate the German labor movement. In the postwar era the former was expected to return to its pre-1933 reformist roots rather than to the revolutionary policies the Communists were generally identified with. Socialization of heavy industry and the banking system were recognized as traditional goals of Social Democratic policy. It was observed that the SPD, unlike the Communists, insisted, however, that these goals had to be achieved peacefully through the state and not by working against it. Finally, the SPD was also expected not to unite with the Communists and to maintain its "longstanding hostility against the Russian system and the Russian policy." These predictions would prove to be on target. As became clear after 1945, the SPD fought for German sovereignty and social democratic reform. Particularly crucial in the postwar era was this element of reform. The SPD realized the dire need for viable alternatives to counter the Communist drive to take control of the German labor movement. But in 1944, even the OSS found it difficult to predict whether the SPD would eventually win this popularity contest.²³

The possibility of a violent struggle between Communist and Social Democrats could not be discounted. If bloodshed and internal disorder occurred over their differences, political activity by political parties was to be prohibited. If they behaved peacefully, however, both parties should be tolerated and their cooperation sought. The policy was, in other words, to prevent "activities that incite acts of violence against the occupying forces and against the democratic forces in Germany."²⁴

A subsequent 1944 OSS report went a step further. It recommended the "ruthless extermination" of Germany as an aggressive power and vigorous denazification. It was hoped "to remove the greatest obstacle to the release of the democratic forces through which alone a non-aggressive Germany can be built."²⁵ But unlike previous reports, this one tried to go beyond the

²³. OSS, R&A No. 1655.1, Civil Affairs Guide...., p. 8.

²⁴. OSS, R&A No. 1655.1, Civil Affairs Guide.... pp. 15, 13.

²⁵. OSS, R&A No. 2076, The Revival of German Political and Constitutional Life under Military Government, 18 September 1944, pp. 1/2.

essentially negative policy of merely destroying the national socialist machinery. It offered a more substantial plan for cultivating political alternatives in Germany. Particularly interesting were warnings of the dangers inherent in favoring any one political organization. It advised that if cooperation with traditional ruling elites were attempted or simply the maintenance of Germany's social structures was pursued as policy, "democratic forces [were] likely to look to the USSR, even if the USSR [had] a policy not very different from that of the Western Powers." But similarly, the USSR might lose ground if she proceeded too ruthlessly in establishing the German Communist Party, while terrorizing Social Democrats. To avert such problems, OSS analysts advocated alternatively a tripartite agreement on Germany's political future.²⁶

Such a society must of necessity embrace elements from both Anglo-American and Soviet social structure and practice. Germany under this conception would be a democracy with competing political parties, civil liberties and protection for small property holders. At the same time, it would have such socialistic features as the nationalization of key industries, banks and insurance institutions and the break up of large estates.

Given Soviet military preponderance combined with the assistance of thousands of fanatical communists eager to increase Soviet influence in Europe, the United States would find it difficult to compete within Germany for support. Interallied cooperation was therefore preferable to conflict.²⁷

The OSS predicted that among these German political parties, the left would reorganize more quickly than bourgeois elements. Its postwar strength also would be greater than during the Weimar republic. It was estimated that the German society by 1945 would consist of 60 percent workers, salaried employees, and peasants but only about 6 percent owners and managers. Given these changes, the traditional German economical and political leadership after denazification would initially find itself on the defensive. Large political activity, however, was deemed an unlikely occurrence. It was more probable that "political apathy combined with intense preoccupation with daily

²⁶. OSS, R&A No. 2076, The Revival of German Political..., p. 7.

²⁷. OSS, R&A No. 2076, Revival of German..., pp. 8/9. (The Research and Analysis Branch was rumored to have been managed by left leaning intellectuals. But it is reasonable to assume that their ideas--how ever similar to social democratic programs--were at least registered by the military. The OSS, if we remember, was first under the supervision of the JCS. After July, 1945, the OSS mission to Germany, although somewhat in limbo, continued to serve OMGUS with intelligence.)

domestic problems" would prevail. Unfortunately, the OSS report concluded, the result will be that political parties will be run by minorities "which may or may not reflect the unconscious demands of the masses." But it was also predicted that once the immediate problems of simple survival had been solved, the majority of the population would again turn their attention to political affairs and that the SPD would play a major positive role in this development.²⁸

By early 1945, U.S. troops began to enter defeated Germany. A situation report on the city of Kassel occupied in early April, 1945 described the citizens' preoccupation with immediate problems of simple survival. It found that most citizens showed little or no interest in those long-term political issues touching upon Germany's future. The principal concern was to restore water and electricity services in the virtually destroyed city. Food and fuel supplies were viewed as adequate. Another major concern, Germans noted, was the looting and other acts of violence committed by the thousands of displaced persons roaming Germany. Most Germans interviewed, listed food, shelter, transport and de-nazification together with political re-education as major goals. Even among the Social Democrats, who appeared to dominate the city's political life since the American arrival, "questions of socialism" had been relegated to the future.²⁹ At the same time, these field reporters did not fail to note the speed with which this local chapter of the SPD began to regroup.

While it is perhaps exaggerating to speak of a Social Democratic Party organization, it is nevertheless true that the SPD is in process of being organized and that its leaders present a united front on all questions, dealing with the US authorities...

The SPD was viewed as unique among political groups. Other political groups consisted not only of a mere handful of men, but also lacked the necessary

²⁸. OSS, R&A No. 2076, The Revival of Political..., pp. 25/6. (1. It is difficult to tell whether the statistics pertain directly to the thesis that the left would organize faster than others. The political forecast was, however, at any rate proven entirely correct. 2. This argument of the political minority was later frequently used by American officials to refuse dealing directly with political parties. But it is difficult to see how else parties could have emerged except through the initiative of dedicated individuals.)

²⁹. OSS, Field Report, "Memorandum from E.M. Hoover and R.G. Neumann to Harold Deutsch, Chief R&A/ETO", 24 April 1945, pp. 1, 5-7.

expertise to organize themselves into political parties.³⁰ Until this condition changed, the SPD was likely to remain the most important political force in Kassel. It was, therefore, recommended that the military government work closely with the party.

At the same time, it was noted with some disapproval that the local Social Democratic leader Herr Nietzsche was trying to organize a trade union movement.³¹ It was predicted that soon it would be impossible to separate the unions from the political parties. Such an alliance was, in these field reporters' minds, not desired by the American government. JCS 1067 allowed the "self-organization of employees along democratic lines, subject to such safeguards as may be necessary to prevent the perpetuation of Nazi or militarist influence under any guise or the continuation of any group hostile to the objectives and operations of the occupying forces."³² But alliances between trade unions and parties were not included. In part, this stemmed from a general American distrust of political parties, but particularly of the Communist Party. It has been argued that top U.S. officials were "determined to inhibit indigenous social radicalism and to contain Soviet power in German." To achieve this, the conversion of German labor into an American ally was essential. Members of more conservative U.S. trade unions such as the American Federation of Labor (AFL) were enlisted to 'design' a reliable German labor movement. Many of these reportedly worked at the Labor Relations Branch of OMGUS.³³ Socialist and Social Democratic emigres were also recruited to act as "bulwark against German Communist party (KPD) influence."³⁴ State Department policy makers may have been overly confrontational toward the German labor movement by conspiring to eliminate communist influence in German labor. But whether American policy was single-

³⁰. OSS, Field Report, "Memorandum to Harold Deutsch...", p. 7, 8.

³¹. First name is not given.

³². "Directive of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff..." (JCS 1067) in Ruhm von Oppen, (ed.) Documents on Germany under Occupation, p. 23.

³³. Carolyn Eisenberg, "Working-Class Politics and the Cold War: American Intervention in the German Labor Movement, 1945-49" in Diplomatic History, Vol. 7, No. 4, Fall, 1983, pp. 283/4. (Harold Zink pointed to the presence of many State Department officials within OMGUS; with labor participating as well, the policy making lines drawn so far are further obscured.)

³⁴. Carolyn Eisenberg, Working-Class Politics..., p. 286.

mindedly confrontational toward Germany's left and the labor movement is at least debatable.

Instead there is evidence to suggest that American officials were often able to recognize and adjust their policies to political currents in Germany without provoking needless conflict. Louis A. Wiesner, the State Department's expert on labor, as early as 12 May 1945 discovered signs of widespread, albeit localized, labor activity. "Anti-fascist committees" dominated by Social Democrats, Communists, and 'leftist centrists' were observed to have organized in various cities across Germany. One such committee in Ludwigshafen, it was discovered, had posted leaflets "demanding the 40 hour week [and] the nationalization of industry...". Wiesner concluded that since the Military Government seemed unable to prevent this combination of political party and labor activity, it would be advisable to revise those policies prohibiting it. Failure to act, he warned, "will bottle up energy which could aid us, drive many of the groups underground, and benefit only those who are most willing to work illegally, namely the Communists."²⁵

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson expressed even greater alarm about recent level of communist activity in Europe. On 16 May 1945, he wrote to President Truman:

It is universally expected that next winter there will be epidemics and starvation in Central Europe. Thereupon may follow political revolution and communist infiltration.... It is essential to protect these countries [in Central Europe] against falling victim to Revolution and communism as a result of starvation.²⁶

Several officials also believed that the Soviet Union was responsible for the increasingly radical tone of communist parties in Europe. State Department Special Assistant to the Director on European Affairs, Raymond E. Murphy, issued the following warning:

While the Communist International theoretically was dissolved in June, 1943, the constituent sections have worked together as a team since then and have never wavered in their absolute support of Moscow's policies. This is a force to be reckoned with in the application of this government's policy abroad for the reconstituted Communist International

²⁵. Louis A. Wiesner to Amb. Robert Murphy, 12 May 1945, Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, Germany 1945-1949, Internal Files, Part I, Political, Governmental and National Defense Affairs. (Henceforth, Central Files, I.F. Part I)

²⁶. quoted in: Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay..., p. 90. [my retranslation into English]

may be expected to undermine and discredit our policies if they do not coincide with those of the Soviet Union.³⁷

Murphy warned that Communist agitators in Europe were busy praising the Red Army as liberators. Since most Europeans were accustomed to life under totalitarian regimes, they could be expected to make an easy transition to a new one.³⁸ These communist agitators were portrayed as presenting the Soviet Union as the "logical guarantor" against another menace comparable to Hitler. He recommended that tough measures be introduced particularly against American communists as "a convincing demonstration to Stalin of the inherent strength of this country [United States]." Such a stance, it was concluded, could only aid in strengthening relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁹

But strongly worded attacks aimed against communist activity tended to be the exception. Generally, officials were more moderate in tone. On 12 June 1945 Ambassador Robert Murphy noted the propaganda advantage the Soviet government enjoyed by portraying the Red Army as liberators from fascism. But he had also heard that the Soviets even within their own zone were not very popular. Murphy did not believe Soviet propaganda posed a threat in Allied zones, but promised, nonetheless, "to keep a close watch on political trends in this direction."⁴⁰

Americans still had reasons to remain concerned. The speed with which the Soviet occupied zone succeeded at re-establishing a semblance of normalcy demanded attention. Only slightly more than a month after surrender, Marshall

³⁷. FRUS, 1945, Vol. I, Potsdam, The Special Assistant to the Director of European Affairs (Murphy) to the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Phillips) and the Director of European Affairs (Matthews), 2 June 1945, p. 268. (Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew sent Murphy's report together with a memorandum to Pres. Truman. But according to the FRUS editors there is no evidence that Truman actually received the report.)

³⁸. FRUS, 1945, Vol. I, Potsdam, "Possible Resurrection of Communist International, Resumption of Extreme Leftist Activities, Possible Effect on United States", 2 June 1945, p. 278/9. (R.E. Murphy in the preceding paragraph mentions one Dean Inge. Perhaps, he is merely summarizing the latter's views. If Murphy tried to this, he certainly took great care to conceal Inge's contribution.)

³⁹. FRUS, 1945, Vol. I, Potsdam, "Possible Resurrection of Communist International, . . .", pp. 278-80.

⁴⁰. FRUS 1945, Vol. III, European Advisory Commission, Austria and Germany, No. 474, Murphy to Secretary of State, 12 June 1945, p. 944.

G.K. Zhukov, the supreme commander of the Soviet Military Government, issued Order No. 2 permitting the formation and activity of anti-fascist political parties. Trade union activity was also legalized.⁴¹ The American government, on the other hand, waited another two months before officially removing the ban on localized political activity in its zone. National party organization was not authorized until November, 1945. On the surface, it appeared thus as if the American government might be losing the first round of the propaganda battle for Germany.

The Soviet government, however, confronted a problem which it found difficult to resolve. On the one hand, it wished to make Germany its ally. On the other hand, the Soviet nation desperately needed reparations from Germany to restore its own shattered economy. One of its first steps was, as far as possible, to dismantle Germany's industry. Barbara Ann Chotiner and John W. Atwell placed the prewar value of plants dismantled at 1.6 billion dollars. Over 6,000 kilometers of tracks and 1,200 locomotives were taken out of the Soviet zone. The Soviet occupation forces, furthermore, were entirely supplied with German produce.⁴²

On June 29, 1945 Lucius D. Clay warned that Soviet dismantling, if continued, could have disastrous effects. Although favouring punishment of Germans, he felt that it should not lead to "mass starvation and sickness." He observed that if Germany's economy continued to be eroded at that level, the consequences could be very severe.⁴³ In the final analysis, such actions, no matter how important to a battered Soviet economy, were bound to harm the Soviet government's efforts at normalizing relations with a future Germany.

⁴¹. No. 18, "Befehl Nr. 2 des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland über die Zulassung anti-faschistischer Parteien und Organisationen", in Dokumente aus den Jahren 1945 - 1949 -- Um ein Antifaschistisch-demokratisches Deutschland, Berlin, G.D.R.: Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1968, pp. 54/5. (henceforth noted as: Dok (GDR))

⁴². Barbara Ann Chotiner and John W. Atwell, "Soviet Occupation Policy toward Germany" in Hans A. Schmitt, U.S. Occupation in Europe after World War II..., pp. 46, 52/3.

⁴³. "From Clay to [John J.] McCloy", 29 June 1945, No. 17, The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol. I, Jean E. Smith, (ed.), Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1974, pp. 41/2.

Fears of alienating the German population were similarly on the minds of American government officials. In late June, 1945, Robert Murphy referred to the danger of restoring political order without concomitant economic improvements in Germany.

any or most political groups we permit to organize in near future seems likely to become anti-American Military Government particularly if as appears probable the German people will suffer an adverse economic existence for some time to come. And once we lift present ban on political activity, it would be extremely difficult to reintroduce it.⁴⁴

A year and a half later winter, 1946, when there was again some talk of lowering the daily calorie rations in the American zone, Lucius D. Clay very shrewdly cautioned,

We have insisted on democratic processes in the U.S. zone and have maintained a strict neutrality between political parties. As a result the Communist Party has made little inroad. However, there is no choice between becoming a Communist on 1500 calories and a believer in democracy on 1000 calories.

He concluded, convinced that reducing the daily allowance would pave the road to a Communist Germany.⁴⁵ Clay chose in 1946 to inflate the potential for political unrest in Germany. Early 1946 election victories for moderate political forces should have left him with few doubts about how unpopular radical parties were in Germany. Germans had sent a clear message, rejecting the forces of violent change as viable alternatives. In summer 1945, on the other hand, American officials were not able to anticipate that the demise of German radicalism would come about so quickly and with such finality. But American officials realized already that continuing an "essentially negative and suppressive" policy of disallowing political activity could not possibly further their cause against political radicalism. Robert Murphy thought that continuing a ban on political activity would discourage democratic parties from expressing themselves. Extremists on the right and left, on the other hand, being more adept and disciplined could be more effective in the underground. The solution, he thought, was to support Social Democrats and Centrists since "they might be inclined to obey our orders while Communists and Nazis advance their own organizations."⁴⁶

⁴⁴. FRUS, 1945, Vol. I, Potsdam, "Murphy to the Director of European Affairs (Matthews)", 28 June 1945, No. 339, p. 472.

⁴⁵. Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol. I, "From Clay to [Maj. Gen. Oliver P.] Echols and Petersen", 27 March 1946, No. 103, pp. 183/4.

⁴⁶. FRUS, 1945, Vol. I, Potsdam, No. 339, Murphy to Matthews, 28 June 1945, p. 472.

At the same time, Murphy appears to have entertained strong doubts about Germany's ability to reorganize politically in 1945 because of the political and economical chaos. In his memoirs he wrote that "two months after their surrender, Berliners still were moving about in a dazed condition... In addition to three million Germans in Berlin, thousands of displaced persons were roaming around the shattered city. None of us could be sure how these people might behave, whether their experiences had made them apathetic, revengeful, or crazy."⁴⁷ In July, 1945, Clay told future Assistant Secretary of State John H. Hilldring that no visible pattern of political activity had yet emerged. He attributed this like most other observers to the German people's concern primarily with "everyday problems of food, clothing and shelter". He was also not greatly unsettled by the communist underground movement. Although aware that the Communists were the most widely organized, he did not consider them a mass movement at the time.⁴⁸ One of the most outspoken recent critic of the American occupation Edward N. Petersen argues that Germans were quite capable of organizing politically. American help was not actually required. At least two OMGUS officers Charles W. Thayer and George Schuster concur that it was absurd to assume that Germans were inherently anti-democratic or unable to reform. The only time Americans found their reform efforts hampered, Schuster suggested, was when Germans felt that attempts were being made to "reshape the supposed German character".⁴⁹

Murphy and Clay were perhaps shrewd enough to recognize the potential use of reformist socialists such as the SPD against Communist activity. But they clearly underestimated the strength of the Social Democratic Party to regroup so quickly after the war. Kurt Schumacher certainly did not have to be taught the basics of democratic behavior. "Married to politics" since the early days of the Weimar Republic, it was only natural for him to seek as quickly as

⁴⁷. Robert Murphy, Diplomat among Warriors, p. 264.

⁴⁸. Papers of Lucius D. Clay, No. 19, Conditions in Germany, From Clay to Hilldring, 5 July 1945, p. 47.

⁴⁹. Edward E. Petersen, The American Occupation of Germany — Retreat to Victory, Detroit: Wayne State U. Press, 1977, p. 161.

possible his old party's revival.⁵⁰ What made Schumacher difficult to endure not only for Americans was the single-mindedness with which asserted his party's sole legitimate claim to rule a future Germany. It supposedly so dominated Schumacher's thinking that, according to another Social Democrat, Theo Pirker, he failed to give the labour movement the new sense of direction and purpose it desperately needed. This, Pirker feels, should have been the real goal of the party. Instead, Schumacher perpetrated the "myth" that his party should determine all large national questions from German unity, to reconstruction and democratization.⁵¹ Yet in the end, Pirker continues, the party achieved little of Schumacher's program. Its only choice was, in the end, to cooperate in the creation of a Western Germany that contained few elements of Schumacher's socialist dream. How complete the defeat of socialism was became clear in 1959 when the SPD's Godesberg program eliminated crucial socialist elements from the party's platform. The SPD by then had come to realize that such sacrifice was the only route to winning elections. The root of this disaster, Pirker thinks, lies in Schumacher's failure after 1945 to provide a credible and viable socialist program, thus paving the road to "authoritarian democracy".⁵²

Pirker's sweeping analysis contains considerable merit. But Pirker denies or is unwilling to concede that Schumacher had little choice. Even if the consensus among historians is that Schumacher was able to rule his party with an iron fist, it is equally true that many final decisions for Germany, including those concerning his own party's future, were not his to make. Schumacher admittedly remarked as early as 6 May 1945 that "We [the SPD] cannot be and do not want to be the autocratically ruled instrument of some

⁵⁰. See page 1 of this Chapter for a few examples of Schumacher's very early resumption of political activity after the war.

⁵¹. Theo Pirker, Die SPD nach Hitler — Die Geschichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1945-1964, Munich: Rutten & Loening Verlag, 1965, pp. 9/10.

⁵². Theo Pirker, Die SPD nach Hitler..., pp. 11-13. (Pirker describes himself as a "leftist" [den "Linken" im weitesten Sinne]. He evidently deplores the striking discrepancy between socialist vision as formulated before 1945 and reality which gradually decimated these dreams in favor of traditional capitalism.)

alien imperial interests."⁵³ But he also accepted that "in Germany Democracy would be socialist or not at all", either way only if the occupying powers would allow it to happen.⁵⁴

Schumacher clearly fought an uphill battle. He had to unite opposing groups of social democrats and neutralize the influence of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). He had not only to establish the SPD as the only viable workers' party but simultaneously to transform it into a "Volkspartei", in other words, a party with broad mass appeal; something, given its predominantly working class constituency, it had never been in the past.⁵⁵ Finally, he needed the support of the Western Allies. Schumacher knew that his threats of leading his Germany to neutrality were empty rhetoric. Under the Soviet system with the Communists in power, there would be no room for other left-wing alternatives. German unity, he realized, depended not on his party's initiative, but on the ability of the Allied powers to reach agreement on the shape of the postwar world. The more improbable such an arrangement became, the more he reluctantly became willing to accept the "Weststaat" within the Western alliance.⁵⁶

But Schumacher hesitated to admit this publicly. Memories of Weimar and his party's association with the 1919 "Versaillesdiktat" demanded that the SPD after 1945 under no circumstances be associated with any future peace imposed by the victors. Much of his early rhetoric thus assumed a harsh tone toward the allies. But to leading party functionaries he conceded that "we cannot... choose our own plan for a united Europe. We cannot expect at all from life to

⁵³. Erich Ollenhauer, Kurt Schumacher, Willy Brandt, Der Auftrag des Demokratischen Sozialismus, Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1972, p. 31.

⁵⁴. Quote taken from: Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik, p. 490.

⁵⁵. In 1912, at the height of its pre-War popularity the SPD obtained a popular of only 34.8 percent. Most of the votes came from the working classes. To be a true "Volkspartei" a party has to be able to appeal to large and varied segments of society. This the SPD simply never did before 1959.

⁵⁶. See Chapter 5: Schumacher explained his views privately to several American officials from 1946 onward. Although I must admit that I am not entirely certain about the true motives behind his confessions to these officials.

let itself be guided by abstract notions."⁵⁷ In concrete terms this implied that the party would have to work with the Western Allies. German independence and unity were sincere goals. But Schumacher also had to make certain that the SPD was associated with these demands, even as he realized that they were likely to remain elusive. In the initial postwar years, he remained convinced that his party needed to distance itself from Allied policy.

Schumacher had to juggle numerous variables to keep his party afloat. But, ultimately, he could not but fail to resolve what is commonly referred to as "Schumacher's dilemma". His party's survival depended on the Western alliance, while the latter, in turn, threatened to retard, or at least significantly modify where possible, the realization of the German Social Democratic dream. His final success was, nevertheless, impressive. Under Schumacher's leadership, the SPD came to be gradually acknowledged as the only legitimate left-wing alternative to conservatism by the vast majority of Germans. Even if power remained elusive, the SPD emerged united, possessing a greater share of the popular vote than it ever had before in its long history. Finally, no one was ever able to say that the SPD was responsible for another stab in the back. On the contrary, so vocal was Schumacher's nationalistic zeal in public that he more than any other German statesman was identified with the revival of German nationalism. It is not clear whether American officials during the early months of the occupation were aware of the intricacies of the Social Democratic dilemma. Theo Pirker argues that in 1945 the Western forces never even understood the significance of the "inner-party" struggle between socialism and communism.⁵⁸ This statement is disputable. The first agency to have commented on this conflict as early as 1944 was the OSS. As already mentioned, both Murphy and Clay had taken notice of internal differences.⁵⁹

⁵⁷. Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik, pp. 519, 545.

⁵⁸. Theo Pirker, Die SPD nach Hitler..., pp. 41/2.

⁵⁹... Murphy would usually sign his name on letters to the secretary of state. But the so called "Murphy reports" were the outcome of research and analysis conducted by his staff at PolAd. Clay, when commenting on political activity, would similarly refer to intelligence gathered by his field reporters.

The first opportunity American officials had to revise their original policy of prohibiting political activity was offered at the Allied Conference at Berlin, Potsdam, staged during the latter half of July, 1945. Other issues were clearly vastly more important such as reparations or Germany's unity as a nation. According to Herbert Feis, Potsdam "turned into a court of claims". It brought to the forefront the many conflicting interests which had always persisted but had been relegated into the background while Germany's defeat was still the paramount concern. But rather than solving differences, Potsdam exposed the powers' failure to rule the postwar world as one.

The Allied debate over German political activity certainly underscored this failure. Feis claims that Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and British Minister for Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden sought Soviet commitment to permit free elections, open to all parties and their candidates whose democratic and anti-Nazi record had been sufficiently demonstrated.⁶⁰ Charles E. Bohlen, who acted as Truman's interpreter at Potsdam, shares in the uncertainty as to whether Potsdam sealed the fate of Germany as a divided nation. But he concedes that even the Western powers were frequently intransigent where outside interference in their individual occupation zones was proposed. When the Soviet government proposed the internationalization of the Ruhr industries, the British, who controlled that area, refused to comply. Bohlen defends British refusal, stating that "Moscow would undoubtedly have used the privilege to paralyze the German economy and to push West Germany toward Communism."⁶¹ In response, the American government's resolve grew to seek the reintegration of Germany into an American-led world, a policy that Washington had been contemplating at least since the fall of 1944.⁶² After Potsdam thus the division of Germany began to look much like a foregone conclusion.

The Potsdam communique released 2 August 1945 acknowledged the Allies' failure to agree on a future Germany. Article 9 (iv) implied as much by stating that

⁶⁰ Herbert Feis, From Trust to Terror -- The Onset of the Cold War 1945-1950, New York: W.W. Norton, 1970, p. 47.

⁶¹ Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969, New York: W.W. Norton, 1973, pp. 233/4.

⁶² Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, The Limits of Power -- The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954, pp. 116, 118.

"for the time being no central government shall be established." But, on the other hand, "all democratic parties with rights of assembly and of public discussion shall be allowed and encouraged throughout Germany."⁶³ The Potsdam agreement supplemented JCS 1067, the official policy guiding the actions of the American occupation forces. JCS 1067 remained in effect until 1947 when it was replaced by JCS 1779. The Potsdam agreements superseded provisions in JCS 1067 if they appeared to contradict those arrived at during the Conference. This included among others the authorization henceforth of democratic political activity in Germany.

Another consequence of the Conference appeared to be that the United States government had emerged determined to proceed more rapidly with the restoration of Germany. Truman himself took the initiative in a report to the nation on 9 August 1945. He spoke of the ruins in Berlin, other devastated cities and "German women and children and old men...wandering over the highways, returning to bombed-out homes or leaving bombed-out cities, searching for food and shelter.." Germans, he thought, had been sufficiently punished for their crimes. The tasks of the newly founded Council of Foreign Ministers was to eliminate all remnants of national socialism and German militarism. It would, furthermore, seek "to rebuild democracy by control of German education, by reorganizing local government and the judiciary, by encouraging free speech, free press, freedom, and the right of labor to organize."⁶⁴ As Theodor Eschenburg commented, the Council was created to deal with problems not solved at the conference.⁶⁵

Sanctioned by the American government, political activity was to be revived. American officials certainly began to scrutinize more carefully the various forms of political party activity occurring in their zone. Higher level American officials as well began to examine in greater detail the political

⁶³. Germany under Occupation — Illustrative Materials and Documents, James K. Pollock, et al. (ed.), Ann Arbor, Mich.: George Wahr Publishing Co., 1949, p. 19.

⁶⁴. "Report by President Truman to the Nation on the Berlin Conference", 9 August 1945, in Arthur M. Schlesinger, jr., (gen.ed.), The Dynamics of World Power — A Documentary History of United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1973, Vol. I, Western Europe, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973, p. 428.

⁶⁵. Theodor Eschenburg, Jahre der Besatzung 1945-1949, Stuttgart, F.R.G.: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983, p. 46.

content of German parties. Future elections, too, were included as official policy. In a memorandum dated 4 August 1945 the Civil Administration Division of the U.S. Group Control Council wrote that "representative and elective principles shall be introduced into regional, provincial, and state (Land) administration as rapidly as may be justifiable by the successful application of these principles in local self-government."⁶⁶

Accordingly, on 27 August 1945, the military government initiated the first steps within the American zone to authorize political party activity. Such activity was, however, at first limited to the 'Kreis' or county level. Organization meetings were held immediately and appeared to be well attended. Since these meetings were also conducted in an orderly fashion, political parties were authorized to organize state wide in November 1945.⁶⁷ Earlier on 19 September 1945, proclamation No. 2 issued by General Eisenhower had divided the American zone into three Lander. On 17 October, the recently appointed minister presidents were summoned to a meeting, where the creation of a 'Landerrat' or council of states was announced. Its function was to handle inter-Land activities that no Land could handle individually. Although possessing neither legislative, judicial nor police powers, its cooperation on issues such as population transfers from Eastern Europe and the sudden demobilization of millions of German soldiers was crucial. American officials argued that eventually this body would aid in the transition of power back into German hands.⁶⁸

The political environment, although now visibly improving, still suffered from one major drawback. The wider German public was reluctant to become involved. American officials concerned about such lack of enthusiasm could offer few suggestions for correcting the problem. Officials, including Clay, had spoken

⁶⁶. Germany under Occupation..., James K. Pollock, et al., (ed.), p. 113. (U.S. Group Control Council was the official title of the occupation administration until officially changed to OMGUS in October, 1945. In April OMGUS assumed full military government responsibility)

⁶⁷. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1950, p. 87.

⁶⁸. Germany under Occupation, James K. Pollock, et al. (ed.), p. 101. (see Pollock's editorial comments. The three Lander were Bavaria, Hesse and Wurtemberg-Baden. Also part of the American zone was the Free City of Bremen.)

much of 'grass roots' or 'bottom up' approaches on political activity. Indigenous political party development with minimum outside interference was openly favored. But how it was to be accomplished? Even in mid-October 1945, Clay still observed that "complete political apathy" prevailed. Particularly smaller and rural districts were noted as "not producing any political activity." The unanimous conclusion of military government reports, he claims, was that, except for dedicated minorities, the "German masses are entirely unready for self-government and ignorant of democratic processes and responsibilities."⁶⁹

Both Robert Murphy and Clay were still deploring in the fall of 1945 what they thought was political apathy. But it can be argued that political apathy had become somewhat of a misnomer. Masses rarely organize spontaneously, leaving most work to more qualified or dedicated men and women. In 1945 and for some time thereafter, most Germans were struggling to survive and had little time to become actively involved in politics. But despite this preoccupation with economic survival, Germans still found time to vote. The municipal election turnout in January, 1946 was 86 percent. Clay conceded that this "was twice what we could expect at home" during local elections in the United States.⁷⁰

Most political party activity traditionally centered around the larger urban communities. It was here, as in the past, that the two leftist parties, the SPD and Communists, were most active and best organized. In early October, following Allied authorization, Kurt Schumacher organized the first party conference on German soil since the war had ended. The meeting held at Wennigsen near Hannover was of historic importance. It was here that the party made fundamental policy decisions about its future path.

Theodor Eschenburg distinguishes two results that more than any others characterized the meeting. One was that Schumacher emerged as the party's undisputed leader and central figure and would likely continue in this

⁶⁹. F.R.U.S., 1945, Vol. III, Council of Foreign Ministers, Germany and Austria, "Clay to the War Department", 13 October 1945, p. 981.

⁷⁰. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, p. 88. (By 1950, Clay's perception on political activity in late 1945 had changed substantially. He now remembered "the healthy growth of political parties" in the American and British zones. p. 91)

position for the foreseeable future. Secondly, was the formal recognition of two SPD factions, one in the East, the other in the West. In July, 1945, the SPD of the Soviet zone together with all other parties had consigned themselves to unification with the Communists in a "firm front of anti-fascist and democratic organizations." Schumacher's hatred of communism had persisted even through all his years at Dachau. He did not associate with them in the concentration camp nor would he ever permit any association with communists after the war. Too deeply were memories of 1932 engraved in his mind.⁷¹ The Communist party, he charged, was too "indivisibly linked to one of the superpowers, namely to Russia as national and imperialist state and its foreign political goals."⁷²

One OSS official had noted in October, 1945 that Schumacher opposed unification with Communists. He also mentioned briefly Schumacher's displeasure over attempts by the Social Democratic Central Committee in Berlin to assume control of the whole party.⁷³ Lucius D. Clay recognized at least that although there was a "tendency for left parties to cooperate closely", they had so far failed to merge.⁷⁴ Although Clay's belief that Schumacher discouraged an open break between the left parties at the time is correct, OSS reports, with a finer eye for detail, had predicted in September 1945 that the Social Democratic Party in the Western zones shared Allied policy opposing both a united democratic front and the establishment of a united labor party. The reports hinted at the presence of internal party divisions whereby the traditionally anti-communist "old men" were opposed by the more radical rank and file. The latter appeared more readily inclined to merge with the Communists. Should they be able to wrest party control from the remnants of

⁷¹. Theodor Eschenburg, Jahre der Besatzung..., p. 174, 173. (The communists then had conspired under Stalin's orders against the reformist Social Democrats thus facilitating Hitler's rise to power.)

⁷². "XIX. Kurt Schumacher: Politische Richtlinien für die SPD in ihrem Verhältnis zu den anderen politischen Faktoren, 1945", in Kurt Klotzbach and Dieter Dowe, (eds.), Programmatistische Dokumente der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie, Berlin: Verlag J.H.W Dietz Nachf., 1973, p. 268.

⁷³. Strategic Services Unit, War Department, Field Report(?), "Social Democratic Conference in Hanover", 9 October 1945.

⁷⁴. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, No. 51, "Conditions in Germany", 13 October 1945, From Clay to Secretary of War (Patterson), p. 102.

the old guard, the united front could well materialize in the Western zones, as well.⁷⁵

Even though top officials such as Robert Murphy and Clay still appeared in late 1945 to have little faith in German political maturity, they clung to the election date set for January, 1946. Murphy expressed some reservations as late as mid-December, 1945. He found particularly interesting that the three minister-presidents had petitioned Clay to postpone elections at least until 1 April 1946. Bavaria's Social Democratic minister president Wilhelm Hoegner still argued in his memoirs that the elections were staged prematurely. He thought that the German people were still politically "comatose" at that stage. He also argued that election results at the time would not have been truly representative of the population since many former national socialists were prohibited from voting together with refugees, who had not yet fulfilled the one year residency requirements necessary to participate in the elections.⁷⁶

Hoegner's major reservation stemmed largely, as he admits, from his party's unpopularity in the predominantly catholic Bavaria. As anticipated, in none of the local elections held between January and May 1946 did the Bavarian SPD succeed in obtaining more than forty percent of the popular vote. But Hoegner, ignoring calls for his resignation, continued in office, confident that the Military government supported him.⁷⁷

If, as it turned out, German leaders themselves entertained reservations about early elections, why, given the presumed political apathy, were elections held? For one, there was the Soviet challenge which demanded a response. The more evident it became that unification would remain elusive, the less inclined the American government was to delay the creation of a West German

⁷⁵. OSS, R&A, No. 1549, "The Social Democratic Party of Germany", 1 September 1945, pp. 36, 38.

⁷⁶. Wilhelm Hoegner, Der Schwierige Aussenseiter, Munich: Isar Verlag, 1959, pp. 241-243.

⁷⁷. Wilhelm Hoegner, Der Schwierige Aussenseiter, pp. 243. (documents in F.R.U.S reveal that support existed. Murphy liked Hoegner's espousal of federalism and decentralization. But he also realized how unpopular Hoegner was among German political leaders. see: No. 1577, Murphy to Secretary of State, 27 December 1945, p. 1023.)

government. Municipal elections held in the first half of 1946 were anyhow little more than public opinion polls, revealing important insights about the direction German politics were likely to take. Decision making power for the American zone was to remain in the hands of American government agencies, whether it be OMGUS, the State Department, the White House or even Congress.

Another factor accelerating the return to political normalcy, according to John H. Backer, was the U.S. Congress. Clay was aware that Congress could at any point seek an end to the American occupation of Germany. Congress had always been critical of the immense cost of maintaining American forces there. As it turned out, the OMGUS staff of around 13,000 was to be reduced to 5,000 in late Spring, 1946. In 1971, Clay defended his decision:

We—at least I—didn't know how long the United States was going to be willing to support an occupation, and therefore if I was going to establish law and order, I felt that the best way to do it was by utilizing Germans. Secondly, I felt that the more we could reduce American personnel and military government, the more apt we were to be able to obtain the proper support at home by doing the job. And thirdly, I thought they could do it better than we could.⁷⁹

It is hard not to agree with Clay's assessment. By introducing democracy at a point where Germany's morale appeared low, the American military government's decision to hold elections allowed whatever remnants of apathy and lethargy, incurred by defeat, to be replaced by a new sense of political importance. The future no longer appeared as uncertain as before.⁸⁰

Overall, the spring 1946 municipal elections held in the American occupation zone proved generally reassuring. Although as Harold Zink has observed participation declined between the January, 1946 municipal elections for communities not exceeding 20,000 and those for larger counties on 28 April 1946. The voter turn out was 86 and 70 percent respectively.⁸⁰ The Coalition of Christian Democrats (CDU) and Christian Socialists (CSU) won majorities in Bavaria and Wurttemberg-Baden. In Bavaria, the majority was absolute. The elections in Wurttemberg-Baden proved indecisive. The Social Democrats won in Hesse, but without passing the fifty percent hurdle. But most importantly,

⁷⁹. quote from 1971 interview conducted by Jean D. Smith. Cited in: John H. Backer, Winds of History -- The German Years of Lucius DuBignon Clay, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983, p. 77.

⁷⁹. John H. Backer, Winds of History..., p. 79.

⁸⁰. Harold Zink, The United States in Germany..., p. 180.

nowhere did the Communist party gain more than fifteen percent of the popular vote.^{*1} Nor were there any signs of a right wing revival. The threat of anti-American resistance had evidently not only failed to materialize, but political parties friendly, or at least not openly hostile to the American occupation, were also clearly enjoying massive popular support. Thus encouraged, American officials were persuaded to grant greater leeway to political parties.

The elections meant that the American government had successfully passed the first hurdle in the democratization of Germany. The election turn-out and the overwhelming victory pro-Western parties had scored gave American officials reassurance that liberal democracy could work. Prospects that Western Germany would one day be a reliable ally of the United States were increasing.

The months between surrender and the first municipal elections held at varying dates between January and May 1946, as far as political activity was concerned, were dominated by worries about radical left- and right-wing insurgences. In the next instance, as it became more and more apparent that German sovereignty would be restored, the more concerned the American government became with the structure of Germany's future political system.^{*2} Accordingly, more precise and extensive analyses of the SPD could henceforth be found at most levels of the American government. The question now became what role the SPD would eventually play in any German government. American officials began to question whether a Social Democratic government could be relied upon as an ally. An answer to this question was all the more urgently needed as the Soviet Union stepped up its efforts to strengthen its foothold across Germany with the help of the Communist controlled SED. But Americans need not have worried. For throughout most of 1946 the SPD proved a formidable means for neutralizing the more radical Communists. But this was to change once American officials had concluded that the threat of communist infiltration had been successfully contained at least in Germany.

^{*1}. Election results are covered in James K. Pollock, Germany under Occupation, pp. 124-126.

^{*2}. Chapter 4 and especially Chapter 5 discuss in greater detail the growing American concern over the SPD's role in a future German government.

Until 1946, the SPD and American officials had therefore found few major issues to quarrel about. Aside from sharing a strong anti-communism with the SPD, American officials would often find thereafter that the party's stubborn defense of the Social Democratic vision for a new Germany was a hindrance to the realization of their own plans for Germany. In 1946, with the successful neutralization on West German soil of their common enemy, the Soviet Union and the German communists, antagonisms between the United States government and the SPD soon began to surface.

CH. III The American Government and SPD Prospects 1946-1947

Throughout 1946, the American Military Government repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to let Germans, if not govern, then at least administer their own affairs. The relative political calm which had persisted since the beginning of the occupation clearly encouraged American officials to proceed further. The spring elections had tested German resolve to behave democratically. High voter participation and relatively easy victories for reformist parties such as the SPD and the CDU were promising signs. State elections held on 30 June 1946 confirmed earlier municipal election results. The CDU emerged as the single-largest party winning nearly fifty percent of all seats in the various state legislatures. The combined number of seats the CDU, SPD and a few minor parties such as the Liberals (FDP) obtained was 237 of 370 seats. The Communists (KPD) mustered a mere twenty-five seats. Liberal democracy, it seemed, was workable even in Germany.

The first months 1946 gave no indication that the domestic political calm that had prevailed throughout 1945 would not continue in the same manner. American officials thus decided that stability could likely be maintained without much interference on their part. American policy on political activity that year therefore encouraged where feasible more German self-government. The American Military Government, however, reserved final judgement on all German policy designs or proposals.² Germans were asked to assume administrative tasks as well as to engage in policy planning. But final approval for any policy proposals would remain, as a rule, the unassailable prerogative of the occupation forces.

². See: Germany 1947-1949 The Story in Documents, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950, "Relations between Military and Civil Government (U.S. Zone) Subsequent to Adoption of Land Constitutions: Military Government Directive", 30 September 1946, pp. 155-157. Also: Appendix C, "Democratization of Germany, A Statement by General Joseph McNarney", 9 July 1946, in Carl J. Friedrich, (ed.) American Experiences in Military Government in World War II, New York: Rinehart & Company, 1948, pp. 415/6.

Among the various transfers of power denazification was the most controversial. The "Law for the Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism", officially implemented on 1 June 1946, shifted responsibility for denazification to German administrators. Introduced with the approval of the American military government as early as 5 March 1946 by the minister presidents of the three Lander inside the American zone, the law expressed the intent to liberate Germany from "...National Socialism and Militarism...." To achieve this goal, "all those who have actively supported the National Socialist tyranny, or are guilty of having selfishly exploited the conditions thus created, shall be excluded from influence in public, economic and cultural life and shall be bound to make reparations."²

Another contentious issue in Germany after 1945 were the constitutions for the Lander of the American zone. Early in February, 1946, the three minister presidents of the American zone (Hesse, Bavaria and Wurttemberg-Baden) were ordered to establish individual constitutional commissions. Their task was to draft constitutions for their respective Lander. These drafts were to be completed no later than 15 September 1946, and once granted Military Government approval, a referendum on these new constitutions was to be held 3 November 1946.

The delegation of policy planning authority to Germans had the obvious advantage of reducing personnel requirements at OMGUS. Other economic concerns also had a significant role to play. Relying heavily on imports from other zones, the American zone itself had become a great financial burden. The goal, therefore, was to bring about as quickly as possible the economic unification of Germany. Clay's vision was to create a politically federal Germany, united by strong economic ties. Lander constitutions, as part of the American democratization program were moves in that direction.³

². Occupation of Germany. Policy and Progress 1945-1946, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947, (Dept. of State Publication No. 2783.), Appendix D, "Denazification", p. 119.

³. Barbara Falt, "In einer Atmosphäre von Freiheit" -- die Rolle der Amerikaner bei der Verfassungsgebung in den Ländern der US-Zone 1946", in Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 33, No. 3, July, 1985, pp. 428/9. See also: John Gimbel, "Byrnes' Stuttgarter Rede und die Amerikanische Nachkriegspolitik in Deutschland", in Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1972, pp. 41-43.

Growing international tensions thus supposedly had little influence on the American government's decision to begin reconstruction within their own zone. International factors therefore played strictly a secondary role to financial and economic ones in the American decision making process for Germany. American officials relegated to the background such issues as the escalating East-West conflict and French obtrusive intransigence when it came to settling the future of a central German government. But it could be argued, to the contrary, that American preparedness to exclude, if necessary, the French and Soviet governments signalled a new trend in U.S. foreign policy. By imposing a new government structure within their own zone, American officials indicated that they considered a united Allied policy for Germany in the short term improbable.

The French government presented an obvious obstacle to the smooth implementation of American policies. Yet in 1946, American officials rarely pressured the French government to adopt American policy. Wolfgang Krieger attributes this patience vis-a-vis the French government partly to the latter's instability. The French bourgeois forces discredited since its compromise with the German occupation found the Soviet backed communists a serious challenge. If the French government appeared intransigent on a fusion of the three Western occupation zones, moderate forces in the French government such as Leon Blum and Georges Bidault assured American officials that this stance was designed primarily to satisfy a hostile domestic opposition. Krieger asserts that the American government, keeping its designs for Western Europe in mind, considered French political and economic revival more important even than Germany's.⁴ American officials, therefore, thought

⁴. Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay..., p. 144. (Both the Soviet and American governments tried to influence the French election of 2 June 1946. Although suffering terribly from a lack of food, the Soviet Union donated wheat to the French. The United States government 45 days before election day extended a billion dollar credit to the French government.) Hans-Peter Schwarz argues similarly but thinks there also existed divisions within the American government and among policy analysts whereby one side favoured a German solution, while the other felt France, above all, merited most attention. The former view was supposedly represented by Clay, James Forrestal and Herbert Hoover. The latter was endorsed by John F. Dulles, Sumner Welles, and Walter Lippman et al. But both sides agreed that only a Western European alliance could solve the remaining problems. see: Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik, pp. 86/7.

it was advisable to avoid anything that could have weakened forces inside France friendly to the United States.⁵

The French government's obstructive influence on German political party systems was also never nearly as threatening to American designs as it appeared on the surface. The French government was skeptical of all political parties, because they represented a centralizing force. A strong central German government was understandably opposed by French statesmen. In general, however, the French government did not interfere outright in party development, even though Kurt Schumacher's nationalistic rhetoric clearly incurred its wrath. The French government found the Christian Democratic Union "more trustworthy and deserving of support than its major rival, the S.P.D.." French leaders presumably saw Kurt Schumacher as the "traditional arrogant Prussian nationalist, consumed by hatred and contempt for the hereditary foe (Erbfeind)." This view, with some modifications, was shared by most French leaders, including French Socialists. Schumacher was never recognized by French authorities as the SPD's official leader. Barred from political activity inside the French zone until 1947, Schumacher had to conduct most business in that zone through other party members such as Carlo Schmid and Erwin Schoettle.⁶

The true threat to American interests as far as political parties were concerned emanated from the Soviet government. In the first half of 1946, it had become apparent that the Soviet government was determined to make the SED sole representative of Germany's left. Nowhere was this aim more glaringly obvious than in Berlin, the only place in Germany where a real semblance of Allied joint occupation was maintained. Berlin soon became the SPD's ground for testing its resolve to resist further Soviet encroachment. To be successful, American support was required. American officials, on the other

⁵. Wolfgang Krieger, General Lucius D. Clay..., pp. 143-145.

⁶. Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher..., pp. 173-176. (According to Edinger, Schumacher may have benefitted from French antagonism. Their resentment made him appear even more so as the "principal defender" of German interests. see: p. 174.)

hand, watched with bated breath as Communists and Social Democrats engaged one another in a struggle for political survival.⁷

American officials had not given up fears that communism could eventually become a major political force throughout Germany.⁸ Under these circumstances, a merger in Berlin between SPD and Communists was clearly not the favoured choice. But American officials rarely intervened in the process whereby the SPD succeeded in resoundingly defeating the most dramatic of Communist takeover bids attempted in post-war Germany. If American officials learned from this experience, it was to appreciate more fully the rift between German Social Democrats and Communists that had existed since 1932. American perceptions of the SPD were still largely determined by the latter's usefulness in the American efforts to contain the spread of Soviet-backed communism into the Western zones of occupation. Besides a keen interest for the SPD's anti-communism, in 1946, American policy planners showed little concern over SPD's political agenda for a new Germany. American officials admittedly began to examine some of the finer details of the SPD's political program throughout most of 1946. But with the shape and nature of a future Germany largely undecided, there was no need for American officials to pay much attention to these finer details. It was therefore not until 1947 when the discussions for the creation of a West German central government began in earnest that American officials took more seriously the possible implications of the Social Democratic model for Germany.

In 1946, the contest between Communists and Social Democrats was of greater interest to American observers than any other aspect of Social Democratic

⁷. One OMGUS report, prepared in May 1946 relates a event during which Soviet Marshall Zhukow, in conversation with a SPD party leader, expressed the "wish" for a KPD/SPD merger. The report does not confirm the meeting, but notes that the SPD's central committee began changing its stance in favour of a merging shortly thereafter. See: Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, Germany 1945-1949, Internal Files, Part I, Political, Governmental and National Defense Affairs, (henceforth: CF, Int.Fil, Part I), "The KPD-SPD Merger in Berlin and the Soviet Zone", (Special Report of the Military Governor, US Zone) 15 May 1946, p.5.

⁸. See: FRUS, 1947, Vol. II, Council of Foreign Ministers, February-December, 1947, pp. 848-903. (On these pages involving joint occupation of Berlin, Murphy writing to the Secretary of State repeatedly returns to problems related to combined efforts by the Soviet government and the SED to control the political process in the city to the detriment of the democratic parties. Particularly affected was the SPD.)

activity. If there had been any lingering doubts among American officials about the SPD's credibility, the unequivocally anti-communist speech Kurt Schumacher gave at a party conference on 4 January 1946 in the British zone dispelled them altogether. In the context of denouncing Soviet attempts in their zone of occupation to unite all parties, Schumacher declared:

Amongst the Social Democratic membership [in the Soviet zone] the firm conviction persists that the Communist party is superfluous. Together with the Nazi Dictatorship the ideas and reality of any dictatorship have been obliterated. The Communist party therefore no longer has a social and political basis within the German party system.

In Berlin, the only step, Schumacher declared, was to resist Soviet pressures to amalgamate all parties.⁹

1946 Berlin represented a kind of microcosm of East-West tensions, a testing ground whereby both sides engaged one another in challenges designed to measure the other's resolve. Lucius D. Clay states that:

The wide divergence between Western democracy and its emphasis on the rights of the individual and on human freedoms, and Soviet collectivism, which suborns the freedom and rights of the individual to the needs of the state, was becoming more evident with each meeting. [of the Control Council]¹⁰

Clay recalls many incidents in early 1946 which revealed the "hidden tensions" that existed between Soviet and American forces in Berlin. Among the first such incidents was the disappearance of three municipal judges behind the Iron Curtain. Soviet officials later defended the abduction upon the grounds that the judges' had failed to render decisions "in accord with the expressed views of the German Communist leaders." The affair's most exasperating feature was that two of the judges had been arrested in their homes in the Western sector. According to Clay, this was only the beginning of many such Soviet attempts to intimidate Germans opposed to Communism.¹¹

⁹. Kurt Schumacher, "Demokratie und Sozialismus zwischen Osten und Westen", 4 January 1946, in Turmwächter der Demokratie--Ein Lebensbild--Reden und Schriften Vol. II, Arno Scholz, Walter G. Oschilewski, (eds.), Berlin: Arani-Verlags GMBH, 1953, pp. 52/3. (henceforth cited as: Reden und Schriften)

¹⁰. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, p. 133.

¹¹. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, p. 134. (Donald Heath, Charge in the Office of Political Adviser for Germany (Robert Murphy stated that two judges and one court officials had disappeared, and not three judges as Clay has suggested. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Heath to Sec. of State, 1 March 1946, p. 707.)

Few other efforts were as dramatic or significant as Soviet attempts to destroy through amalgamation of all parties in the Soviet zone the independence of the SPD. Procedures for such amalgamation officially began on 10 January 1946 when the central committee of the block of "anti-fascist-democratic forces" announced that:

Unity and cooperation are the most powerful motor for the reconstruction of our economy and the development of democracy. They will also be the strongest guarantee for the cleansing of factories and administrations against all reactionary and fascist elements. They will be the best safeguard against the recurrence of imperialist elements.¹²

This call for unity of all German political parties under the guise of anti-fascism was really the beginning of the move to eliminate opposition in the Soviet zone. Fascism was so broadly defined here that it could be applied to encompass anyone resisting Soviet efforts including the Berlin SPD who successfully defended its political independence against considerable external pressures.

The SPD leadership in the Soviet zone had officially endorsed this declaration. But Ambassador Robert Murphy expressed some doubts as early as 9 January 1946 that SPD leaders in the Soviet zone had agreed to this and to a similar joint declaration in late December 1945 for any other reason than to gain time. Murphy also knew that Western SPD leaders such as Kurt Schumacher had already condemned all proposed mergers. He concluded, suggesting that "the battle for merger has only just begun" and that the Soviet government would increase pressure to bring about complete unity of all parties.¹³

Murphy's man in Munich, Parker W. Buhrman, described similar attempts in that city by local Communist leader Bruno Goldhammer to unite both parties. Assisted by the SPD secretary, Goldhammer sent a statement to the Bavarian Military Government expressing both parties' intent to form a "bloc for common action". But as Buhrman noted, the leader of the Bavarian SPD Wilhelm Hoegner

¹². Dokumente aus den Jahren 1945-1949 -- Um ein Antifaschistisch-demokratisches Deutschland (Dok (GDR)), "Appell des Hauptausschusses des Blocks der anti-faschistisch-demokratischen Parteien zum festen Zusammenschluss aller antifaschistischen Kräfte gegen reaktionäre und separatistische Umtriebe", 10 January 1946, p. 229.)

¹³. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers (?), Murphy to Secretary of State [James F. Byrnes], 9 January 1946, pp. 701/2.

moved quickly to disassociate himself and other leaders from this statement.¹⁴ Merger activities such as these began elsewhere in the Western zones. But Western military governments stopped such activity in their own zones. American officials, for example, countered by not granting a party license to the Socialist Unity Party (SED). This refusal clearly hampered the latter's ability to organize effectively in the Western zones. On its own, the legal Communist party was too weak to become the genuine national voice of Germany's left.

In late February and early March 1946, tensions began to escalate as the Berlin SPD prepared for the 31 March referendum, intended to give every party member a vote for or against merger with the Communist party. A weekly intelligence summary issued by OMGUS on 2 March 1946 reveals that American military officials believed that many SPD rank and file members were more "pro-unity" than their Western leaders such as Kurt Schumacher and Erich Ollenhauer. The report suggested that the Berlin SPD tended to be more left-wing and more outspokenly Marxist than its Western counterparts in the British and American zones.¹⁵ Winston Churchill's speech in Fulton, Missouri on 5 March 1946 demonstrated how seriously Western Allies took the ongoing struggle in Berlin. Increasingly anxious about Soviet encroachments in Europe, Churchill warned among other things that "an attempt is being made by the Russians in Berlin to build up a quasi-Communist party in their zone of occupied Germany by showing special favours to groups of Left-wing German leaders."¹⁶

Kurt Schumacher himself knew that the anti-merger forces inside the SPD were in a precarious position. Victory was not a certainty. With American

¹⁴. CF, Int.Fil, Part I, Parker W. Buhrman, Office of Political Adviser, Munich to Robert D. Murphy, 9 January 1946. (Hoegner claimed to have already known Goldhammer during his Zurich days as a relentless Stalinist. see: Wilhelm Hoegner, Der Schwierige Aussenseiter, p. 203.

¹⁵. CF, Int.Fil, Part I, OMGUS Intelligence Summary, Week ending 2 March 1946, p. 3.

¹⁶. "Soviet Influence in Europe: Extract from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, U.S.A., March 5, 1946", in Selected Documents on Germany and the Question of Berlin 1944-1961, (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1961, p. 64.

permission, he therefore flew to Berlin on 19 February 1946 to organize resistance against the merger. Even his political rivals concede that Schumacher's ultimately successful initiative was his very finest hour. So impressed were East German Communists that for eight years after the foundation of the SED, Soviet agents would still conduct extensive searches for so called "Schumacher agents" inside East Germany. Many SPD members vanished; some died in Soviet prison camps. In 1947, Schumacher himself became the first German politician barred from entering the Soviet sector. He had quite evidently earned the respect of the Soviet government. But, in 1947, even Christian Democratic party leader Konrad Adenauer had to concede that in preserving the SPD's independence in Berlin, Schumacher's contribution was crucial.

We must acknowledge that Dr. Schumacher and other leaders in the SPD stood out in this struggle. The uninhibited activity of the SPD in the Soviet zone represents..., purely and simply, the question of democracy in Germany.¹⁷

James F. Byrnes wrote to Robert Murphy, recommending that US authorities should offer SPD members in Berlin "all feasible protection," particularly after the 1 March 1946 meeting of the Berlin SPD where 2,000 delegates voted in favour of holding a party referendum.¹⁸ In Robert Murphy's judgement, many SPD members were not opposed in principle to unity of the working class parties.¹⁹ Despite the bitter quarrels that had occurred prior to 1933, thirteen painful years together in the underground had helped them forget the past. The real reason why the SPD majority opposed the Communists in 1946, Murphy attributes to "harsh and apparently callous Russian occupation policies during the first stage of the occupation." The close cooperation between Communists and Soviet authorities, he continues, did not help to convince SPD members that the "KPD is either truly democratic or an independent German political party."²⁰

¹⁷. Quoted in: Karl-Heinz Rose, "Kurt Schumacher" in Weert Borner, et al. Demokraten--Hermann Ehlers, Theodor Heuss, Kurt Schumacher, Hannover, F.R. Germany: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1967, p. 27, for Soviet response see: pp. 20/1.

¹⁸. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Byrnes to Robert Murphy, 13 March 1946, p. 709.

¹⁹. See: Footnote No. 62 in Chapter 3 to understand the relevance of the so called "Murphy Reports".

²⁰. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Murphy to Secretary of State, 20 March 1946, p. 710/1.

Official military government policy was to remain neutral where domestic political activity was concerned. But American officials among themselves made it clear that no merger would be permitted unless approved by a majority of party members. Lucius D. Clay announced that this was "equally applicable within the American sector of Berlin. If supported by a majority of ballots of members, it will be sustained."²¹

The SPD stood under another disadvantage in the administrative machinery of Berlin. The Western powers had moved too slowly in reaction to the Soviet government's swift assumption of control of the Berlin government apparatus. When the Western forces arrived in summer 1945, most offices had already been filled by Soviet proteges. Once they begun making the adjustments, American officials appeared more concerned with finding efficient employees prepared to execute any Allied order than with the creation of a healthy party system. Social Democrats were welcome employees, but mostly because they possessed the unique virtue of being anti-communist and anti-Nazi. By late 1946, SPD members controlled more than one third of high municipal offices.²² The prevailing impression SPD members entertained prior to the escalation of Social Democratic and Communist tensions was that American officials favoured the bourgeois parties. Although treated with fairness, the SPD also realized that the Allies were nowhere near as actively engaged on their behalf as the Soviet government was for the Communists. The most disappointing moment occurred, however, over a year later when the Western Allies complied with the Soviet veto of Berlin's recently elected Lord Mayor Social Democrat and staunch anti-Soviet, Ernst Reuter, in October 1947. The American government's ambivalence vis-a-vis Moscow produced indecision where the SPD was concerned. Officially, the American government, was still committed to the war-time alliance. At the same time, the government would not break with the Soviet

²¹. CF, Int.Fil, Part I, Clay made this remark at a Press Conference, 23 March 1946.

²². Michael Faisst, et al., "Die Berliner Sozialdemokratie und die Personalpolitik der Besatzungsmächte 1945/1946", Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1980, pp. 330-333, 341.

Union over as small an issue as the SPD whereabouts in Berlin. In other words, the SPD lost to the near mythical "ideology of Allied unity."²³

In the spring of 1946, American policy on the referendum was to carefully scrutinize voting procedures and, if conducted fairly and democratically, to abide by it.²⁴ The SPD referendum itself held on 31 March 1946 was a major victory for Schumacher's anti-merger group. Of the over 23,000 SPD members who voted in the three Western sectors, 82 percent voted against immediate merger of their party with the Communist party. But over 14,000 also expressed the wish for continued close cooperation between both parties. While 73 percent of eligible SPD members in the Western sector voted, the Soviet sector did not vote at all after the Soviet government had decided almost at the last minute to forbid a referendum in its own zone.

American military government observers concluded that despite a few irregularities "the referendum was carried out along democratic lines." They forecast "an independent SPD to remain in existence on the strength of the voting."²⁵ Robert Murphy's own assessment was less optimistic. He was convinced that despite the referendum results the question was far from settled as the referendum itself was not binding upon the SPD central committee in the Soviet zone. The latter was controlled by pro-mergers such as Otto Grotewohl and Erich Gniffke. Murphy recommended to at least await the results of the upcoming Berlin SPD leadership conventions on 13 and 19 April 1946.²⁶ James F. Byrnes responded reiterating Lucius D. Clay's maxim on political parties that, although his government welcomed the convention, a

²³. Michael Faisst, "Die Berliner Sozialdemokratie...", pp. 344-346.

²⁴. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Robert Murphy to Secretary of State, 29 March 1946, pp. 714/5.

²⁵. OMGUS, Adjutant General's Office, Decimal File 1945-1948, (henceforth: OMGUS, (AGO), "Report on SPD Merger of 31 March", 31 March 1946.

²⁶. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Murphy to Sec. of State, 5 April 1946, pp. 715/6. (Hans-Peter Schwarz has warned against stereotyping men such as Grotewohl, but particularly pro-Soviet Christian Democrats like Otto Nuschke and Josef Dertinger. Above all Germans, they were to some extent enticed by Soviet intimations that their country under Soviet guidance might survive as a single nation. See: Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik, pp. 24/5, 243/4.)

pro-merger decision would be accepted only "if demanded by party members rather than a small group of party leaders."²⁷

As it turned out, the Convention decided in favour of amalgamation. The result was the separation of the West German from the East German SPD. Kurt Schumacher always knew that the reunification of Germany depended upon the Soviet government's consent. But he was also not prepared to accept reunification, if the price was the destruction of democracy and an independent SPD.²⁸ When Soviet authorities granted on 26 April 1946, the SED the official license to organize politically, Schumacher knew he had lost the East. The SPD's survival would henceforth hinge more than ever upon a Western alliance.

Schumacher's preference for the West was partly necessity. He knew that any amalgamation with the Communists would eventually destroy the SPD. During a speech in early April 1946, Schumacher had warned against such dangers.

The Communist Party in the Soviet Zone has become the Party of mere beneficiaries of power politics. They pretend to own a monopoly on any exercise of power.... Those Eastern Social Democrats who hope to find solace in the surrender imposed upon them by thinking that they could make their presence decisively felt in a new "Social Democratic Unity Party" misunderstand the nature of a centrally organized and dictatorially ruled Party. The latter views power even within the Party as the essence of politics. Furthermore, it draws for its survival upon the ruling power in its zone.²⁹

But Schumacher's opposition to the Communists and the Soviet Union involved more than survival and power politics. There was an ideological element, as well. Socialism and democracy were indivisible in Schumacher's mind. Otto Grotewohl and others in Eastern Germany, Schumacher thought, viewed democracy more as a means toward achieving socialism. If socialism was possible otherwise, that option should at least be explored. "To view democracy as a means," Schumacher proclaimed,

is the most putrid perception there is. It represents the very greatest danger to our country. Democracy has to be viewed as the mainspring of German politics, as the all-pervasive political, social and cultural principle before Germany can be reconstructed. Democracy is indeed the last and only chance to allow this country to survive. It is the only

²⁷. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, 9 April 1946, Byrnes to Murphy, p. 716.

²⁸. Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher..., p. 104.

²⁹. Kurt Schumacher, "Kontinentale Demokratie", in Reden und Schriften, p. 421.

way to establish a common language with which to communicate with the great civilized nations of this world.

Social Democracy envisioned a united Germany, but would not endorse a new nationalism whose aggressive and expansive nature might one day again pose a threat to world peace. The goal was to restore Germany as equal among the United States of Europe.³⁰

The first Western SPD conference since the war was held in early May 1946. It gave the SPD a party agenda, the "Buro Dr. Schumacher" had working on since early 1945. The conference confirmed Schumacher's leadership and vision of a future Germany.³¹ Schumacher's aggressive and confident rhetoric at the conference was symptomatic of the party's revival. Social Democrats wanted to convey the message that they were prepared to once again become a major political force in Germany. In a speech, Schumacher reiterated that indivisible SPD trinity of "Socialism, Freedom, and Democracy." Democracy in Germany, he thought, was still very fragile. Too many elements such as Communists drenched in the tradition of Leninism, the monied class [Besitzburger] and the occupation forces were standing in the way of truly democratic development. According to Schumacher, Lenin had expressed his hatred of democracy when he stated that "Democracy is the state." Schumacher's cryptic response was that "Democracy is the state, and the state, that can exist in Europe, is democracy; any other form we dismiss." He questioned thereby the merits in dreaming about the classless society. He saw it as an untested experiment where the outcome was highly uncertain.³²

The error the occupation forces were committing, Schumacher charged, was to surround themselves with German and other advisers whose interests and beliefs were suspect. Their commitment to democracy, Schumacher deemed doubtful. He recommended that the occupation's only German advisers should be party members

³⁰. Kurt Schumacher, "Kontinentale Demokratie", in Reden und Schriften, pp. 419, 423. (Schumacher unwittingly denounces the use of democracy as a means, but then argues very similarly when he suggests that it is Germany's only chance for survival. Democracy thereby emerges as a means to the survival of German nationhood. I suspect Schumacher thought that only a democratic German nation is truly legitimate.)

³¹. 99 percent of the votes cast at the party congress were in favour of Schumacher as the new leader.

³². Kurt Schumacher, "Aufgaben und Ziele der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie", in Reden und Schriften, pp. 79-81.

and German government officials appointed by the military governments. Social Democratic or not, only the parties, a representatives of the popular will, could be relied upon as truly democratic."³³

Schumacher warned against utilizing German capitalists in the reconstruction of Germany. The perception of democracy the monied classes entertained was founded upon convenience. They considered it a political system that could be manipulated and controlled, but just as easily disposed of once it no longer served their purposes. Capitalism had been directly responsible for Hitler's rise to power in 1933. From the moment the war ended, the "Besitzburger", according to Schumacher, had begun longing for a return to "the last twelve years, a time, where the class had not been suspended but suppressed in favour of large ownership."³⁴

Only the SPD provided a truly viable alternative for a future Germany.

We do not want power for its own sake, but we want to see justice given the power it needs.
In this sense I call upon you [the SPD members] to work for the party. Show some political spirit! The Social Democratic Party will become the decisive factor in Germany or Germany will be nothing and Europe will become a breeding ground for unrest and decay."³⁵

The Social Democratic guidelines of 11 May 1946 agreed upon at the conference echoed Schumacher's thought. Under the party's leadership, the democratic forces in Germany were to be summoned to make possible a complete transformation that would safeguard the German people's economic and social living conditions, while protecting freedom and peace.

This program called among things for the socialization of large corporations.³⁶ The transfer into public ownership of mining industries and steel production was to be undertaken immediately. Together with the whole banking system, these industries would be subjected to socialist planning. In

³³. Kurt Schumacher, "Aufgaben und Ziele der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie", pp. 81.

³⁴. Kurt Schumacher, "Aufgaben und Ziele...", p. 101.

³⁵. Kurt Schumacher, "Aufgaben und Ziele...", p. 101. (These concluding remarks read like a cry to rally the crowds attending the party conference. The rest of the speech was otherwise neither as arrogant nor as provocative.)

³⁶. Nationalization would appear an adequate synonym for socialization. But socialization will be used here, because it is the term used both by American officials in the postwar era and by the majority of historians.

other words, planned economies would supersede free trade. Land reform implied redistribution of large estates. These would be divided among the smaller peasants. It was hoped thereby to restore a measure of social justice in the rural communities, but also to find space for the many refugees arriving from the East. The party's economic policy aimed for the "economic liberation of the human personality."

That is why socialism is for it [the SPD] the program of workers, clerks, civil servants, the academic professions and the middle classes [Mittelstand], the peasants and all human beings in general who live of the fruit of their own labor and not by means of capitalist exploitation.³⁷

The statement was indicative of the party's ambition to broaden its appeal. It was the beginning of a long process to reach all sectors of German society. The party hoped to shed its image of being a purely working class party and to emerge as a people's party. Only then, it was thought the party would be able to form the next German government.

However, the constituent assemblies elections held on 30 June 1946 in the three American occupied Lander confirmed the Christian Democrats as the strongest party, closely followed by the SPD. The CDU won decisively in Bavaria, obtaining 58 percent compared to the SPD's 29 percent of the popular vote. Bavaria was the only Land where the CDU/CSU coalition won the absolute majority. Wurttemberg-Baden gave the CDU/CSU 41 percent, while the SPD had to settle for slightly more than 32 percent. Greater Hesse was the only Land with a SPD majority. Over 44 percent voted SPD, but the CDU still garnered a respectable 39 percent of the popular vote. Of the 370 seats available in all three constituent assemblies, the CDU/CSU coalition won 184. Given the proportional voting, the coalition, therefore, enjoyed the support of slightly more than 49 percent of the population in the American zone. The SPD came a distant second with 35 percent of the popular vote. The Communist party (KPD) fell far behind with only 25 seats or 6.4 percent of the popular vote. But having surpassed the five percent hurdle required to sit in the assemblies,

³⁷. Dokumente zur Parteipolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland seit 1945 Vol. III -- Part 2 Programmatik der Deutschen Parteien, Ossip Kurt Flechtheim, (ed.), "Politische Leitsätze vom Mai 1946", Berlin: Dokumenten-Verlag Dr. Herbert Wendler, 1963, pp. 18/9.

the KPD continued to be a political force that could not be entirely discounted.³⁸

Had Schumacher's initial efforts to transform his party into a mass movement misfired? The apparently poor showing compared to the CDU/CSU is misleading. Bavaria had always been a conservative stronghold. In Wurttemberg-Baden, the SPD had held sway only in the larger cities such as Stuttgart, Schumacher's constituency before 1933. As subsequent election results in Berlin, the Soviet and British zones were to demonstrate, the more industrialized Lander, with the notable exception of North Rhine-Westphalia, tended to the SPD. The SPD, furthermore, made its strongest showing since the First World War. In May 1928, at the height of its popularity during the Weimar Republic, its share of the popular vote was a mere 30 percent nation-wide. In 1946, the party gained 35 percent in Wurttemberg-Baden, a region of Germany hitherto not overly susceptible to Social Democratic ideas. The result, therefore, could hardly be interpreted as a political defeat. The KPD, on the other hand, which as late as 1932 had enjoyed 14.5 percent of the popular support in Wurttemberg-Baden was the preferred choice of only ten percent of this Land's eligible voters in 1946.³⁹ In summary, it seemed the SPD was well on its way to becoming the largest party in Germany.

American officials welcomed the elections results because they represented a victory for the moderate or pro-American political forces. According to Edward N. Petersen, Lucius D. Clay felt sufficiently encouraged to grant Germans greater independence in drafting their own state constitutions. On 23 August 1946, he wrote his more skeptical superiors at the War Department in Washington that:

These constitutions must go to the German people as a free creation of their elected representatives and with the least possible taint of military government dictation. We have every confidence that the constitutions thus prepared will meet the requirements of democracy and

³⁸. For parties to sit in the assemblies, most Lander required at least a five percent of the popular vote. Bavaria, initially, even demanded a ten percent share. The idea was to prevent too many political fringes from disrupting, if not paralyzing, the legislative decision making process. Memories of Weimar were still vivid in the minds of most politicians.

³⁹. statistics taken from: Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher, pp. 41, 333. and: Conrad F. Latour and Thilo Vogelsang, Okkupation und Wiederaufbau, p 116.

will be recognized by the German people as the creation of their own representatives.⁴⁰

Clay was confident that even when acting without American supervision, Germans could produce constitutions acceptable to the American government.

But even if he was prepared to grant German officials greater administrative leeway, Clay and other American officials were not entirely prepared to abandon control altogether. The Minister-Presidents and their ministers were selected by the American Military Government. These provisional governments appointed by the occupation forces enjoyed the latter's support. The various elected constituent assemblies did not in 1946 possess legislative powers. Their principal role was to draft a constitution, devise election laws and hold elections. The Minister-Presidents were given advisory powers, although recognized by the Military Government as the official representatives of the German people. This implied direct access to Lucius D. Clay, a privilege formally denied to political party leaders. In the absence of both a body vested with full legislative powers and a functioning judiciary the German executive, or minister presidents became the strongest political force until the German Federal Republic was founded in 1949.

Clay's preference for the minister presidents reflected his prevailing uneasiness about the centralizing tendencies of national political parties. He favored a decentralized government structure for Germany. His southern upbringing may have played a role. But whether his upbringing in Marietta, Georgia, influenced Clay's outlook on politics is largely irrelevant at this point. His promotion of federalism and decentralization corresponded directly to American policy declarations expressed at least since 1945. The drafting of individual land constitutions was perfectly in accordance with this maxim. Harold Zink argues that Clay initiated the process of drafting constitutions partly also because he thought it to be a good "preparation for German democracy, irrespective of how little time allowed or how superficial the work might be."⁴¹

⁴⁰. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, No. 153, Constitutions for Lander in U.S. Zone, From Clay to War Department, 23 August 1946, pp. 260/1.

⁴¹. Harold Zink, The United States in Germany....., p. 179.

The successful ratification of the land constitutions presented a setback for Kurt Schumacher's vision of a centralized German government. Schumacher found equally unsettling the American decision to barr officials of political parties from the official drafting process unless they held office in the provisional governments as well. Schumacher's direct influence was thus negligible. Particularly sobering to Schumacher and his circle of supporters, Theo Pirker argues, was that the Minister-Presidents and their cabinet ministers, even where themselves Social Democrats, frequently ignored orders or advice from the central party headquarters.⁴² Federalism was a political structure incompatible with Schumacher's image of a socialist Germany. But Schumacher was not so naive as to ignore the difficulties he might encounter in realizing a centralized German government. As early as May 1946, he announced that "I do not know if it will be possible to create central agencies in Germany. Currently it appears as if one cannot succeed. But in that case one has to take the initiative in the zones, Lander and provinces."⁴³

Schumacher acknowledged the need for immediate zonal administrative agencies. He emphasized that their mandate should be provisional and that they be disbanded as soon as the occupation zones were dissolved and German unity restored. Lucius D. Clay and Schumacher would likely have agreed for the sake of expediency that Lander administrations were justified. As long as the Allies could not agree on a single political solution for Germany, regional government agencies were necessary. But Clay, who envisaged a federal system, for Germany probably viewed the constitutions as more permanent solutions than Schumacher would have preferred. These Lander constitutions could be considered, Schumacher argued constantly, only as replacements to fill the vacuum left by the fall of the German Reich until a German central government would once again assume full responsibilities.⁴⁴

⁴². Theo Pirker, Die SPD nach Hitler, pp. 60/61.

⁴³. quoted in Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik..., p. 545.

⁴⁴. For a more complete elaboration of Schumacher's views on this issue see: Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik..., p. 548.

American officials were generally tolerant of the new Lander's constitutional drafts. Exceptions occurred wherever they felt that specific provisions presented a move toward a Germany central government. Several OMGUS reports believed that the Lander constitutions should guarantee that civil servants not simultaneously become member of the legislatures or engage actively in party politics. The promotion of civil servants based on performance was also to be written into the constitutions. But Director of the Civil Administration Division Henry Parkman, the mastermind behind several proposed constitutional revisions, was repeatedly rebuffed by his Lucius D. Clay who countered at one point that he "would never agree that a civil servant could not be a member of a party, that is a denial of what I hope is a constitutional right and is certainly the duty of every good citizen where there is a party government."⁴⁵

Clay's unequivocal defense of individual liberties, however, did not extend to all issues of the constitutional debate. His strong reservations to Article 41 of the Hessian constitution is a matter of record. Clay's motives are still subject to debate. It has been argued that Clay opposed this article on socialization as part of the American plan to restore traditional capitalist forces in Germany. The concept of public ownership as envisaged by Article 41 was thus simply incompatible with American interests.⁴⁶ A related argument is that American officials opposed any centrally planned economies that could have given a boost to the socialists. Some authors have suggested that in 1947, Clay denied the Minister-President any influence on economic policy in Bizonia because he could not reconcile himself to letting a SPD dominated council of Minister-Presidents (5 of 8) participate in the decision making process. West German historians Ute Schmidt and Tilman Fichter, for example, state that:

Curtailment of Social Democracy and Socialism in Germany was so integral a part of the United States German policy that Clay refused even to define in detail the relationship between Bizonia and the individual Lander.⁴⁷

⁴⁵. The role of civil servants is discussed by Barbara Fait, "In einer Atmosphäre von Freiheit", pp. 438/9, the quote is on p. 439.

⁴⁶. Rolf Badstubner, Restauration in Westdeutschland..., p. 234/5.

⁴⁷. Ute Schmidt and Tilman Fichter, Der Erzwungene Kapitalismus..., pp. 73/4.

However, Clay's papers reveal little evidence to support the thesis that American officials conspired to undermine German social democratic initiatives. Clay and the War Department, admittedly, did not wish to see socialization implemented even if Article 41 was limited to the transfer into public ownership of mining, steel and iron, and energy industries. But Clay and his OMGUS staff sincerely believed that Germans supported socialist or even communist measures such as socialization in late 1946 only because of massive unemployment and starvation. Otherwise, he thought it improbable that they would have favored such measures. He therefore recommended to postpone socialization until Germans were capable of more rational decision making.⁴⁸ The assumption that most American officials agreed to oppose socialist measures is further challenged by what several recent historians have demonstrated quite successfully; namely that several State Department officials endorsed socialization as an appropriate policy for Germany, given its wide-spread popularity and economic traditions peculiar to Germany. Article 41 was a policy endorsed by the vast majority of political parties, both left and right.⁴⁹

The constitutions, finally, were passed by OMGUS in late October, 1946. The referenda which transpired 24 November and 1 December 1946, provided a ringing endorsement for the constitutions. Of those eligible voters who participated in the referendum two thirds cast their vote in favour of future socialization as stipulated by Article 41.⁵⁰ Article 41, during a separate referendum held in Greater Hesse received over 62 percent of the vote.⁵¹

⁴⁸. Dorte Winkler, "Die Amerikanische Sozialisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1945-1948", pp. 94-96.

⁴⁹. Barbara Fait, "In einer Atmosphäre von Freiheit", p. 447. But Fait also cautions that Americans were often successful when one party stood alone on a particular issue. No party wanted to oppose OMGUS alone, but particularly not on as important an issue as the constitutions. pp. 447/8.)

⁵⁰. 70 percent of eligible voters participated in the referendum.

⁵¹. The Referenda on the constitution occurred together with elections to the new Landtage, or provincial legislatures. The results tended to confirm those of 30 June 1946. In other words, no significant changes had occurred since that date.

Another issue which attracted American attention through much of fall 1946 were the ongoing election campaigns in the other zones. Only slightly less important were the elections held in September and October 1946 in the British zone. The elections victories there marked the arrival of the SPD as the most popular party in the Western zones, forcing American officials to focus ever more closely on Kurt Schumacher's SPD. In the rural and municipal elections in the British zone, the SPD won in Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, and Hamburg conceding only but surprisingly the highly industrialized North Rhine-Westphalia to the CDU.⁵² Together with Bremen and Greater Hesse, the SPD would thus be able to control five of eight Lander governments in the Anglo-American occupation zones. The prospects of an independent-minded SPD leadership administering Germany, as will be seen later, were viewed with skepticism not only by American but British officials as well.

The election campaigning in the Soviet zone and the hotly anticipated city election in Berlin represented little new. The Soviet Military Government continued to threaten or harass candidates not belonging to the SED. A military government report observed in May 1946 that the Soviet government, although not inhibiting SPD activities, frequently extended privileges to the SED while denying them to others. The SED would receive large quantities of papers and obtain newspapers licenses more readily than other parties. The report also picked up persistent rumors that SPD members had been not only arrested but on rare occasions had also been shot.⁵³ More common was harassment of individual candidates. Early in August 1946, the chairman of the CDU in the Soviet Sector, Jakob Kaiser, was summoned to the office of the Soviet Political Liaison Officer Colonel Tulpanoff. There Kaiser found his party accused of having become the heaven for reactionaries and instrument for clerical influence. Kaiser, Robert Murphy reports, also complained that

⁵². Encompassing such SPD strongholds as the densely populated Ruhr area, North-Rhine Westphalia was expected to vote social democratic. It did not. This failure is perhaps partly explained by a conservative and catholic Rhineland voting CDU. Konrad Adenauer's popular appeal may also have helped tip the balance.

⁵³. CF, Int.Fil, Part I, "The KPD-SPD Merger in Berlin and the Soviet Zone", (Special Report of the Military Governor, US Zone) 15 May 1946, pp. 2, 4)

obstacles placed in his party's path had become so serious as to render effective campaigning impossible.⁵⁴

Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson concurred that the situation in the Soviet zone had become sufficiently threatening to non-Communist parties to warrant American interference. He stated that "US influence should be exerted in every feasible way to assure conditions which will permit non-Communist parties to maintain their organization, carry on political activity, and take part in forthcoming elections with largest measure of freedom possible under circumstances." American displeasure about conditions, he suggested, should at least be brought to the attention of Soviet authorities.⁵⁵ Lucius D. Clay at OMGUS did not agree.

While acknowledging the difficulties non-Communist parties were encountering, Clay questioned the American government's ability to be of effective assistance to these parties. Soviet authorities within their own zones could furnish their protegee, the SED, with the means to run election campaigns more easily than the Western allies could ever hope to do as outsiders. Clay also questioned the merit of distributing greater aid to the CDU and SPD parties. He thought it violated American "announced principles of neutrality..." Such action "would be misunderstood and would prove a step backward in teaching democracy. Moreover, it would weaken the strength of our protests against corresponding Soviet Action and we are not in a position to compete on equal terms in Berlin." Protection, in his estimate, would also have proven difficult to provide. Clay felt that there existed within the American zone a healthy political atmosphere where the Communist party had been unable to gain much political ground. Conscious of his country's role as foreign occupation power, he thought too blatant an endorsement by the American government for CDU and SPD could undermine whatever progress had been made. Instead, Clay counselled patience and avoidance of impulsive actions. He promised, in

⁵⁴. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Murphy to Secretary of State, 3 August 1946, pp. 729/30.

⁵⁵. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, Council of Foreign Ministers, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Murphy, 16 August 1946, p. 732/3.

conclusion, to assure that election procedures would be watched to see if they were conducted in a fair manner.⁵⁶

The results of the Soviet zone municipal elections (Gemeinde and Kreiswahlen) held in early September 1946 were a success for Soviet backed SED. In Saxony, the SED obtained over 56 percent of the total vote, compared to 22.1 and 21.8 percent for the Liberal Democrats and CDU respectively. CAD Director Henry Parkman observed that the SED's strong performance demonstrated essentially two things. For one, it showed the Soviet government's ability to exert pressure on the population. Secondly, Parkman expressed surprise about the extent to which resistance was still possible. He stressed the SED's ability to control rural districts where it was easier to refuse other parties the opportunity of submitting their own candidate lists. In larger cities, however, where control was still difficult, the combined total of the CDU or Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) frequently exceeded that of the SED. In Erfurt where more than 104,000 valid votes were cast, the SED could muster only 35,000 votes against 25,000 for the CDU and an astonishing 44,000 for the LDP. In Jena the SED obtained only 17,000 votes against 9,000 and 20,000 for the CDU and LDP respectively. While these election triumphs seem to have been the rule in larger cities, both parties were rarely able to repeat these performances in rural communities.⁵⁷

Less easy to manipulate were the Berlin municipal election results. On 20 October 1946, the SPD received almost 48 percent of the vote, the CDU 22 percent, and the SED slightly less than 20 percent. Not surprisingly, the SPD fared poorest in the Soviet sector, winning only 44 percent of the vote versus 30 percent for the SED. A Military Government observer wrote that the vote could not be understood as pro-SPD, since Berlin had never been a particular stronghold of the latter. Instead, it was the repudiation of the Russian

⁵⁶. OMGUS, AGO, Clay to [the] Adjutant General at the War Department (AGWAR) for WDSCA [?], 20 August 1946.

⁵⁷. OMGUS, AGO, "Analysis of Preliminary Gemeinde Elections Results in Soviet, British and French Zones", (Report prepared for Deputy Military Governor Lucius D. Clay by Civil Administration Division), Henry Parkman to Clay, 19 September 1946.

occupation forces who had taken the city and the hatred the subsequent "destruction, looting and raping" by Russian soldiers had engendered."⁵⁸

The SED election defeat in Berlin was clearly an embarrassment for the Soviet government. But Soviet authorities, nevertheless, continued to harass non-Communist party officials throughout 1947. State Department files indicate that American officials, in turn, continued to be preoccupied where Soviet excesses against SPD members were concerned. This preliminary round of the future East-West conflict finally climaxed when, courtesy of a Soviet veto, one of American favorites Social Democrat Ernst Reuter was denied the right to assume his post as Berlin's Lord Mayor throughout the latter half of 1947."⁵⁹

More heavily on the minds of Soviet leaders than a loss of face to the Berlin SPD, however, was the growing trend in the Western zones to seek the economic fusion of their zones. The British and American governments had been preparing for economic fusion since September 1946. On 2 December 1946, the two countries signed an agreement whereby the two zones were to be governed as a single economic unit. The two governments also committed themselves to joint economic planning, sharing of financial responsibilities and the creation of German administrative agencies. The fusion was to take effect on 1 January 1947.

The SPD's role in American policy making had been to contribute to Germany's political revival. The political expertise of the party's leadership proved invaluable in the administration of Germany as well. But most important was its potential to act as counter-force to Communist influence in Germany. The

⁵⁸. OMGUS, AGO, "Special Report of Special Administration Branch--Berlin Elections", 28 October 1946, pp. 7-9. (Glaser is at times refreshingly speculative about future political prospects. At times absurdly so when he speculates what the result may have been, if the SPD had campaigned more strongly and the SED with less obvious Soviet backing. He also has visions of a CDU/SPD coalition. He is able to back up neither. His problems are compounded by rather liberal use of the English language and questionable editing. e.g.: "the [city's] hatred engendered by the destruction, looting and raping OF [my emphasis] Russian soldiers."

⁵⁹. see: OSS, Field Report, "Former Burgomeister of Magdeburg seeks return to Germany", 4 May 1945. (The report describes interviews held between Ernst Reuter and two members of American embassy in Turkey. The OSS official wrote that "Dr. Reuter impressed both Americans as precisely the type of man who should be most helpful to the forces of occupation--especially if American and excluding any area occupied by Soviet troops."

SPD's success in this respect, however, was limited to the Western zones. In these regions where it could campaign with little interference from the occupation forces, the SPD was able to consolidate its position as the most popular of left-wing parties. In the Eastern zone, the Soviet authorities demonstrated quite clearly that they were not prepared to stand by as Social Democratic upstarts tried to destabilize their zone of occupation. The ruthlessly executed amalgamation of the two left-wing parties was evidence thereof.

The SPD, however, succeeded in embarrassing Soviet authorities before world opinion. Social Democrats who resisted the merger first became martyrs and then heroes when elections in Berlin in October 1946 gave the SPD a landslide victory. Kurt Schumacher was suddenly thrust into the limelight of world opinion, making him one of the best known German politician of the post-war era. Observers, both inside and outside of Germany, agreed that this triumph was as much a repudiation of the Soviet occupation as it was a vote of support for the SPD programme. The crushing electoral defeats of the Communist party compared to a strong Social Democratic showing in the Western zones gave further testimony to the lack of popular support Soviet backed communism enjoyed in Germany.

1946 saw the fulfillment of American hopes expressed in 1945 that the SPD could become a counter-force to more radical forces in Germany. 1946 saw the SPD emerge, much to the satisfaction of American policy makers, as the only legitimate representative of the German left-wing movement. But in late 1946, American officials for the first time had to confront individual elements of the Social Democratic programme. Constitutional debates between socialization vs free trade, and centralization vs federalism had produced tensions that could only escalate the closer the creation of a West German state was to becoming a reality. American officials were, somewhat unjustly, disappointed about what they perceived as German political apathy.⁶⁰ But four successive elections within eleven months to return state legislatures and municipal governments possessing no real mandate numbed even the most political of

⁶⁰ By December 1946, the SPD already had 700,000 individual members. This could hardly be the product of widespread political indifference.

German minds. It was only after the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers destroyed whatever remaining illusions about Allied unity in spring 1947 that American officials could proceed with the creation of more permanent German government institutions. When it became evident thus that East-West differences over Germany were irreconcilable, President Truman and his new Secretary of State George Marshall reached the decision that Germany's future should henceforth be planned as if Germany's division had become a certainty.

CH. IV TOWARD THE CREATION OF A WEST GERMAN STATE (SPRING, 1947 - SPRING, 1949)

Throughout 1946 American officials were still debating on what to do about a future Germany. With the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, still unable to agree on the nature of their relationship, neither one would or could make concrete commitments to the reconstruction of a future German state. Agreement appeared to exist that some kind of German state would eventually come into being. The specific nature and shape of such a state, however, remained elusive. For as long as the two world powers refused to commit themselves either to co-existence or to confrontation over Germany any German state had to have, by necessity, an essentially provisional character. Thereafter, from 1947 to early 1949, when the East-West rift emerged as the dominant fixture of international politics, the creation of West and East German states was pursued with enhanced urgency. American officials began to scrutinize in greater detail the individual components that would eventually make up such a West German state.

1946 had basically been an experimental year. In 1946, the goal American officials pursued was to give Germans first-hand experience in democracy.¹ American officials viewed these experiments not only as valuable lessons in democracy for the German people. Experiments such as the elections and the drafting of constitutions were also excellent means of measuring the state of German public opinion. High voter participation and ringing endorsements for pro-Western parties during the 1946 elections could not fail to satisfy Western policy makers. The occupation forces could now at least rely upon the peaceful cooperation of two major democratic institutions, the SPD and CDU, who were now accepted as legitimate contenders for a future German government. The elections and the referenda on the constitutions were interpreted as political victories against the Soviet form of government. The defeats of the

¹. It stands to reason, as some have tried, that the assumption that Germans were politically immature and therefore had to be taught the wisdom of democratic behavior by as distinguished a democratic institution as the American military was understandably not entirely well-received in Germany.

Soviet backed Communist party were unmistakable evidence that Soviet type occupation was unpopular.

Once the Soviet backed German Communist party had been neutralized as a political threat in the Western zones after its dismal showing in successive elections, American officials could turn to examining with much greater interest the political agenda of the democratic parties. Without the Communist party as a significant political factor in the Western zone, the question American officials now increasingly asked themselves was no longer whether these 'moderate' parties could be used against communist encroachment, but whether the parties themselves could become a hindrance to the realization of American policy goals. This preoccupation with party programs coincided with accelerated American efforts to establish some form of a German central government. Before the American government became unequivocally committed to a West German state in 1947, Social Democratic policy for a future Germany was analyzed, but its potential for conflicting with American plans was rarely noted. After 1947, with two divided German nations rapidly approaching, OMGUS and State Department records are replete with references on all aspects of the SPD and its vision of a West German state. It was in the context of the heated debates over the shape and nature of a new West German government that American officials began to question more vigorously than ever most Social Democratic policies, its anti-communism remaining the one notable exception.

While historians disagree at times on the origins and causes of the Cold War, few would deny that 1947 and 1948 were pivotal years, decisively shaping the post-war world. In Expansion and Coexistence, Adam Ulam concludes that Stalin had by 1947 decided that "the scene was to be",

Insofar as world politics is concerned,...., a duel between the United States and the Soviet Union. The pretense of the continuation of the wartime alliance was to dissolve, certainly by 1947. After the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan the two super powers settled down to what might be called competitive coexistence punctuated by sharp crises over Berlin, Korea, and other areas. Their realms of interests, hence of conflict between them, became the whole world.

By 1948, regardless of all previous opposition, the American government had, in fact, accepted Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. The American government

conceded as much by not withholding diplomatic recognition to those East European countries that were, in effect, satellites of the USSR.²

By 1948, the American government had accepted a Europe divided into two camps. It is likely that American officials had begun planning foreign policy very explicitly along these lines as early as 1947. Lucius D. Clay concurs in his memoirs that after the Conference relations seemed to have taken a turn for the worse. He claimed that the meetings of the Allied Control Council for Germany continued but had "lost substance and I, for one, felt we were going through meaningless motions."³ The two top American officials in Germany, Murphy and Clay, at least, claim to have thought at the time that whatever remnants of the wartime alliance had persisted were rapidly disintegrating in 1947.⁴

The enunciation of the Truman doctrine, the European Recovery Programme, and George F. Kennan's famous article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct", published in June 1947, were signals that the American government was increasingly prepared to abandon all pretense of Allied unity. Kennan, who subsequently much deplored alleged misinterpretations of his article, nevertheless, acknowledged the two camps thesis when he recommended "to cease at that point making fatuous unilateral concessions to the Kremlin,"

to do what we could to inspire and support resistance elsewhere to its efforts to expand the area of its dominant political influence, and to wait for the internal weaknesses of Soviet power, combined with frustration in the external field, to moderate Soviet ambitions and behavior.... Stand up to them, I urged, manfully but not aggressively, and give the hand of time a chance to work.⁵

According to Kennan, containment of Soviet aggression--whether or not he envisaged military resistance as well--implied that United States interests

². Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence - Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-73, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, 2nd ed, pp. 409/10.

³. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, p. 154. Also: Robert Murphy, Diplomat among Warriors, p. 307.

⁴. John Gimbel charges that after the Conference it became popular among American officials to blame Soviet rather than French recalcitrance. This approach was preferred because it was likely to receive a response from Washington, although they knew that French intransigence weighed more heavily at the time than the Soviet government's. Clay supposedly thought so as well. See: John Gimbel, The American Occupation of Germany..., pp. 203, 197.

⁵. George F. Kennan, Memoirs - 1925-1950, p. 364.

were better served, if officials were to abandon whatever illusions remained about Allied unity.

In Germany, the East-West conflict appeared more protracted than anywhere else. Adam Ulam suggests that had Germany been of secondary importance, the United States and the Soviet Union might still have been able to reach an agreement. But Germany, he asserts, "was and is the pivot of European politics." Germany also afforded both powers the opportunity to compete in a variety of manners short of military hostilities. Unable to challenge the Soviet government over Poland and Czechoslovakia, the American and British governments could in Germany at least exert pressure by halting, for example, deliveries of much needed industrial equipment from the Western zone to Russia. The Soviet government could reciprocate by harassing the Western powers in Berlin. This psychological warfare in Germany finally reached its zenith with the Berlin blockade the Soviet government imposed in 1948 in a spectacular effort for testing American resolve to resist Soviet encroachments upon the American sphere of influence in Europe. In 1946, however, the Soviet government had limited itself to issuing only relatively mild protests to moves such as the stop on reparations and the fusion of American and British zones. Such caution remained in evidence until after the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in Spring, 1947, when agreement on Germany had become all but impossible.⁶

John Gimbel suggests that American bureaucrats were less concerned with East-West relations than the realization of Europe's economic rehabilitation under the Marshall Plan. It seems more probable, however, that American officials treated the Allied breakdown as if it were a fait accompli in 1947. Even if they had not abandoned hope altogether for a four-power agreement that might still reunify Germany, they, nevertheless, proceeded with nation building. If Germany could not be entirely united, then the next best goal was to aim for the unification of the three Western zones under one central government. The American government, finally, by excluding the Soviet Union effectively

⁶. Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence..., p. 444.

terminated the wartime alliance. Occupation officials, given a clear mandate, henceforth had to pay little heed to Soviet objections.⁷

Directly or indirectly, the reports, memoranda or correspondence examined⁸ were primarily devoted to the fulfillment of this new German policy. American officials were confronted not only with the immensely complex task of building a new Germany, but ideally the latter was also to be transformed into a peaceful neighbor and, perhaps, gradually also into a reliable ally, acceptable to both the United States and its Western European partners. It is here that the roots of friction between the SPD and American officials can be found. The latter began to view with increasing disdain what it perceived to be the party's obstructionist tendencies. Whereas in the past, the SPD had been a useful tool neutralizing the German Communist party's influence, American officials in 1947 and thereafter experienced the party as an obstacle. It could be argued that with the Communist party eliminated as the greatest political danger in the Western zones, American officials could focus their energies on the Social Democratic political agenda. It was at this point that the relationship between the SPD and American officials took a turn for the worse.

According to Lewis J. Edinger, from 1947-on, with the American government and the SPD finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile their vision of a West German state, Kurt Schumacher's opposition to American policies became more open. American officials began to view him as a trouble maker. His sharp criticism of American policies for German economic and political reconstruction and his insistence that Germany's "proper" leadership alone was qualified to decide the future of the West German state were not welcome by

I. Berlin remained the most notable exception. Robert Murphy continued to report on Soviet interference in domestic politics there. Harassment of SPD politicians certainly continued throughout 1947. Berlin offered the Soviet government pretty well the last opportunity to impress American decision makers since the West had written off the Soviet zone.

II. The new assertiveness among American civilian and military strategists vis-a-vis the Soviet Union is perhaps also explained by what American historian Melvyn P. Leffler describes as the "nearly universal agreement that the Soviets, while eager to expand their influence, desired to avoid a military engagement." see: Melvyn P. Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-1948", in American Historical Review, Vol. 89, April, 1984, p. 359.

*. Examined by this author.

American officials. American officials responded by denying that Schumacher was the legitimate spokesperson for his party. Lucius D. Clay met only four times with Schumacher. This presumably was evidence of "exceptionally bad" relations.⁹

Admittedly, the SPD and the American government were ideological adversaries on a variety of issues such as socialization, currency reform, internationalization of the Ruhr industries and on several elements of Germany's quasi-constitution, the Grundgesetz [Basic Law]. But although American officials and Kurt Schumacher clashed primarily over ideological differences, they fought an essentially political battle. Schumacher who in his own words was married to politics from the day he took his seat in the legislature of the Weimar republic challenged the American government wherever possible in the hopes of wresting as many concessions from the American government as possible. American officials frequently resented Schumacher's heavy-handed approach and thus preferred to avoid having to deal directly with Schumacher, something that was often impossible given the major political force Schumacher's SPD had become since 1945. But American resentment of Schumacher's confrontational politics did not imply that the American government was committed at all costs to the frustration of social democratic reforms.

American officials realized that they could not resist downright all forms of socialization of German industries. In the early post-war years, socialization was a very popular concept espoused by a vast majority of Germans including most major German parties. American officials tried to inhibit what they perceived as the worst excesses of German socialization attempts.¹⁰ They had done so during the Lander constitutional debates in 1946.¹¹ Schumacher knew that a West German state was inevitable, but tried

⁹. Lewis J. Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher...*, p. 183.

¹⁰. As shall also be seen, the gradual watering down of socialization from 1947 onward may have been the result of its increasing unpopularity with German voters and politicians at least as much as it was the product of American interference.

¹¹. Americans intervened once more during the constitutional debates for a West German state in early 1949. This topic will be discussed later in this chapter.

strongly to counter the influence of American capitalist and federalist ideas on the new German government. Some American observers identified Schumacher as a political realist and astute tactician, but disagreed with his style and methods. His virulent rhetoric and frequent delaying tactics were resented by American officials, even if they understood his political motives. Theodor Eschenburg states that

...Schumacher's notions were not even popular in England, not to speak of the United States. More even than the State Department did Congress resent his expressly socialist demands. Even General [Lucius D.] Clay could not sympathize with social democratic policies. The centralizing tendencies, in turn being the product of his visions of a planned economy, contradicted America's own federalist principles. But they also failed to harmonize with American security interests regarding Germany.¹²

American fears of German socialism are exaggerated here, but the American government was growing weary of Schumacher's cumbersome political maneuvering. American resentment of Schumacher's obstinacy grew between 1947 and 1948 as the German-American negotiations for a future German state progressed. The American government, in the final analysis, felt more comfortable with the seemingly more cooperative and more explicitly pro-Western coalition of CDU and the liberal FDP that eventually emerged triumphant in the 1949 federal elections.

American officials often realized that the SPD's hostile rhetoric towards the occupation forces were intended above all for public consumption. Numerous private conversations American officials conducted with Schumacher and other Social Democratic leaders in 1947 and 1948 made sufficiently clear that these German politicians entertained few illusions about the state of East-West relations and their implications for German reunification.¹³ Nor did they seriously expect their version of socialism to permeate in undiluted form through every facet of the Federal Republic of Germany. Social Democrats, in other words, were prepared to compromise, especially where intractability promised to harm rather than benefit their own cause. The SPD's subsequent

¹². Theodor Eschenburg, Jahre der Besatzung, 1945-1949, p. 178.

¹³. Robert Murphy had already written on 30 August 1946 that Kurt Schumacher's views could be characterized as "fairly moderate and apparently sincerely held. They are propounded in moderate, reasonable fashion in private conversation, but in a rather excited and demagogical manner in public speeches." see: Central Files (CF), Internal Files, Part I, Murphy to the Secretary of State, 30 August 1946. (the copy of the conversation that Murphy sent was not contained on these microfilms. Subsequent conversations, however, revealed similar American assessments.)

disassociation from Marxist doctrines, incorporated at various party conventions between 1947 and 1948, illustrated its capacity for ideological flexibility.

American officials carefully noted these changes, describing them as an historic turnaround.¹⁴ But even as American officials noted departures from Marxist doctrine, they were not enthusiastic about the prospects of a possible Social Democratic government in the future West Germany. Konrad Adenauer's CDU offered a more attractive alternative. The SPD, however, was a political force that could not be disregarded. There were legitimate worries that the SPD would organize the first West German government in 1949.¹⁵ American officials, in other words, had to work with the SPD, hoping meanwhile for a Christian Democratic victory.

Serious frictions between American officials and the party first developed during the fusion of the American and British zones. Since national party headquarters of both CDU and SPD had been located in the latter zone, American officials only infrequently had contact with the national party leaderships.¹⁶ When bizonal government agencies were established, American officials were compelled to deal more frequently than before with Kurt Schumacher's quarrelsome nature. Robert Murphy and Lucius D. Clay began to suspect early that the SPD and the British Labour government were conspiring against the American administration, given their socialist background and the fact that they frequently agreed in their opposition to the American government. These U.S. officials thought it natural that Labour and the SPD would combine

¹⁴. CF, Int.Fil, Part 1, American Consul General [in Bremen] Maurice W. Altaffer to Sec. of State, 8 September 1947. (American reaction to these changes in ideological outlook by the SPD will be discussed later in reference to the 1948 SPD national party convention and other party meetings, where the party announced its new political agendas.)

¹⁵. The SPD was the largest single party nationwide. The CDU, itself largely an amalgamation of various moderately conservative factions, eventually established a working coalition with the Bavarian Christian Socialist Union (CSU) and the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP). Only then was the CDU to beat out the SPD in the race to form the first federal government in 1949.

¹⁶. These "national" party leaders were, of course, anything but that for as long as the four powers governed their zones separately. The powers did not officially recognize them as such, nor did these leaders find it very easy to extend their influence to all regional party organizations. The Bavarian SPD and Ernst Reuter in Berlin, for example, frequently refused to tow Schumacher's line.

forces. Murphy wrote on 27 April 1947 that bizonal operations confronted the American government with potentially unpleasant options. The British government, he suspected, supported Social Democratic designs for socialization of German enterprise. The question, Murphy asked, was "whether [the] US is prepared contrary to existing policy to approve in western Germany a system of rigid central controls and planning with a similar system of central control of food distribution." He also warned that British plans to push through greater administrative centralization in Germany would likely result in greater financial expenditures for the American government than it should have to endure.¹⁷

Lucius D. Clay expressed his suspicions more bluntly. He too disagreed with British plans for planned economies, which clashed with American beliefs that economic responsibilities should be decentralized. With the exception of scarce materials, "private enterprise and initiative" should have the opportunity to contribute to economic rehabilitation in Germany. Clay proceeded to accuse the British government of conspiracy to help Schumacher's SPD gain control of the recently founded bizonal legislative body, the Wirtschaftsrat, or Economic Council, whose powers were "to direct permissible economic reconstruction," subject as always, of course, to Bipartite Allied approval.¹⁸ In a top secret letter to Major General Daniel Noce, head of the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) at the War Department, Clay confided that

shortly after the Bizonal economic agency was formed, the SPD Party, through very astute maneuvering, succeeded in ousting Doctor [Rudolf] Muelhler (a non-political) figure and replacing him with Doctor [Viktor] Agartz who has announced frequently that his principal mission is socialization. Our intelligence reports have indicated that [Kurt] Schumacher and Agartz received British support in making their political maneuver successful, and that Schumacher, head of SPD in British zone, was promised that Agartz would receive a much greater authority than he has actually been given.¹⁹

Clay wrote another note the same day to Daniel Noce following his discussion with British Military Governor General Sir Brian Robertson. He observed that the

¹⁷. FRUS, 1947, Vol. II, Council of Foreign Ministers, Murphy to the Director of the Office of European Affairs ([H. Freeman] Matthews), 27 April 1947, p. 909.

¹⁸. Taken from: John Gimbel, The American Occupation of Germany..., p. 124. (It is evident here once again that occupation officials hoped to absolve themselves from all administrative responsibilities, while reserving all final decision making powers.)

¹⁹. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol I., From Clay to Noce, 29 April 1947, p. 342.

British proposal to give each Land equal representation in the Wirtschaftsrat would create a substantial SPD majority.²⁰ Schumacher's SPD, he continued, stood not only for "immediate socialization of Germany," but also "the nationalization of industry, a highly centralized controlled economy and in fact a strong central government. His views are, of course, diametrically opposed to our policies of decentralization and federalization." The SPD majority in the Wirtschaftsrat, made possible by this British proposal, would not, he suggested, represent the majority German view point. The two highly populated Lander, North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria, would find themselves, as a result, in a less influential position at the Economic Council than they deserved given their size. Clay concluded with the urgent request that his government resist British and SPD attempts to impose socialism.

What we would like is assurance from our Government that its desire to make economic fusion work does not make it willing to accept a highly centralized economic control, which will be utilized in the hands of the SPD with the support of British military government, to extend the socialist influence. With such assurance, we should be able to insist on compromise solutions here which will, at least protect in some degree our policy of decentralization, and also a reasonable degree of free enterprise and initiative.²¹

Daniel Noce replied two days later on 1 May 1947 that he fully appreciated Clay's concerns over British tactics. Another tactic which had drawn Clay's ire was the British habit of directly addressing the American government. British officials tried to bypass Clay's office in Germany. Noce replied that the State Department was currently working on an official policy stance on socialization. He predicted that it would contain a cautious endorsement of public ownership of certain industries. The State Department, however, concurred with Clay that public ownership would be acceptable only if "based upon full and free expression of popular will either by referendum, by

²⁰. Membership in the Economic Council was to be determined by the Landtage (state legislatures). If we remember, the SPD enjoyed majorities in five of the eight Landtage in Bizonia. (Lower Saxony, Hamburg, Greater Hesse, Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen). The CDU held the greatest number of seats in Bavaria, Wurtemberg-Baden and North Rhine-Westphalia. Bavaria was the only Land where any party actually commanded an absolute majority. (approximately 58 percent)

²¹. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol. I, Clay to Noce, 29 April 1947, pp. 344-346.

legislative action based upon constitutional auth[orization?], or clearly expressed political party platform...."²²

Clay and other American officials were probably correct in suggesting that the British government and the Social Democrats made a coordinated effort to gain as much control of Bizonal agencies as possible. But the British Labour and the SPD consented primarily to a marriage of convenience, and were not truly motivated by their common socialist roots. It is true that Labour leaders favored the SPD leadership. At times they consulted with the latter, while excluding others altogether. But there exists little evidence that the SPD profited significantly from this relationship.²³ Beyond some political support, direct assistance remained negligible. Even if a few Labour leaders supported Kurt Schumacher's Social Democrats, there was also the British Military Government to contend with. Successive British Military Governors, Sir Brian Robertson and Sir Ivon Kirkpatrick, strongly disliked Schumacher. The two Governors tried to maintain political neutrality in accordance with official British policy. But one intriguing incident illustrates how the British government did not hesitate to contradict the SPD where its own interests favored such a move. Earlier in July, 1946, the British government had announced the creation of the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia. Presumably designed to foil the French government's attempts to separate the industrial Ruhr area from the rest of West Germany, it also had for the SPD unpleasant the side-effect of combining the strongly Catholic Rhineland with Germany's industrial heartland. Konrad Adenauer was reportedly ecstatic, whereas Schumacher was very critical. The latter's reservations were warranted. The SPD lost the Land elections in 1946 and 1947 to the CDU because of the pro-conservative Catholic vote.²⁴ Even if the British Labour government

²². FRUS, 1947, Vol. II, Council of Foreign Ministers, Note to Clay, 1 May 1947, pp. 911-15, (Webster's Revised Dictionary of 1987 does not list the term "auth". Perhaps it means authorship. But it appears hardly important anyhow.)

²³. Richard M. Scammon, "Political Parties", in E. H. Litchfield, (ed.), Governing Postwar Germany, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U. Press, 1953, p. 479.

²⁴. See footnote: Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher..., p. 178. Gabriel Kolko similarly wrote in 1972 that other than his anti-communism, the SPD, led by Schumacher--"a melange of impulses--sectarian, bureaucratic, and radically indignant"--"had little to commend itself to the United States, despite a certain sentiment in Labour circles, to the British as well." Neither authority felt it could trust him. See: Kolko, The Limits of Power...

sympathized with their German counterparts, often their priorities rested elsewhere.²⁵

Key Labour politicians were never truly committed to imposing a socialist society in Germany. "Realist" elements around Clement Attlee but especially Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin preferred a "balance of power" policy between the Western Allies which eventually obviated the need for a Social Democratic partnership. After 1947, when the Anglo-American alliance was fully consummated, the British government decided that political, economic and financial needs prescribed such unity of action, if necessary, at the expense of the SPD.²⁶

Was American influence necessary to persuade British officials to distance themselves from the SPD? The British Labour Government also learnt to dislike the SPD's stubborn independence and concluded by late 1946 that it the SPD alone was not sufficiently strong to achieve socialism in Germany. Particularly unfavorable for the SPD had been its participation in the North Rhine-Westphalian government of Christian Democrat Rudolf Amelunxen. The SPD was subsequently held equally responsible for the miserable economic and social conditions in late 1946. It was at this time that the British government decided that Schumacher's inflexibility on his party's economic programme had contributed to the impression among Germans that the social democratic economic policies were responsible for the continuation of the economic crisis. Having alienated many hitherto favorable voters, the SPD had thus considerably reduced its chances of forming the next German government. It was therefore preferable to work with the more levelheaded realist Konrad

p. 127.

²⁵. British Historian Alan Bullock even questions whether Labour's foreign minister Ernest Bevin shared such brotherly affections for the German Social Democrats. First, he never forgot the German Social Democratic betrayal in 1914. Kurt Schumacher's nationalism and virulent attacks on all occupying powers, furthermore, irritated Bevin considerably. His favorite German presumably was instead trade union leader Hans Boeckler. See: Alan Bullock, Ernest Bevin -- Foreign Secretary 1945-1951, London: Heinemann, 1983, pp. 375/6.

²⁶. Rolf Steiniger, "British Labour, Deutschland und die SPD 1945/46", in Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz für Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1979, p. 191/2. (Steiniger suggests that Britain's rapid slide in economic recession may have acted as a catalyst. But American and British interests were becoming congruent, thus making a closer alliance increasingly probable regardless of the latter's financial straits.)

Adenauer rather than the "the violent dealer in superlatives", as the British Foreign Office would frequently describe Schumacher.²⁷

Where socialization was concerned, after the creation of Bizonia, British policy began to conform to the American. The British Labour government announced in July 1947 that "no decision will be taken which will prejudice the possibility of carrying out a Socialist policy in the British zone of Germany." This meant that while the British government would no longer insist on imposing socialization, it also would not resist efforts towards that goal either. But by 1948, the British government's attitude had become similar to that of the American government. American officials, too, had proclaimed that they were not fundamentally opposed to socialization, but would resist any attempts to have a minority impose it from above. The British veto of North Rhine-Westphalian socialization laws in August 1948 suggested the extent to which the British government had begun to abide with the American policy of inhibiting where possible nationalization of German industries. More importantly, on 10 November 1948, Anglo-American Ordinance No. 75 stipulated that the public ownership "should be left to the determination of a representative freely elected German government."²⁸

Lucius D. Clay who had strongly endorsed American complaints about British lack of cooperation took some credit for his share in the American effort to have the British government back down from a socialist program for Germany. Clay later appreciated the British government as a reliable ally against German obstinacy on issues relating to the shape of a future German government. He never fully recognized, however, the strong divisions which existed between the British government and the SPD. As late as 1949, during

²⁷. Rolf Steiniger, "British Labour, Deutschland...", pp. 212-214. (Steiniger, while discussing the growing differences between SPD and Labour, also touches on the political infighting between Labour "realists" and internationalists such as Denis Healey, and Harold Laski who adamantly insisted the Labour assist their German social democratic brother-in-arms. See also: Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik, pp. 156-165. (Schwarz is interesting, because he is rare among non-British historians writing on the general post-war era in having given some serious thought to the considerable inner-political difficulties Prime Minister Clement Attlee apparently faced around 1946/47.)

²⁸. Wolfgang Rudzio, "Die Ausgebliebene Sozialisierung an Rhein und Ruhr -- Zur Sozialisierungspolitik von Labour-Regierung und SPD 1945--1948", in Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1978, pp. 11, 35/6, 34-39.

the Grundgesetz (German Basic Law) debates, Clay still thought that he had convinced British Military Governor, General Sir Brian Robertson, to exert pressure on the SPD to abide by Allied policy.²⁹

This problem notwithstanding, when the Moscow Conference of Spring 1947 failed to reach a four-power agreement, newly appointed Secretary of State George C. Marshall became forcefully resolved to make Bizonia self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Bizonal trade, it was agreed, should be balanced by 1949. But as Wolfgang Krieger points out, the existing rate of economic development offered few promises that this goal would be achieved on time.³⁰ Recognizing the pressing need for reform, Ernest Bevin and Marshall finally agreed to increase the annual steel output to 10 Million (metric) tons. Dismantling of industrial equipment would continue, with the amount to be determined by the level of economic progress actually achieved. The Soviet Union would also continue to be supplied with industrial surplus. On the governmental level, the bizonal agencies, hitherto dispersed among five cities, would be relocated to Frankfurt. But most importantly, for our purposes here, was the agreement that the jurisdiction of Lander, Bizonal agencies and military governments would be altered, with instructions to avoid giving rise to accusations that a separate central government was being created. The provisional nature of a central bizonal government was to be preserved to signal that the British and American governments were still sincerely interested in four-power agreement on Germany.³¹

²⁹. See: The Papers of Lucius D. Clay - Vol. II, From Clay for Department of the Army, 19 April 1949, p. 1114. (Clay agreed in 1949 that the British were no longer trying to impose SPD versions of the Grundgesetz on the Military Governors. Instead the British government is described as having tried to persuade the party that the Allies were agreed on the question of a future German government. The British government may have tried to influence the SPD's decision making process, but, in the end, SPD approval was obtained only after some concessions to allow a more central government were made.)

But even before Labour distanced itself from SPD policies, the British Military Government was arguably antagonistic towards the SPD. Clay expressed the longstanding feeling among Germans that "the British would eventually force the Military Governors to accept the SPD position." Clay notes with relief that "the fine statement from the Foreign Ministers of 5 April helped dispell this." The Papers of Lucius D. Clay - Vol. II, Clay to Department of the Army, 19 April 1949, p. 114. (When Clay talks about "the British" it is unclear whether he is referring to the British Labour government, the British Military Government in Germany or both.)

³⁰. Wolfgang Krieger, Lucius D. Clay..., p. 239.

³¹. Wolfgang Krieger, Lucius D. Clay..., p. 241.

Where American and British delegates frequently clashed during the ensuing negotiations was over the shape and nature of the central agencies. They found it especially difficult to agree on the jurisdiction and the powers the various agencies should enjoy. Each side accused the other of trying to create institutions that would favour their own interests. Lucius D. Clay certainly thought the British wanted a government dominated by the Social Democrats who, similar to the British, favoured strong centralized government agencies.

The government structure finally agreed upon on 29 May 1947 created the Wirtschaftsrat (Economic Council), the Exekutivausschuss (Executive Committee) and the Direktorium (Executive Directors).³² The 52 members of the bizonal legislature, the Wirtschaftsrat, were to be appointed by the Land legislatures. The Exekutivausschuss, essentially an advisory body, could recommend for implementation regulations and ordinances to the Wirtschaftsrat. They could also supervise the work of the Direktorium whose role, in turn, was basically to administer the two zones. As always, final approval would rest with Allied Bipartite Board, consisting of British and American officials.³³

Clay "had fashioned the administrative machinery as much as possible in accord with the traditional American principles of checks and balances." The Wirtschaftsrat was designed to protect the interests of political parties. The Exekutivausschuss as an element of Clay's federalist spirit would safeguard the interests of the Land governments. Since the SPD controlled five of the eight Lander governments by virtue of a majority of individual Land election victories, they obviously held sway in the latter. The Christian Democrats, on the other hand, were able to counter by maintaining a slim majority in the Wirtschaftsrat because the three CDU dominated Lander were far more populous than those ruled by the SPD. But this majority was

³². Translations provided by: John Gimbel, The American Occupation of Germany, p. 124.

³³. John Gimbel, The American Occupation of Germany..., pp. 124/5. (Gimbel's summary is the most concise.)

possible only in coalition with the Christian Socialist Union and the liberal FDP.³⁴

Clay's efforts to assure that Social Democrats would not dominate the bizonal government has been called an act of "political engineering." Clay himself described the condition whereby executive and legislature were controlled by two different political parties, the SPD and CDU respectively, as unfortunate. He admits that "political antagonisms made mutual co-operation between Council, Executive Committee, and the administrative agencies difficult." But he still thought that it was an improvement over the initial organization set up in January 1947.³⁵ Although officially committed to political neutrality, the American military government actually interfered in Germany's political reorganization in a manner that had to place at a disadvantage the political order envisaged by the SPD.³⁶ The origins of this conflict between the American government and the SPD dated back to 1946 and the wirtschaftlicher Verwaltungsrat, the precursor of the Wirtschaftsrat. Consisting of six members, not only members of the major political parties had been invited to participate. Some Council members such as Rudolf Mueller and Ludwig Erhard, were not officially affiliated with any political party. Most controversial, however, was the decision the occupation officials took to reject Social Democrat Viktor Agartz as chairman of the wirtschaftlicher Verwaltungsrat on 23 September 1946. Clay instead favoured the "non-political" figure Rudolf Mueller whose economic views he found entirely agreeable.³⁷

Kurt Schumacher had resented the 1946 removal of his protegee Agartz who had been one of the most vocal proponents of socialization and a planned economy. By 1947, Agartz insisted that he was not opposed to private initiative. On the contrary, he argued, such enterprising individuals should be supported as

³⁴. John H. Backer, Winds of History, pp. 187/8.

³⁵. Lucius D. Clay, Decision in Germany, p. 175.

³⁶. Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika, p. 82. (Grabbe doubts that American officials purposely retarded the SPD's growth in 1945 or that Clay, as Gimbel has argued, suspended Socialization article 41 of the Hessian constitution in 1946. see: John Gimbel, The American Occupation of Germany, p. 117, but also Grabbe's thought on Article 41, p. 88)

³⁷. Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie, und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika..., pp. 95/6.

as long as their activities did not create social injustice. Any undue concentration of power in private hands, however, would be countered. In 1947, he added that "the direction and distribution could only be decided by the democratic 'Rechtstaat'. State planned economies will have to replace individual capitalistic profit orientation as the main regulator of the new economic system."²⁸

Agartz was eventually able to assume the chairmanship inside the Wirtschaftlichen Verwaltungsrat when Mueller lost a vote of confidence by the economic ministers of the Lander on 18 January 1947, only three weeks after the Verwaltungsrat's official assumption of duties. The election of the Social Democratic Agartz invoked fears of socialization. It led American officials to decree on 7 May 1947 that the bizonal administration should be devised so as to inhibit socialization. It was therefore important to not to give in to British demands that the Wirtschaftsrat, then expected to be dominated by the SPD, be vested with more than advisory powers. Clay wrote on 12 May 1947:

I would like to point out that under any arrangement, the SPD, which will have with it further Leftist parties, will have a majority in the economic council. Since the British Government has always backed the SPD working through [Kurt] Schumacher, it will be able to control to considerable degree the deliberation of the economic council. To protect our objectives it is essential that we cannot commit ourselves to the acceptance of the decisions of the economic council. The SPD alone would not have the majority and therefore to have control it must have the support of other Leftist groups, which would cause it to take more extreme position than it might take otherwise. [sic]²⁹

The last statement is difficult to understand. It is unclear what Leftist groups, Clay might have been referring to. It obviously could not have been the Communist party. Besides the latter and the SPD, there was no other left wing movement worth mentioning. The thrust of Clay's statement at any rate intimated a preparedness, or at least a strong desire, to intervene in German political affairs where American interests were threatened.

²⁸. Doc. No. 14, Viktor Agartz, "Sozialistische Wirtschaftspolitik", (1947) in Norbert Konegen, Gerhard Kracht, (eds.), Sozialismus und Sozialisierung, Kronberg/Ts, F.R. Germany: Scriptor Verlag, 1975, p. 122.

²⁹. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol. I, Clay Personal for Noce, 12 May 1947, p. 354. (Judging from the rest of Clay's note "to protect our objectives" expressed his worries that the American government could lose influence in Germany if the SPD with British help succeeded in taking control of the Wirtschaftsrat. Clay continued that what had prevented the conservative parties from consolidating their position was the fact that they unlike the SPD had no military government backing. He does not specify, however, how this fact interfered with American objectives.)

The new central agencies established in late May 1947 succeeded according to Clay's wishes in preventing the SPD from controlling the central agencies. Kurt Schumacher had resented this maneuvering prior to the creation of the bizonal central agencies so that the SPD would not control the Wirtschaftsrat. The SPD with its control of the Exekutivausschuss certainly found it difficult to share governing responsibilities with a CDU dominated Wirtschaftsausschuss. Schumacher was irritated that his party's control of the Exekutivausschuss did not translate into domination of the CDU controlled Wirtschaftsrat. When in early July, 1947, the Wirtschaftsrat refused to accept his personnel proposals for the Direktorium, Schumacher announced that his party would no longer participate in the bizonal government. Instead his party would assume henceforth the role of a "pragmatic, constructive opposition".⁴⁰

Schumacher's decision was motivated by a desire to begin early parliamentary reconstruction by providing viable political alternatives. But Schumacher was driven by an "all or nothing intransigence" which precluded political compromise. Schumacher insisted that the economic director's office should be held by his party. The CDU would have agreed, if the SPD, in turn, gave up the agricultural ministry of three Lander. In retrospect this was a very generous offer. Yet Schumacher refused. This intransigence was furthermore compounded by a kind of "passive fatalism" that made Schumacher continue to await confidently the bankruptcy of bourgeois-capitalist economic policies. In any case, Schumacher's stance was unlikely to improve his reputation among the occupation forces.⁴¹

Schumacher did not stand alone in his opposition to the bizonal arrangements. In the minds of the Lander Minister Presidents who met at the Munich Conference on 7 June 1947, the new bizonal government could only be

⁴⁰. American officials had some knowledge as early as 21 May 1947 that the SPD might withdraw from government responsibilities, if it felt that its social and economic program were given short thrift. The information was based on a British memorandum written by Alan Flanders of the German Political Branch, Political Division etc.... Robert Murphy agreed that the CDU was likely to be main German beneficiary of the SPD's withdrawal. See: CF, Int.Fil, Part I, Robert Murphy to Sec. of State, 21 May 1947.

⁴¹. Kurt Klotzbach, Der Weg zur Staatspartei: -- Programmatik, Praktische Politik und Organisation der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1945-1965, Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz, 1982, p. 135.

interpreted as signs that Allied disunity was eroding whatever chances for German reunification remained. The official concluding statement of Minister Presidents was an urgent appeal to the powers to reach agreement on Germany's future. The wording revealed a certain degree of restiveness rarely expressed with such unanimity.⁴² It read in part as follows:

The Chiefs of the German Lander Governments assembled in Munich cannot close their deliberations on how to stop the German people's immediate distress during the next winter, without announcing before the entire world the great goal of the economic and political unity of Germany, and without explicitly manifesting their will to a peaceful cooperation with all nations.

...Since two years the German people have been waiting for a clarification of their destiny in vain. All attempts to bring this about have been frustrated so far. Separated from the world, without the vital foreign trade, thus without the raw materials necessary for their industry, torn into four zones, without a secure industrial basis, deprived of the corps of their most important agricultural territories, kept in ignorance as to their political future, without direct contact with the Allied Governments which at present are responsible for Germany, the German people by a process of economic self-consumption are sinking from month to month more deeply into constantly growing misery and distress.⁴³

The American Consul in Munich, E. Tomlin Bailey, wrote that the unanimity expressed during the Conference reflected in part the participants' overwhelming preoccupation with current economic conditions. Whatever political statements were made, he believed, were largely the result of Schumacher bringing pressure to bear upon his Social Democratic followers among leading Lander politicians such as Schleswig-Holstein's Minister President Hermann Luedemann and Hamburg's Mayor Max Brauer. Schumacher had intended to use the Conference as a platform for attacking the SED and the Soviet Government. His efforts apparently failed, however, when Bavarian officials persuaded participating Social Democrats to limit themselves to informal comments and radio speeches rather than using the Conference itself for criticizing Soviet authorities.

The participants' reluctance, with one notable exception, toward making political statements addressing Germany's political future, Bailey warned, should not be regarded as evidence that the prevailing economic conditions were uppermost on the minds of the Minister Presidents. While emphasizing the

⁴². The minister presidents from the Soviet zone were ordered to stay away, thus somewhat weakening the conference participants' ambition to speak as representatives of the whole of Germany.

⁴³. CF, Int.Fil. Part I, American Consulate General, Munich, on the subject: "Minister Presidents' Conference in Munich", dated 20 June 1947.

economic distress, the minister presidents had also warned about the inherent political dangers, if the economic well-being of Germans did not improve. From conversations with Bavaria's SPD leader Waldemar von Knoeringen, and one of Bavaria's leading bureaucrats Anton Pfeiffer, Bailey thought he had learned that the Conference's main purpose was to "hoist the storm signals." Although Bailey acknowledged the worsening of economic conditions, he concluded that officials had knowingly exaggerated them, hoping thereby to obtain greater assistance from the occupation authorities.⁴⁴

Bailey's insistence that political interests motivated the minister presidents to evoke images of economic and political collapse is at least debatable. Instead, it could be argued that the Minister Presidents avoided the political discussion on a future Germany so as not to entirely alienate their counterparts from the Soviet zone. The Minister Presidents from the Soviet zone, allegedly upon receiving orders from a higher authority, had decided to abstain from the conference. It had been planned by organizers such as Hans Ehard that the conference, if attended by the Minister Presidents from all occupation zones, could demonstrate of a strong united German will for German reunification. When the delegations from the Soviet zone stayed away, the Conference threatened to turn into a farce. To save face, without conceding defeat, the Minister Presidents chose to downplay issues about Germany's political future and instead to place emphasis throughout the Conference on purely economic issues. But hopes of presenting a united front were clearly not fulfilled. One American observer described Munich as another "Moscow" Conference. Germans had arguably emulated the Allied powers in their disunity.⁴⁵

The SPD proceeded with reconfirming its commitment to German unity. The protocol of the national party convention held at Nurnberg between 29 June and 2 July 1947 established guidelines which the SPD recognized as essential for

⁴⁴. CF, Int.Fil., Part I, "Minister Presidents' Conference in Munich", [American Consul in Munich] E. Tomlin Bailey to Secs of State, 20 June 1947, pp. 4-6.

⁴⁵. Manfred Overesch, "Einheit oder Teilung? Westdeutsche Entscheidungsträger vor der Gesamtdeutschen Frage 1945-1947", in Josef Foscaphoth, (ed.) Kalter Krieg und Deutsche Frage - Deutschland im Widerstreit der Mächte, 1945-1952, Göttingen, F.R. Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985, p. 282. (Overesch's discussion of the Conference: pp. 277-282.)

the reconstruction of the German Republic. A unified Germany was reconfirmed. The party would in the future reject anything that could be interpreted as a threat to the unity of the Reich. Article 2 of the Nurnberg protocol expressed that,

German Social Democracy was committed to the political and constitutional [staatsrechtlichen] Unity of Germany. While acknowledging local peculiarities. It refuses to accept any open or covert separatism and particularism. The Lander constitutions should contain nothing that could stand in the way of reunification [Reichseinheit]. These constitutions must include a the proviso that national law [Reichsrecht] supersedes Lander law.

The protocol rejected any efforts to create a federation of independent German states. A federal German republic with a healthy measure of decentralization that would not weaken the nation's central unity, however, was considered acceptable.⁴⁶

American officials had followed with keen interest the deliberations of the Nurnberg convention. A flurry of reports discussed the potential consequences of the Social Democratic gathering. One typical report noted the lack of ideological currents throughout the Convention. Not once were theoretical questions raised. Marxism was mentioned only once and none of the speakers called for the party to adopt or reject Marxist dogma. The report suggested that this ambivalence was part of Kurt Schumacher's strategy to "dilute its [SPD's] program sufficiently to make it acceptable to various groups in society."⁴⁷

Robert Murphy thought that the most important feature of the conference was that Kurt Schumacher emerged "more than ever the accepted and outstanding leader of the party."⁴⁸ Reminiscent of the first party conference, he was reelected by 99 percent of the delegates. The resolutions passed also bore

⁴⁶. "Richtlinien fur den Aufbau der Deutschen Republik", (Protocol of the discussions held at the SPD convention at Nurnberg, 29 June to 2 July 1947), in Ossip Kurt von Flechtheim, (ed.), Dokumente zur Parteipolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland seit 1945 -- Vol. III, Part 2, Programmatik der Deutschen Parteien, pp. 31/2.

⁴⁷. OMGUS, Adjutant General's Office (AGO), "SPD Parteitag in Nurnberg-29 June to 2 July 1947, Nurnberg", 17 July 1947, p. 7. (the author might have been Edward Litchfield, although the report's somewhat unrefined style seems to contradict that. Murphy who sent the same report to the Secretary of State on 4 August 1947 stated that it had been prepared by the Civil Administration division at OMGUS. see also footnote No. 54)

⁴⁸. CF, Int.Fil, Part I, Murphy to Sec. of State, 4 August 1947.

Schumacher's stamp. The rejection of federalism, the espousal of socialization and the downplaying of ideology had long played an integral role of Schumacher's strategic thinking. The latter had been dedicated at least since 1945 to transforming his party into a political body with widespread popular appeal.⁴⁹

Schumacher had not really renounced Marxism. He merely continued what he had been stressing since early 1946, namely he preferred Marxism as an "analytical tool" rather than "prescriptive dogma". To view Marxism principally as method he felt did not imply disavowal of the class struggle. Schumacher viewed post-war German society as already enmeshed in conflict where a rapidly developing majority of proletarians had to be motivated to prevent the triumph once more of capitalism. He thought, he had detected signs of a "latent proletarian revolution" restrained only by the presence of the occupation powers.⁵⁰ According to Klotzbach, Schumacher preached to his fellow social democrats not to regard Marxist teachings as eternally valid economic laws of nature, but as only one method among others for relentlessly questioning and exposing the progressive deterioration of capitalism. Such an open interpretation of Marxism gave Schumacher greater flexibility to conduct his political campaigning.⁵¹

American observers were not unaware that Schumacher was capable of being more pragmatic than his public appearances suggested. After a conversation with the party leader on 10 July 1947, the Counsellor of Mission in Murphy's office, Donald R. Heath, reported that Schumacher was not a "doctrinaire political theorist". He noted Schumacher's praise of the Marshall Plan, which the latter considered an important contribution to the economic restoration of

⁴⁹. Another party conference held at Ziegenhain in late August, 1947, seemed to confirm American suspicions that a major shift within the SPD was in the making. American Consul in Bremen Maurice W. Altaffer described the conference's resolution as "a turning point in the history of the Social Democratic Party inasmuch as it seems to mark a break with the purely dialectic materialism of Karl Marx." see: CF, Int.Fil, Part I, Maurice Altaffer to Secretary of State, 8 September 1947. (For full text of Ziegenhain resolution see Dieter Dowe and Kurt Klotzbach, (eds.) Programmatische Dokumente der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie, pp. 282/3.

⁵⁰. Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher..., pp. 78/9.

⁵¹. Kurt Klotzbach, Der Weg zur Staatspartei..., p. 125.

Europe. Schumacher asserted that "political means or method...were not important" and that "the only good political line was one that promoted a sound economy." Heath also remembered that Schumacher felt that the bizonal plan, if successful, together with the Marshall plan, could prove effective in persuading the Soviet government to relax their grip on Eastern Germany.⁵²

Schumacher was, despite some misgivings about its governmental setup, supportive of the bizonal system. He also supported the Marshall Plan. The former he appreciated because officially it appeared committed to the economic strengthening of those two zones; the latter because it suited Schumacher's conceptualization of the West as an economic magnet, so powerful that even in the face of Soviet power, the Eastern nations would be unable to resist the promise of economic well-being offered by the West.⁵³ But Schumacher's enthusiasm faded as he became convinced that both Bizonia and Marshall Plan helped principally in laying the groundwork for a future Western Germany. Schumacher had always insisted that all governmental agencies could only have provisional character and a centralized government responsible to a reunified Germany should replace it as soon as possible. The seeming permanency of these agencies after 1947 became a source of considerable concern to Schumacher.⁵⁴

If Schumacher was resentful in fall 1947 about the waning prospects for a unified Germany, he was careful to conceal his feelings during an interview State Department officials conducted with him during his visit to the United States in October, 1947. State Department official Henry J. Kellerman certainly thought Schumacher came across as "as an astute politician and political realist." The latter presumably expressed his willingness to recognize unification of Western Germany "as a minor evil vis-a-vis

⁵². CF, Int.Fil, Part I, Robert Murphy to Sec. of State, 11 July 1947, "Enclosure #2: Memorandum of Conversation with Kurt Schumacher [by D.R. Heath]", 10 July 1947.

⁵³. Kurt Klotzbach has suggested that Schumacher's "passive fatalism" led him to await the collapse of capitalism. Even if it is true that this part of his political philosophy, Schumacher was also an astute political tactician. He apparently recognized that a healthy capitalist economy might be useful in luring East Germany into the Western mould, thus allowing for the reunification of Germany.

⁵⁴. Hans-Peter Schwarz, Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik..., pp. 551-3.

progressive deterioration and disintegration." Economic recovery was more important, but the Social Democratic Party would tolerate a Western Germany if it was a step in the direction of Germany's final reunion.⁵⁵

It is difficult to offer an explanation as to why Schumacher in conversation with American officials would agree that he too expected Germany to remain divided for an indefinite period. He would rarely even admit these doubts to his own advisers. Maurice Altaffer explained on 19 November 1947 that the trip to the United States may have changed Schumacher's hitherto uncompromising stance. His constructive meetings with American labor leaders and a few government officials may have impressed him sufficiently to at least temporarily adjust "his party's policies to cooperate with the aims of the Western powers in this period before the London Conference [of Foreign Ministers]."⁵⁶

The confidence in Schumacher which these American officials expressed in late 1947, remains difficult to understand. Disagreements between American policies and Social Democratic plans for a future Germany, which had surfaced since the creation of Bizonia grew rather than diminished. In late June, 1947, Lucius D. Clay appeared uncertain on whether to recommend that his government oppose or permit socialization. As always he insisted that, if at all, the only acceptable policy on socialization was the one chosen by the German public. But given the political and economic instability, he thought it unwise to take socialization directly to the people. Consistent with past statements, he advised that a referendum be held once stability had been restored. But he insisted that his government eventually would have to firmly commit itself for or against socialization. To take an unequivocal standpoint for or against socialization, Clay concluded, was necessary, "if our Bipartite

⁵⁵. CF, Int.Fil, Part I, To William R. Tyler from Henry J. Kellerman, 31 October 1947, "Statements made by Mr. Kurt Schumacher on October 23, 1947".

⁵⁶. CF, Int.Fil, Part I., Maurice Altaffer to Sec. of State, 19 November 1947. (Every American document describing a conversation with Schumacher that I came across noted with astonishment the discrepancy between the loud-mouthed public figure American officials thought he was before and the reasonable nature of his argument displayed during these talks. Altaffer, too, found him "a much more sympathetic personality than I had anticipated." Design or not, there is an intriguing logic to Schumacher's behavior. Whether sincere about his willingness to cooperate or trying to instill American officials with a false impression about his intentions, in either case, he would have to be described as a shrewd political realist.)

Board was to function effectively."⁵⁷ What Clay had tried to emphasize was the troubled state of economic affairs persisting in Western Germany. Indecision was unlikely to improve the economy.

The indecision Clay was referring to was the one between British and American occupation officials and within their respective governments. In essence, it was one over differing method for salvaging Germany's sagging economy. Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson had noted that in summer 1947, the food rations had dropped to 1200 Calories, 350 less than the previously recommended minimum. Patterson thought this was "slow famine." Less pressing, but equally controversial was the problem of coal production. Patterson was opposed to experiments in socialization of the coal industry, when the real need was to find ways to maximize production as quickly as possible. It was time, he thought to exert great pressure upon the British to decide on the issue of coal production. "If my house is on fire," he mused, he would try to extinguish the fire, but "not engage in arguments on the state of title to the house."⁵⁸

The management of the Ruhr area continued to preoccupy occupation officials, as well. The compromise American officials eventually put forward was intended to satisfy all sides. The British government favoured public ownership while the French government preferred to see the Ruhr area severed from a future German state. The French government's suggestion that the Ruhr industries be submitted to international supervision was virulently and uncompromisingly opposed by all German politicians.

The American proposal of mid-August 1947 suggested that the Ruhr industries be returned to German management. All coal mining properties such as coal processing facilities and even the miners' housing would be placed under the supervision of an individual German trustee, who would have to refer for

⁵⁷. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol. I, From Clay to [Howard C.] Petersen [Ass. Sec. of War], 24 June 1947, p. 376.

⁵⁸. FRUS, 1947, Vol. II, Council of Foreign Ministers, Sec. of State (Patterson) to Sec. of State, 13 June 1947, p. 1152. See also: Sec. of State [George C. Marshall] to the United States Military Governor Clay, 24 June 1947, p. 931. (Marshall agreed that it was time to bring pressure to bear upon the British to stop experimenting, but was not absolutely sure whether he would be successful.)

approval of all his actions directly to a US-UK Control Group. The trusteeship would continue for five years during which the ownership question would be suspended. Acting Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett proposed that this provision could be altered if the British government insisted, that an option be included whereby Germans would at some point be allowed to vote on public ownership.⁵⁹

The negotiations conducted between 22 August and 27 August 1947 in London did not, however, produce a final agreement. For our purposes we need only note that the French government refused to withdraw its objections to the Anglo-American proposal for management of the Ruhr, pending further clarification of the future level of the German industry. The French government also demanded further assurances about the extent to which the rehabilitation of Germany's coal and coke industries would be allowed to benefit Europe's heavy industries. It would support greater coal output only if such increases were designed primarily for export. French officials did not appear to think that current plans to revive Germany's industries would guarantee as much.⁶⁰

While the French government was withholding judgement, the British government was committing itself to the American position. Ernest Bevin had already finalized his decision to break with the Soviet Union in the wake of the Marshall Plan and its rejection by Soviet government in early July 1947. But it was the failure of the London Conference of Foreign Minister in November/December 1947 that afforded Bevin the opportunity to thrust British support unreservedly behind American plans to create the 'Weststaat' (a West German state).⁶¹ On 18 December 1948, he duly reported the breakdown of the London Conference to the British House of Commons and insisted that his government was steadfastly committed to the preservation of German unity. But

⁵⁹. FRUS, 1947, Vol. II, Austria and Germany, Acting Secretary of State (Lovett) to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 22 August 1947, p. 950.

⁶⁰. "Communique Issued by the United States, the United Kingdom and France on the Level of Industry in the Combined U.S.-U.K. Zones of Germany and the management and Control of the Ruhr Coal Production", 28 August 1947, in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., (gen.ed.), The Dynamics of World Power..., pp. 470/1.

⁶¹. Victor H. Rothwell, "Grossbritannien und die Anfänge des Kalten Krieges", in Josef Foscchepoth, (ed.), Kalter Krieg und Deutsche Frage, pp. 104/5.

he also declared that his country could not continue forever to shoulder the financial burden as Western Europe lay in chaos. Britain could no longer afford to wait for a four-power agreement to materialize, but would proceed with economic rehabilitation of Western Europe. In conclusion, he stated:

We have no aim and no desire to divide the world. But the termination of the conference and the manner of its ending, I have no doubt, will cause many people furiously to think.[sic] We cannot go on as we have been going on. We have hoped against hope that four-Power collaboration would work. Most of the world Powers can find a basis of agreement; they cannot all be wrong. We shall close no doors. We shall maintain all the contacts we can and we shall do our best to try to find a way out of all these difficult situations, and still to work away hard to produce in the end what I still believe is necessary, not only a united Germany but a united Europe and the peace of the world.⁶²

But for the time being, the American and British governments left no doubt that they had accepted the division of Germany and proceeded correspondingly with the foundation of a West German state. Lucius D. Clay had already written in early November that the United States government "must have courage to proceed quickly with the government of Germany, first provisionally and then representative, if the Council of Foreign Ministers fails to produce an answer for all Germany."⁶³ Implicit here was the American determination, if necessary, to embark upon the political fusion of the bizonal regions. American officials habitually denied such intentions, aware that the German public and its representative still very strongly opposed any political fusion which did not incorporate the whole of Germany. But once East-West relations had reached an apparently irreconcilable impasse, American officials concluded, therefore, that the best, perhaps, even the only viable alternative to a united Germany was a Western state.

This growing resolve by American officials to accept the existence of two Germanies is what Kurt Schumacher feared. First foreign control of Germany, and then division of Germany imposed by the former stood in unacceptable contrast to everything Schumacher had struggled against for the preceding two and a half years. Schumacher knew, despite the vehemence with which his party

⁶². "Report of the Foreign Minister's Conference: Extract from House of Commons Debates, December 18, 1947, in Selected Documents on Germany and the Question of Berlin 1944-1961, (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1961, p.97.

⁶³. Quoted in: Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie, und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika..., p. 116. From: The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, From Clay Eyes only for [William] Draper, 3 November 1947, p. 476.

responded officially to Bipartite plans for political fusion in early January 1948, that the social democratic economic program could not be realized. He nevertheless chose henceforth to devote his energies toward the creation of a strong centralized West German state hoping thereby eventually to be able to revise existing policies.⁶⁴ Schumacher had remarked after the London Conference, the "relationship among the victorious powers and not the explicit German will to unity would determine Germany's future." The Allied Frankfurt proposals for political fusion of the bizonal regions, Schumacher described as orders which the SPD was prepared to obey. But he also wanted it understood that he held the Allied powers responsible and that he would personally do nothing to promote the creation of a Western state.⁶⁵

The reluctance with which he cooperated did not endear Schumacher to American officials. But what made it possible for Americans to avoid Schumacher were emerging political and economic alternatives which proved, in the end, more powerful than Schumacher's Social Democratic program. Politically, the CDU represented a major political force in Germany that appeared willing to cooperate more readily with the Western powers. Economically, Ludwig Erhard's 'Soziale Marktwirtschaft' offered an ingenious alternative to both socialism and unfettered capitalism. Essentially, Erhard succeeded in combining a free market economy with strong commitment to the establishment of a welfare state. Despite Social Democratic opposition, and initially lukewarm support from Christian Democrats, and enthusiasm emanating only from the liberals, the Bizonal Wirtschaftsrat approved the proposals of the politically independent Erhard. Erhard's plans for Germany's economic recovery have been described as a stroke of genius in that they guaranteed a competitive market, while protecting it against monopolization without the need for a planned economy.

⁶⁴. Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie, und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika, p. 119. See also: John Gimbel, Origins of the Marshall Plan, pp. 217/8. Gimbel argues that although the State Department may have been able to tolerate socialism and socialization, officials regarded with apprehension Schumacher's nationalism and independence. In other words, they opposed German socialization from late 1947 onward precisely because Schumacher advocated and not because of any ideological differences. If true, Gimbel's assertion presents one of the most damning pieces of evidence against Schumacher's leadership. On the other hand, one question remains: Would American officials have endorsed socialization in the first place, had it not been for such powerful lobbying on behalf of this economic policy by Germans such as Schumacher?)

⁶⁵. Theo Pirker, Die SPD nach Hitler..., p. 73.

Allegedly, what Erhard was trying to do was to defend capitalism against capitalists.⁶⁶ At any rate, together with his orchestration of currency reform in summer, 1948, Erhard's program has been identified as the principal foundation for the German economic miracle of the 1950s.

American opposition to Schumacher's SPD grew, particularly following the economic and then the political fusion of the bizonal regions. The socialization issue demonstrated American officials' determination to resist the German demands, even if put forward by representatives from all major parties.⁶⁷ But the Wirtschaftsrat's approval of Erhard's economic program on 17 and 18 June, 1948, independently of American lobbying, suggested that the SPD's problems may have run much deeper than occasional Allied meddling in German political affairs.⁶⁸ The Wirtschaftsrat, consisting of 104 members, included as of 8 February 1948 only 40 Social Democrats against 40 Christian Democrats, 8 Liberals (FDP), 4 members of the right-wing Deutsche Partei, 8 Communists and 4 others. This fact indicated the relative Social Democratic weakness. It meant that the two major parties had to try to agree for any motion to pass the Wirtschaftsrat. But such consensus was only rarely achieved.

The arrangement of the Wirtschaftsrat, cleverly fostered by Lucius D. Clay, neutralized the five SPD Lander, prevented the monopolization of political

⁶⁶. Theodor Eschenburg, Jahre der Besatzung..., pp. 425, 430-442. (A sophisticated counter-argument against the common assumption that Erhard's plans together with European Recovery Program were decisive stimulants for German recovery is offered by: Werner Abelshauser, "Die Rekonstruktion der Westdeutschen Wirtschaft und die Rolle der Besatzungspolitik", in Claus Scharf and Hans-Jürgen Schröder, (eds.), Politische und Ökonomische Stabilisierung Westdeutschlands 1945-1949, Fünf Beiträge zur Deutschlandpolitik der Westlichen Alliierten, Wiesbaden, F.R. Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977, pp. 1-17. Abelshauser argues that economic recovery was well under way in 1946, but suffered a severe setback between fall 1946 and fall 1947, because of profound problems in transportation, causing production to collapse temporarily. see: p. 9)

⁶⁷. Yet of the 171 economic laws the Economic Council passed, the Military Government rejected only 8, while postponing 36 others. These 36, however, had been approved in principle. See: Edward N. Peterson, The American Occupation of Germany, p. 185.

⁶⁸. Lucius D. Clay was certainly flabbergasted at first by Erhard's independent initiative. Edward N. Peterson recounts the amusing anecdote where Erhard was called into Clay's office after the former's April speech for economic reform. Clay reportedly reminded him that Germans could not change Allied law. Erhard supposedly retorted that he had not changed them, but had ended them. At the end of the conversation, Clay agreed to Erhard's policies. see: Edward N. Peterson, The American Occupation of Germany, p. 191.

power in the Social Democratic hands. But one could also contend that the Social Democratic insurgence had already peaked. Kurt Schumacher appeared to be more of an anomaly with time.

A man such as Kurt Schumacher had to appear to his contemporaries living in a burned out political landscape as a bothersome anachronism. Neither his basic political demands nor his political gesturing found the resonance, he needed and longed for. Socio-economic reconstruction at the very roots, the struggle between capitalist reaction and socialist progress, national sovereignty and German equality among the World's democracies--all these were elements, which the average German citizen, and probably even many traditional Social Democratic voters treated with indifference.

Not even his anti-communism, aggressively propagated, could attract West Germans, who were yearning for security, "Ruhe und Ordnung", but did not want to be reminded constantly of the Eastern menace by virtue of Schumacher's shrill demagoguery.⁶⁹

German voter dissatisfaction became painfully obvious during the first federal parliamentary election held in August 1949. The SPD garnered a mere 29 percent of the popular vote, which translated into 131 out of a total of 402 possible seats. The relatively poor showing of the CDU with 31 percent could not conceal that the Social Democratic agenda was rapidly approaching political deadend.⁷⁰ Such poor election results could not have been the product of outside manipulation alone. To adequately explain the reasons for the Social Democratic malaise, it would be necessary to look elsewhere rather than to suspect that American intervention may have played a role.⁷¹ It is perhaps true that American officials interfered at times. But would American neutrality have produced very different results? The American government did not destroy socialization. If, for example, in 1946 62 percent of Hessians had voted for Article 41 on socialization, only slightly more than fifty percent in Bremen endorsed the corresponding Article 47 of the Land

⁶⁹. Kurt Klotzbach, Der Weg zur Staatspartei..., p. 181.

⁷⁰. For a discussion of the 1949 elections and the electoral process see: Richard Scammon, "Postwar elections and Electoral Process", in Edward H. Litchfield, (ed.), Governing Postwar Germany, pp. 500-533.

⁷¹. On 3 September 1953, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told Germans of the desirability to reelect the Adenauer government. Reportedly, he warned that failure to do so could jeopardize Germany's chances for reunification. Summary taken from: Facts on File, Vol. XIII, No. 671, 4-10 September 1953, p. 293.

constitution in fall 1947.⁷² A poll taken early September 1949 in the Ruhr area revealed that only 3.2 percent of those questioned considered socialization an urgent task. Economic democracy and planned economy, for example, were not even mentioned by those questioned.⁷³ In other words, American officials may have succeeded in delaying socialization procedures, but growing German indifference to socialization did the rest.

After some protracted negotiations at all levels, the Western powers finally agreed on a formula for a new German government. The Six Power communique on 7 June 1948 formalized the division of Germany and the Occupation Statute of 8 April 1949 defined the limits of sovereignty for Western Germany after direct military occupation had been terminated.⁷⁴ The discussions following the Six Power Communique and preceding the Occupation Statute led American officials and Social Democrats to continue on a collision course. The pivotal issue during these constitutional debates was the roles the central and Lander governments should play in a future Germany. A memorandum issued by the SPD headquarters on 7 April 1949 stated:

The fortuitous compromise between federalist and centralistic elements which was realized in the Weimar republic has been considerably thrown out of balance by the almost particularistic system of government described in the version of the basic law adopted by the Main Committee in its third reading. The wide measure of autonomy of the Laender as well as the scope of their powers in connection with influencing federal policies would seem to cast a paralysing effect on the rehabilitation of Germany.⁷⁵

Lucius D. Clay, in turn, thought in Spring 1949 that the SPD's obstinacy was the true culprit paralysing Germany's recovery in spring 1949. He never felt comfortable with the idea of party leaders as arbiters of Germany's future.

⁷². Figures provided by: Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie, und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika..., p. 128.

⁷³. John A. Maxwell, "Failed Social and Economic Policies: The German Social Democratic Programme", in Europa, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1982, p. 174.

⁷⁴. The six powers were the United States, United Kingdom, France, and the three Benelux Countries. The powers essentially agreed to establish international control of the Ruhr and proceed with the political and economic organization of Germany. I.e., the powers had officially agreed to the creation of a Weststaat. The Occupation Statute defined the powers of the occupying forces. Once in effect, Germany was to acquire limited sovereignty, with the limits defined by the Statute. The Statute itself went into effect 21 September 1949.

⁷⁵. "Memorandum Presented by the Social Democratic Party on Federalistic and Centralistic Elements in the SPD Draft of the Basic Law", 7 April 1949, in Beate Ruhm von Oppen, (ed.) Documents on Germany under Occupation..., pp. 369/70.

Schumacher, who held the post as party chairman, could dictate guidelines binding on the whole Social Democratic membership.⁷⁶ On 19 April 1949, Clay wrote about Schumacher's adamant stand in favour of a stronger centralized government than American officials had initially envisaged that:

I must repeat that the issue today is as to whether or not [Kurt] Schumacher and the small group of party bureaucrats sitting around him in Hannover are to succeed in their policy of defying the occupation authorities. I must emphasize that my concern is not about the personal issue of losing an issue to Schumacher. I am rather concerned with what I believe to be the very great dangers which will result from permitting any small group to make a success of defiance of the occupation authorities on an issue of major policy particularly as it is done to gain popularity in the following elections.⁷⁷

On 20 April 1949, the SPD delegation to the Parliamentary Council in Bonn voted 63 to 4 (with 8 abstentions) to reject the Draft of the Basic Law as it stood. The SPD opposed particularly the large financial and legislative independence the Lander were to be granted under the original draft. Both areas, the SPD emphasized, should be constitutional prerogatives of the federal government.

On 23 April 1949 the Allied powers compromised partly with SPD demands when they agreed to safeguard the supremacy of the future federal government in financial matters. But Schumacher's victory on this issue was crucial in accelerating the process of alienation between the SPD and the United States government. American officials, already planning ahead for Germany's remilitarization and European reintegration, after April, 1949 now finalized their decision that the SPD was not "a suitable partner for the new course."⁷⁸

This chapter has tried address one question concerning the perceptions American officials entertained vis-a-vis the SPD between 1947 and early 1949 and to what extent their growing restiveness with Schumacher's and his party's intransigence provoked them to intervene in German political decision making

⁷⁶. Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, "Die Deutsch-Alliierte Kontroverse um den Grundgesetzentwurf im Fruhjahr 1949", in Vierteljahrshefte fur Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 26, No. 3, July, 1978, p. 411.

⁷⁷. The Papers of Lucius D. Clay, Vol. II, From Clay for Department of Army, 19 April 1949, p. 1114. (When Clay describes Schumacher as "...defying the occupation authorities...", he is likely referring to the SPD's unnerving tactics designed to delay the constitutional drafting process, in the hopes of wresting more concessions in accordance with SPD policy.)

⁷⁸. Lewis J. Edinger, Kurt Schumacher..., pp. 169/70, and Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, "Die Deutsch-Alliierte Kontroverse..." p. 415.

process. While encouraging Social Democratic anti-communism, differences concerning the type of future German government dissipated most American officials' early enthusiasm for the SPD. But growing American reservations did not translate into opposition or hostility. The United States government fought where it could such measures as socialization and government centralization. But evidence that American officials conspired to weaken the party's influence and political importance remains scant. It is also unclear whether American officials were more afraid of socialism or Schumacher's nationalism.⁷⁹ Dean Acheson, in particular, appears to have feared that Schumacher's nationalism was likely to render the SPD a troublesome ally in the future. The Social Democratic party leader, even if he posed no serious threat to American security interests, was identified after 1947 as unlikely to contribute to these interests. If the SPD had been able to impede the free expression of American interests in Germany, for example, by becoming a more powerful political voice than it did, then, perhaps, American officials might have felt compelled to interfere far more aggressively.

⁷⁹. See once again: John Gimbel, The Origins of the Marshall Plan, pp. 217/8.

Conclusion

American tolerance in general of German political parties can be interpreted in two ways depending on one's assessment of American strength in the aftermath of the Second World War. First, American attitudes toward political parties can be described as admirable self-restraint exercised for the sake of a healthy democratization of Germany. Such tolerance presumably led the American government to accept the SPD even though its rallying cries for German national independence, the socialization of industries, the nationalization of credit institutes, centralization etc. smacked of socialism. Truthful to their "grass roots" approach to democratization, American officials, it could be said, wisely abstained from interfering too much, realizing that in the long run direct involvement by a foreign occupying power had to invoke the ire of the German people.

The second and more persuasive interpretation is that given the actual limitations of American power after the War, the American government was increasingly compelled to tolerate and subsequently make compromises with German political parties, including the SPD. Internationally, the East-West conflict left the United States scrambling for allies. American estrangement with the SPD, the party that at one point appeared destined to dominate West German politics, would have boded ill for any future German-American alliance against the Soviet Union. In the United States, opposition to the costly maintenance of U.S. troops in Europe and the Army's desire to terminate the occupation of Germany gave further incentive to the American government to end the occupation of Germany as soon as possible. American officials, working under these constraints, felt obliged to work for the speedy creation of a West German state with Germans resuming control of the levers of power. Being believers in political parties themselves, Americans had to respect, however grudgingly, the rights of German political parties to autonomous development, knowing at the same point that the government of West Germany would be turned over to them. Between 1945 and 1949, American officials felt obliged, therefore, to work with these parties.

There were two other reasons limiting American power inside Germany. The policy of self-restraint, or non-interference in domestic affairs as far as possible was, as Lucius D. Clay very wisely suggested, also part of the American military government's realization that Germans were better suited to administer their own country than American officials. Americans were not ill-prepared for the occupation of Germany. It had been planned in various stages throughout the United States involvement in the Second World War. War and State Department planning for occupation was augmented by thoughtful OSS research reports on Germany. But implicit in Clay's statement is the recognition that no amount of planning could have adequately prepared the United States for the magnitude and the intricacies of the tasks of occupying a distinctly different society. The other reason for allowing Germans soon after 1945 to participate in the administration of the American zone of occupation was that the American shortage in manpower made it imperative that German politicians and bureaucrats be invited to participate in ever greater numbers in the administration of Germany.

American occupation of Germany thus gradually devolved upon Germans. On issues such as a German constitution and economic policies, Germans could proceed more or less independently. American officials stayed in the background, reserving the right to pass final judgement. On a variety of occasions Lucius D. Clay vetoed decisive legislation such as socialization. In 1949 he objected to what he perceived to be an unacceptable tendency toward over-centralization of the German federal government. In general, Germans were free to reconstruct Germany within the framework of what the United States could afford to tolerate. But a too strongly centralized German government--perceived as a potential future threat to American security--was rejected.

Although the SPD often deplored the consequences such interference entailed, Clay and the American government did not act in a vacuum in their efforts to inhibit fundamental socialist reform. Clay after all enjoyed the backing of Adenauer's CDU, a party which in 1949 and increasingly throughout the 1950s enjoyed greater popular support among Germans than any other party. Clay,

perhaps, gave greater weight to the CDU. In shying away from the SPD, Clay was supported not just by a handful of German reactionary elitists as the German left has been tempted to suggest. Instead, Clay's skepticism about the SPD was shared by a majority of Germans, who expressed their opposition to the Social Democrat blueprint for Germany at the polls in 1949, and for over a decade thereafter.

The proof that Clay's position was widely held among Germans lies beyond 1949 in the federal election results of 1953 and 1957, which provide a useful mirror with which to judge the earlier period 1945 to 1949. Consecutive election defeats in 1953 and 1957 federal election revealed Social Democratic weaknesses. In 1953, the CDU alone was able to poll over 45 percent of the popular vote, compared to the SPD's 28.2 percent. Together with the liberal FDP's 9.3 percent and the conservative German Party's (DP) 3.3 Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was able to control a vast majority of 307 seats (of 487) in the Bundestag (parliament). The 1957 election results were similar. While the SPD increased their share of the vote by three percent (31.75), the CDU and its Bavarian affiliate the Christian Socialist Union (CSU) together obtained the absolute majority with 51.8 percent of the popular vote. The election results revealed a Christian Democratic party with broad mass appeal reaching all sections of society. The SPD, on the other hand, had remained stagnant, just barely able to improve upon its pre-1933 election record. It is unlikely that these election outcomes were the results of American interference on behalf of the CDU. More likely is that the SPD's agenda had failed to reach a majority of Germans.

The misunderstanding about the power wielded by Americans has been compounded by what American politicians and historians have claimed. American influence was important, but one should be careful not to exaggerate the American government's ability to interfere in German postwar politics. America's power apostle, Henry Kissinger, suggests in his memoirs that the United States government was powerful enough to dictate the directions the German government would take.² The prevailing belief in American omnipotence in Germany after

². Henry Kissinger, White House Years, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979, p. 97.

the war is best-illustrated by the American Julian Bach, a reporter after the war for the American military journal Army Talk, who wrote that "in America's Germany we do as we like. If it suits us to let Germans starve, they will starve. If we feel like blowing up aluminum factories, we will blow up aluminum factories. If we want Germans to read Thomas Jefferson and Mickey Mouse, they will read Thomas Jefferson and Mickey Mouse."²

Following Julian Bach's commentaries and those of others one could be tempted to conclude that American officials wielding immense power masterminded and implemented the new German political system purely on the basis as to whether it served their nation's interests. Bach is wrong however. In the post-war era, American power was never so clear-cut as to allow the application unreservedly of American political whims. The assumption that American authorities would have reverted to downright repressive measures to direct the German political process, if Germans had proved insufficiently pliable, is historically difficult to verify.

Bach's faith in American power, in other words, is mere hyperbole. Even if the United States had emerged the most powerful nation after the Second World War, several factors conspired to inhibit the full expression of this new-found strength. In international affairs, not only the Soviet Union, but also Great Britain and France, among others, fought for a role in determining Germany's future. The Soviet Union, eventually controlling Eastern Europe, was even more insistent. The British government's success in obtaining occupation of North Rhine-Westphalia including the Ruhr areas, despite similar American wishes to occupy these highly industrialized regions, demonstrated that British influence at least in 1945 was still weighty.³ As in the British case, the American desire to win France's alliance was part of the American government's awareness that it could not sustain indefinitely its military presence in Europe. Cognizant of Soviet power, the American government struggled to find viable alternatives. The goal was to limit a costly and

². my retranslation into English from a quote in: Caspar Schrenck-Notzing, Charakterwasche - Die Amerikanische Besatzung und ihre Folgen, Stuttgart, F.R. Germany: Seewald Verlag, 1965, p. 19.

³. Victor H. Rothwell, "Grossbritannien und die Anfänge des Kalten Krieges", in Josef Foscith, (ed.), Kalter Krieg und Deutsche Frage, pp. 88/89.

unpopular military presence in Europe without too much loss of power. The Marshall Plan and later the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in conjunction with the strategy of containment, were efforts in part to delegate American responsibilities to allies in Europe, while simultaneously preserving American predominance. Of course, aside from strategic interests of containing the Soviet Union, political and economic ones were also present*. A revived Western Europe could open the door for American products while augmenting American ability to resist further Soviet encroachments in Europe at low cost.*

The circumstances which denied the United States the opportunity to act alone thus mandated a revived Germany as one of the cornerstones of American power. A strong West German state could make an indispensable supplement to the defense of the Western world. But an economically and politically restored Germany could only have become truly useful, if its alliance stood on solid grounds. Given these assumptions, an unruly, independent German political leadership could not possibly have been welcome by the United States government.

It is here that Kurt Schumacher's SPD evolved into something of an anathema to American officials. Although recognized as an anti-communist, a relentless opponent of national socialism and a socialist reformer, Kurt Schumacher's volatile leadership never gained the trust and confidence of American officials. The SPD's exaggerated appeals for German neutrality and sovereignty were anxiously regarded by those officials who, while confident of Schumacher's anti-communist and anti-Soviet stance, worried about the effects upon American security interests that a too independent-minded Social Democratic government under Schumacher's leadership might have.

*. Michael J. Hogan, The Marshall Plan--American, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952, Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1987, pp. 26/7. (John Lewis Gaddis, in a slightly different context, has suggested that containment was a strategy devised at a point in American history where an economy minded Republican Congress after 1946 made the Truman administration realize that "interests would have to be contracted to fit means." Limiting American focus in Europe on maintaining control in the western part of that continent rather than recovering all of Europe, was a strategy based, "on the calculated relationship of resources to objectives." See: John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment--A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy, Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1982, pp. 23/4.

Although tolerant at first of the SPD after its political activity was recognized as peaceful in 1945, American officials grew restive the more imminent the creation of a new German republic became. A new German government vested with all the authority necessary to function fully, would have given the SPD, had it won the 1949 election, more power to defy the American government than it had previously had. It is perhaps questionable whether Kurt Schumacher would ever have become a threat to American interest. A number of important American observers had begun to sense after private conversations with Schumacher that probably he would not be.⁵ But even if American officials had generally been confident that Schumacher's SPD posed no threat, Konrad Adenauer's CDU, as Dean Acheson and Lucius D. Clay had intimated, presented a more attractive alternative. American officials concluded that it was simply not useful to foster the idea of a Social Democratic government, particularly, in view of the Christian Democratic option.

The available evidence indicates, however, that the part played by American officials in the early failures of the SPD between 1945 and 1949 was not decisive.⁶ What could, perhaps, be argued in part, having compared American goals and socialist visions for a future Germany, is that their differences were perceived by the German electorate which did not want to drift too far away from the Americans. But the SPD's vision itself must have been found wanting, for the party's inability to obtain an electoral majority in the late 1940s did not vanish with the termination of the American military government of Germany. The SPD's failure to realize its program in the 1950s powerfully illustrates the lack of appeal of the socialist agenda among the German people. A rapidly expanding economy accompanied by a drastic improvement in

⁵. From the available evidence it is also not clear who knew about the content of these conversations and the extent to which other American officials thought they could trust Schumacher's private statements.

⁶. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' comments prior to the 1953 federal election in Germany is admittedly a conspicuous piece of evidence. Noteworthy is that President Eisenhower chose to reprimand Dulles not for misrepresenting American policy but for being all too candid about touchy foreign issues. But these comments, for one, say little about American policy between the years 1945 to 1949. They, furthermore, do not prove that the American government interfered directly neither in 1953 nor in the post-war era. It appears that comments about domestic politics by foreign officials have traditionally proved counterproductive and are, therefore, best avoided.

the standard of living, as well as the achievements of Konrad Adenauer's coalition of moderate forces, made nonsense of Schumacher's persistent assurances that salvation was possible only under a Social Democratic government.

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Thanks to an index or a user's guide, the most useful document collections were the State Department, Foreign Relations of the United States and Confidential U.S. State Department Files (available on microfilm). In the late 1970s, the files of War Department's Office of the Military Government of the United States (OMGUS) were microfilmed and indexed by a team of German archivists. Although now much more accessible, this crucial collection remains far less organized than those of the State Department. The published Papers of Lucius D. Clay are immensely insightful, even though they limit themselves largely to the views of the man himself. Of unexpected interest were the OSS documents. However, the best reports from the "Research and Analysis Branch" and the Field Reports were drafted during the Second World War. Except for a few revealing details, memoirs by important American government officials proved to be of little use. Finally, in the realm of secondary literature, the works of Hans-Peter Schwarz, Wolfgang Krieger, John Gimbel, Lewis J. Edinger and with some reservations that of Hans-Jurgen Grabbe were particularly valuable.

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