

# The German Question (1943-8): An English School approach

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the treatment of the German Question in the context of the trilateral approach outlined by the English School of International Relations. I will firstly outline the basic tenets of Wight's trilateral approach and then proceed to tackle the Rationalist, Realist and Revolutionist aspects of the treatment of the German Question between 1943-8 and determine how these influenced the outcome of the nascent post-war international order.

A reformulation of the trilateral tradition of international relations theory outlined by Wight hinges upon the psychological roots of human association. Let us take the example of a married couple. It is however possible to say that it is this very continual overlapping of the three traditions that provide the international political system with a sense of order. The couple, upon entering into the institution of marriage, swear to abide by rules, principles and certain values that sustain the basic functions of the relationship. They may undertake to be monogamous, to have mutual respect, to share in the housekeeping duties and to contribute to the household expenditure. These undertakings represent the Rationalist aspect of the relationship. The rules and principles agreed upon by the couple, if honoured, may contribute to creating the conditions that would transform the relationship. The couple might decide to have children, to spend romantic weekends together and to buy a retirement home in the Caribbean. However, this couple may also have opposite views on politics, a different approach to expenditure and alternative ways of expressing love. These clashing views and attitudes represent the Realist aspect of the relationship. The association in which this couple enters into may be sustained for life or, indeed end at some point. However for the duration of the association, there will be elements that will preserve, challenge as well as transform its context, thus giving it a particular shape and meaning.

Drawing an analogy between individuals and states one may argue that in any reasonably well-constituted political order there are rules by which citizens abide. There are also group and individual interests, which create a competitive

atmosphere between societal actors. There is also the natural love and sense of belonging that the members of the political system feel for it. At international level, states may, for instance, share membership of international and supranational organisations, but be fierce about the protection of their national interest while pursuing it within the boundaries established and agreed by the members. The dynamics between the member states of the European Union is an eloquent example of this state of affairs. A member-state like Poland may on the surface value a relationship with the United States more than France and Germany for example. At the same time they may demand a louder voice within the European Union and ask for more subsidies and bigger institutional representation.

Wight suggests that the most distinguished theories of international politics can be divided into three basic categories: Realism, an international system-maintaining tradition which emphasises the concept of 'international anarchy'; Revolutionism, an international system-transforming paradigm which concentrates on the aspect of the 'moral unity' of the international society, and Rationalism, an international system-reforming perspective which is based on the aspect of 'international dialogue and intercourse'.<sup>1</sup> Wight thought that the three traditions influence and cross-fertilise each other, constantly evolving but without losing their inner identity.<sup>2</sup>

However, by rejecting each extreme, the realist, in which power is the central force in international relations, and the utopian perspective, with its call to revolutionise the international system of states, the English School embodies the notion of a middle course between practical demands and moral claims. In contrast to the realist approach, the English School maintains that states are not entangled in a permanent struggle for power and that they limit their conflicts through common rules, institutions and moral imperatives. However, unlike the Kantian tradition, the English School accepts the realist premise that the state is the primary reality of the international political system and maintain that these imperatives foreswear the replacement of the society of states by an universal community of mankind.<sup>3</sup> One of the basic assumptions of this approach is that although the traditions overlap, Rationalist provides a *via media* between national interest pursuits and moral claims.

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<sup>1</sup> Wight M., *International Theory*, (London: Leicester University Press, a division of Pinter Publishers) (1991), p. 7-8

<sup>2</sup> Wight M., *International Theory*, op. cit, p. 260

<sup>3</sup> Bull H., *The Anarchical Society*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan) (1995), p. 26-7

There appears to be a continual overlapping of the three traditions in international politics. The treatment of the German Question between 1943-8 is an example of how the three lines of interpretation collide, overlap and supplement each other.

### **A Rationalist perspective**

The normative theory of Nardin can be placed in a similar theoretical category to the English School, since it addresses questions relating to standards of behaviour, obligations, rights and duties as they pertain to states and the international system and as such it ranges over all aspects of the subject area including international law, international political economy and diplomacy.<sup>4</sup>

Nardin replicates Oakeshott's model on a global scale: international society is best seen as a *practical association* made up of states each devoted to its own conception of good. Practical association is a 'set of considerations to be taken into account in deciding and evaluating decisions and actions'.<sup>5</sup> For Nardin, 'the common good resides not in the ends that some, or at times even most, of its members may wish collectively to pursue, but in the values of justice, peace, security and co-existence, which can only be enjoyed through participation in a common body of authoritative practices'.<sup>6</sup>

According to Nardin, we should not understand the society of states as a *purposive association* but rather as a procedural *societas* which protects the common interests of states in stable co-existence. Nardin argues that the *societas* is undermined if states or any other actors attempt to transform it into a purposive association. Justice is about impartial rules, which impose obligations on all states with equal force, regardless of the distribution of power and wealth among them.

The practical association model is intimately related to the emphasis that English School places on common rules and interests for the attainment of order and the taming of the worst effects of naked power. The procedural *societas* described by Nardin approximates the normative and descriptive value of the international society

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<sup>4</sup> Evans G., and Newnham J. (Ed.), *Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*, (London: Penguin Books) (1998), p.382

<sup>5</sup> Nardin T., *Law, Morality and the Relations of States*, (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press) (c.1983), p. 6

<sup>6</sup> Nardin T., *Law, Morality and the Relations of States*, op cit., p. 19

model of the English School inasmuch as it reinforces the concept of procedural justice, which was to be quintessential in order to achieve a solid working arrangement for the great powers in regards to the German question.

During the 1943-8 period, the main wartime Allies (the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union) were obliged to deal with the most system-defining question of all: the German Question. The treatment of the German Question was contained within the framework of international law, diplomacy and the making of a balance of power to serve the post-war international order. This framework smoothed the divergences among the Allies that stemmed from their pursuit of the national interest and helped to transform and revolutionise not only Germany, but the post-war international political system as a whole.

In the period stemming from the Casablanca Conference of January 1943 until the Potsdam Conference of April 1945 the practical association framework was pivotal to defeat the common enemy and its evolution helped to lay the foundations of the post-war international system. The practical association framework disciplined the behaviour of the Allies as it set a clear marriage between the legal arrangements nurtured through the process of diplomatic, military and financial cooperation and an ethical dimension, which prevailed over concerns imposed by the national interest. The moral and legal obligations of the practical association framework imposed prudence on the Allies, enabling them to maintain a connection between the different political spheres while allowing considerable space for inner dynamics.<sup>7</sup>

The onset of World War Two prompted the making of a new society of states. This society of states started to take a visible shape with the entry of the Soviet Union and the United States into the war. The practical association established by the Allies constituted the embryo of the international political system which would emerge at the end of the war. War, as a Rationalist element, derives its legitimacy from the service it renders to international society as a whole.<sup>8</sup> When the conflagration became global in spectrum and affected the international political system as a whole, it took the significant of an 'epochal war',<sup>9</sup> hence propelling the

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<sup>7</sup> Coll A., '*Normative Prudence as a Tradition of Statecraft*' in Rosenthal, Joel H., *Ethics & international affairs: a reader*, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press) (1999) p. 78

<sup>8</sup> Anderson K, and Hurrell A., *Hedley Bull on international society*, p. 101

<sup>9</sup> Bobbitt defines an 'epochal war' as 'a war that challenges and ultimately changes the basic constitutional structure of the State, by linking strategic to constitutional innovations'. Bobbitt, P., *The shield of Achilles: war, peace and the course of history* (London: Allen Lane) (2002), p. 907 and pp. 21-3

Allies to create a *new* international order based on a *new* international legal framework which would not only juxtapose the Axis credo but fill the legal vacuum of the interwar period which had overhauled the international system.

This period signalled the start of an unprecedented phenomenon in the modern history of the society of states. The Allies determined the future shape of the post-war society of states in a radically different way than that envisaged by their former enemy. The practical association framework established by the Allies in the 1943-8 period rejected the racially motivated configuration of the international order desired by the Axis. It differed from the system established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, where the Restoration powers were compelled to adopt many of the Napoleonic reforms and it also differed from the system laid down by the Treaty of Versailles Conference in 1919, (whose treatment of Germany would sow the seeds of the revisionist attempt of the 1930s) which refused to accommodate ideological differences among its members by denying admittance to Soviet Russia and denying Japan a clause for racial equality.

The international law laid down during this period constrained the conduct of the Big Three as it created an ethical relationship which sustained the edifice of practical association, making it workable among the members of an Alliance who lacked shared beliefs and values.<sup>10</sup> The rationalist legal structure of the practical association prevented the emergence of ideological disputes between the Western powers and the Soviet Union. The discourse used in order to make the practical association function was not hermetically sealed off from one another as it was between the Allies and the Axis. The Big Three employed a normative view in their dealings with one another in order to prevent that their difference of ideologies would cause an irresolvable confrontation that would undermine the chances of defeating the common enemy.<sup>11</sup> Both the Western powers and the Soviet Union adopted a state-centric discourse, which enabled them to see beyond their own inner ideological dynamics and in spite of Realist concerns, to discuss the shape of a future society of states.

The legal framework of the practical association, established by the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations was enhanced during this period through intense summitry diplomacy. The law laid down during this period was highly optimistic about the prospect of maintaining the collaboration with the Soviet Union

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<sup>10</sup> Nardin T., *Law, Morality and the Relations of States*, op. cit., p. 305

<sup>11</sup> Frost. M., *Towards a normative theory of international relations*, (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press) (1986), p. 89

after the war and the fight against the Axis was therefore waged with that prospect in mind. But for the common goal of working together in peacetime, there could have been a rift between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union which could have significantly altered the culmination of the war as well as the foundations of the future alignment of the post-war international system.

The Tehran Conference of 1943 constituted a diplomatic milestone for the practical association framework, as it devised a highly defined military strategy and a strong determination to marshal the post-war international system into relatively peaceful coexistence between the Soviet Union and its Western Allies.

This modus operandi was reiterated throughout this period of practical association. International law was understood as a framework of restraint and coexistence, which presupposed toleration and diversity.<sup>12</sup> At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers of 1944 the Big Three agreed to insure that for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security pending the inauguration of a system of general security they will consult with one another and as occasion requires with other members of the United Nations, with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations, an objective enshrined at Tehran.

The Dumbarton Oaks declaration of October 1944 stated that the purposes of the general international organisation should be 'to maintain international peace and security' and 'to that end to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace'.<sup>13</sup> While these measures were also reflected in the spirit and letter of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the international organisation enshrined with the creation of the United Nations (set up by the Conference of San Francisco in 1945), had as its purpose a more effective and comprehensive organisation of the international political system.

The foundations of the post-war international order were delineated through an effective cooperation between the main Allies. This extended to the military and financial spheres, measures indispensable in order to win the war, waged in a multitude of fronts and within a coalition of diverse ideological criteria and national interests.

The Alliance waged war in order to preserve the continuation of the balance of

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<sup>12</sup> Nardin T., *Law, Morality and the Relations of States*, op. cit., p. 322-4

<sup>13</sup> *Washington Conversations on International Peace and Security Organization. October 7, 1944*-<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1944/441007a.html>

power system and ridding it from the effects of the hegemonic aspirations of a regime based on a sadistic and brutal ideology. The Allies understood that the continuity of an international system based on a balance of power entailed a multiplicity of ideologies or at the very least, a modicum of coexistence between Communism and liberal democracy.

Bull argued that the balance of power is an artifact to a desirable end.<sup>14</sup> Its normative basis has been described as crucial for its proper functioning<sup>15</sup> as in the case of the alliances established by France and Russia (1892), France and Britain (1904) and Britain and Russia (1907), which had all forgone ideological considerations in order to balance against the ever-threatening power of Wilhelmine Germany. So did the Big Three during 1941-5. The Allies fought to preserve the survival of independent as the basic aim of the balance of power, which exists in a society of states and to restore the state for self-interest but pursued by attention to group interest.<sup>16</sup>

Rationalism stresses the inter-subjective legal and moral understandings, which bring a measure of civility to the anarchic condition of the international order.<sup>17</sup> The prosecution of the war refrained the Allies from discussing the shape of post-war Germany in any definite form, lest it should meddle adversely in the joint war effort, and from making the German question an issue of irreparable discord.

Mitrany argues that *functional action* (in this case in regards to the German question) influences international society by rationally developing what is already in the system.<sup>18</sup> The Allies pursued the treatment of the issues related to the German Question through the gradual and rational process, which developed from their own planning and the diplomatic Allied interaction. Because of the war, the Allies muddled through a shared decision making process which was influenced by a diversity of psychological, cultural and sociological factors. However, the framework of practical association was consistent throughout the existence of the association and as such it

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<sup>14</sup> Bull, H., *The Anarchical Society*, op. cit., p. 100

<sup>15</sup> Brown, C., *Understanding International Relations* (Palgrave: London and Basingstoke) (2001), p. 112

<sup>16</sup> Gulick, E. V., *Europe's classical balance of power: a case history of the theory and practice of one of the great concepts of European statecraft* (London and New York: Norton) (1955), p. 30-1

<sup>17</sup> Burchill S., Linklater A., Devetak R., Paterson M. and True J. (Ed.) *Theories of international relations*, (Macmillan: London) (1997), p.109-110

<sup>18</sup> Mitrany, David, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, (Martin Robinson & Co.: London) (1975), p. 119-21

proved capable of ensuring a rational treatment of the German Question and prevent the abovementioned factors from paralysing the overall treatment of the German Question.

The psychological gap between the Allies and the Soviet Union was not unbreachable; practical association had brought them together and enabled a cognitive opening that was later an useful, if not to avoid misperceptions, at least not to let those misperceptions mar the general scope of diplomacy and trigger an all-out war. The breakdown of practical association over Germany was managed within a rationalist framework that not only avoided an all-out confrontation but most importantly, preserved the tenets of co-operation established during the war and its immediate aftermath.

The treatment of the German Question and the various issues related to it were discussed at national level and at inter-Allied level. The US administration was particularly divided as to how to deal with Germany and there was an obvious rift between State and treasury and among the different officials. Britain had a more cohesive attitude to the German Question, considering partition but emphasising the need for the future economic viability of Germany. The Soviet Union had a preference on security matters and economic reparations and those issues informed the way Moscow wanted to deal with Germany. The Allies engaged in the diplomacy of Germany agreeing to continue the process of negotiations and managing to create a rationalist, legalistic framework for that diplomacy as well as the occupation of Germany. The treatment of the German Question was informed by the general aspects of the practical association framework and was also an influential factor in how the practical association framework developed.

The fact that the German Question was negotiated at the level of diplomacy only in 1947, gave the occupation machinery and unfolding of events, sufficient leeway to determine the actual split of Germany. One can only conjecture what could have been the effect of a treaty on Germany at the beginning of the occupation. Certainly the Allies recoiled from hurrying into such an agreement that could have deterred their national interest. None of the Allies was sure as to what to do with the Germany because their overriding concern was Germany's position in regards to their national interest.

One can be almost certain that the course of events from start of occupation to partition was not the result of concocted efforts by any of the Allies, acting according to their national interest or in unison. Tentative policies in regards to Germany were put forward since 1943 and the whole array of possible outcomes to the German Question were contained in the rationalist framework set by the Allies for the conduct of the war and the treatment of the German Question itself. This was the Allies' greatest achievement and most important legacy to the international political system that endured until the German Reunification in the 1990s. This rationalist framework produced a stalemate in Europe and a symmetrical balance of power that extended well beyond the frontiers of the Old Continent.

The German Question created the bipolar system and for the during of the Cold War international order, that very same German Question would remain the most important pawn of the superpower interaction. On one hand, the treatment of the German Question created a Soviet policy for Europe, extending Soviet influence in Europe like never before in the history of the Russian polity.

It also created a Western policy, which would extend beyond the fate of post-war Germany. The United States saw an opportunity for establishing a foothold in Europe and therefore to create a Liberal economic order. This was 'accelerated' by the British willingness to create a 'Western' policy for Germany and therefore Europe (and beyond) to ensure a dignified decline in its relative position in world affairs.

After Germany declared its unconditional surrender, the practical association that tied the four occupation powers together during the war suffered a gradual breakdown. But while there was growing disagreement based on self-interest and mutual suspicion over the issue of the occupation and the future shape of Germany, this clash of views was more tolerable than that suggested by the 'domestic analogy' outlined by Hobbes. Disagreements over the issues related to German did not create political anarchy. The façade of four-power co-operation (maintained primarily through the diplomatic machinery of the Council of Foreign Ministers after war) and the beginning of the organisation of two distinct political and economic blocs facilitated an orderly, gradual and peaceful transition to an international order based on balance of power.

The Allies' greatest triumph in regards to the treatment of the German Question was the prevention of a complete breakdown of inter-Allied relations

because of disagreements over issues like reparations the economic and political set of the occupation zones. The Allies established a highly organised apparatus of occupation, joint and zonal. This apparatus succeeded in containing, within a legalistic framework, the effects of the breakdown of the wartime practical association. Although their common concerns extended beyond Germany, the vanquished nation was the most important 'battleground' of the nascent international order. The occupation structure, the policies on which the Allies agreed on and implemented, the channels of negotiation *and* the façade of cooperation contributed to preventing an abrupt and potentially dangerous end of cooperation over Germany.

The Potsdam agreement and the occupation apparatus, the wartime legacy of law-making and cooperation and quite possibly post-war fatigue, ensured that the breakdown came about gradually and incrementally and tamed by the constraints imposed by diplomacy and the inter-Allied occupation structure. The Allies operated, half-unwittingly, half-consciously, under the premise of *pacta sunt servanda and rebus sic stantibus*. They were engaged in a practical association but also reserved the right to excuse themselves from the arrangement, although this was achieved in a gradual and incremental manner and as a result of the evolution of the situation. In doing so they created a new international order.

The transition from quadripartite control, effectively broken by March 1948, to a bipolar configuration of the German problem and the international political system meant a peace of sorts between the Allies and the Two Germanys which endured for the duration of the Cold War. This '*peace of sorts*' was vigorous enough to sustain the conflict of interests between the two superpowers. The enormity and the vastness of the German Question created a situation by which both superpowers were compelled to establish clear parameters and minimum goals in the treatment of Germany.

While rationalism accepts a variety of contexts in which a balance of power situation can exist, it generally thinks of equilibrium in international politics as an even distribution of power, that is, a state of affairs in which no power is so preponderant that it can endanger others.<sup>19</sup>

That was the kind of balancing achieved in the international system created by the division of Germany. The United States exercised its preponderance in order to organise the unity of the West but its use of power did not extend to working

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<sup>19</sup> Wight, M. and Butterfield, H. (Ed.), *Diplomatic investigations: essays in the theory of international politics*, (London: George Allen and Unwin) (1966), p.151

towards eliminating the Soviet bloc. For the United States and the West, balance of power meant containment, not a crusade to rid the world of Communism. Likewise, the Soviet 'Two Camps' theory meant that the Soviet Union were interested in having a sphere of influence and lead world Communism but not in initiating an ideological crusade in order to destroy the West. The balance of power between the West and the Soviet Union resulted from a calculated use of power and pursuit of the national interest.

The balance of power which would prevail during the next four decades pre-empted an all-out confrontation along realist lines. Even when the treatment of the German Question became more confrontational, as in the Berlin Blockade, the United States and the emerging Western bloc preferred a costly and politically embarrassing airlift to the possibility of waging war in order to have a unified Germany under Western wings. Germany's division was accepted as a distinct possibility since Bizonia and by the time of the start of the blockade it had become a de facto reality that would give shape to the Cold War international political system.

Partition came about through the occupation but was also informed by diplomacy and policy and was the corollary of a diplomacy that gradually discarded the practical association model of the war years and confronted two different socio-political systems confronted each other. Partition was not a fortuitous event. It was an outcome managed by the orderly diplomacy of the great powers<sup>20</sup> through the CFM, which would gradually paved the way for a continent and an international system divided along ideological lines. Once the German question was settled in the form of orderly partition, the formation of co-existent spheres of influence took a definite shape

### **A Realist perspective**

The development of a practical association model did not preclude the pursuit of the national interest on the part of the Big Powers along Realist lines. Indeed, the association of the great powers did not seem to have the most auspicious background. Bolshevism stood against the Anglo-American historical experience of individual freedom and voluntary social progress. The United States officially recognised the Soviet Union only in 1933 (Britain did so in 1931) and the senior policy-makers at the Foreign Office as well as Churchill himself were deeply

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<sup>20</sup> Dunne T., *Inventing international society: a history of the English school*, p. 147

suspicious of the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> British, American and French forces had aided the White side during the Russian Civil War (1917-20) and occupied part of its territory. Western Europe had turned a blind eye to Mussolini, Franco and the assortment of dictatorships that sprawled across Europe during the 1920s and 1930s and built a *cordon sanitaire* against the Soviet Union through a series of military treaties.

The Soviet Union had a highly authoritarian political system under the leadership of a brutal dictator and an economic system that was diametrically opposed to that of the Western Allies. In the later 1920s, the Soviet Union had embarked upon a process of war-oriented industrialisation and, most importantly, it had signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939, with whom it divided Poland. This general context of suspicion clouded the general context of inter-Allied relations and it spilled over the issues over Germany where the Allies had diverging interests.

The main Allies engaged in this practical association with specific needs in mind, namely, survival and the pursuit of the national interest. Britain needed to prevent the collapse of its war effort and in a post-war scenario, for Germany to be self-sufficient and stop being a threat to world peace, as well as the preservation of its influence and power and financial aid to reconvert its economy to peacetime needs. The Soviet Union needed financial aid for its war effort, territorial advancement into Central and Eastern Europe to prevent an encirclement by the Western powers, and the opening of the Second Front to relieve the pressure of having to fight the Germans. America needed Britain and the Soviet Union to keep carrying the brunt of the war in Europe and to ensure the suppression of Germany as a challenger to the international order as well as to ensure that any post-war settlement would be in line with a Liberal system of exchange in order to prevent another Depression.

Within the general context of practical association, there were issues where the interests of the each of the Big Three diverged. Britain and America clashed over the demise of the imperial structure after the war and the demotion of power and influence of Britain in the post-war international system. The Western Allies clashed with the Soviet Union over territorial issues in Central and Eastern Europe and the Second Front. This divergence of interests as well as the different needs of each of the Big Three

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<sup>21</sup> Ruotsila M., *British and American anticommunism before the Cold War*, (London and Portland, OR : Frank Cass ) (2001), p. xiii

clouded the general spectrum of co-operation and spilled over the diplomacy of the German Question *directly or indirectly*. The Big Three experienced disagreements over the issues of reparations, the occupation of Germany as well as its possible dismemberment.

The practical association framework established by the Allies since 1941, responded primarily to the need to defeat the Axis. For Britain and the Soviet Union, it was truly a war of national survival. Germany attempted to dominate the whole of Europe and establish a political and economic system radically different from the tradition of Western parliamentarianism and the Communism ideals. The ideology of the Axis had a racial motivation which informed every political and economic policy in the territories occupied by Japan and Germany. The United States was threatened in the Pacific by the mighty power of Japan and would have probably be left isolated and relegated as an irrelevant regional power had the Axis won the war. In order to ensure survival, the Big Three acted primarily on the premise of self-interest, not on ideological concerns. They acted on the Machiavellian principle of survival as the main goal of political action.<sup>22</sup>

The Alliance was forged in the end from the bare metal of national self-interest. It survived as long as each side needed the other to help achieve victory. As Roosevelt said to Adolph Berle, Assistant US Secretary of State

‘ We] are much better off if we treat the Russian situation for what it is, namely, a temporary confluence of interests’.<sup>23</sup>

The New Nazi Order specifically targeted Eastern Europe (and Russia in particular) as the *lebensraum* of a Nazi-dominated European economic system. In this context, the Second Front became an issue of utmost importance for Moscow, since Germany had taken all its Western territories and by mid-1942 was only miles away from the oil fields of the Caucasus. Survival and self-interest also prompted Stalin to discuss with its Western partners the issue of territorial claims in Eastern Europe in what would appear to be a concern for a ‘buffer zone’ (if not a sphere of influence yet) that would deter future aggression against the Soviet Union on the part of Germany, and, potentially on the part of the Western Allies themselves.

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<sup>22</sup> Machiavelli, N., *The Prince*, (London: Dent) (1958), ch. 15, 61

<sup>23</sup> Overy, R., *Why the Allies Won*, (Pimlico: London) (1995), p.3

Britain needed US aid in order to prevent a total collapse of its economy and its war effort, which was consuming 50% of its wealth and manpower. The United States needed Soviet as well as British and Imperial forces to carry on with the brunt of the fighting. Necessity brought the members of the Alliance into a practical association framework but with a constant regard for their interests.

Confrontation between the Allies over the German Question loomed in the horizon during the war. While the Rationalist practical association framework created the conditions for cooperation, it did not deter the Allies from confronting over issues like territorial make ups, the possible dismemberment of Germany after the war and reparations, all of which were discussed in the context of their post-war interests.

After the war, these clashing interests took the treatment of the German Question in the direction of a Soviet zone organised along Moscow lines and the increasing integration of the Anglo-American zones in 1947 and the joining of the French Zone (1948) to pave the way for a West German state in 1949.

The breakdown which unfolded during this period, created the conditions for a nascent international order based on balance of power between the Soviet Union (with its increasingly Sovietised zone in Germany *primarily*, and the increasing influence of Communist Parties in central and Eastern Europe) and the Anglo-American front, which, because of their mutual interest in rehabilitating the zones of occupation, the political and economic pressures of running it and the need to secure a foothold in Europe, realised that their common interests were best served through Bizonia and a common stance against the Soviet Union. With the implementation of Bizonia on January 1, 1947 the writing was on the wall for the total dissolution of the practical association over Germany and the creation of a bipolar international order.

The political and economic organisation of the zones of occupation was implemented according to the self-interest of the occupying powers. The gradual breakdown of practical association over Germany prompted the organisation of the Soviet and the Western zones according to the diktat of Moscow and a growing interaction of London and Washington. While the Soviet Union was Sovietising its zone in Germany as well as creating a political redoubt in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Allies reacted simultaneously by creating Bizonia and by pushing for the economic Liberal order envisaged by Washington during wartime.

Western Europe, and specifically France and Italy, also provided the scene for confrontation, with efforts to keep those two nations under the Western camp. But it was the gradual dissolution of practical association over Germany, as seen in the diplomatic failure of the Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers Conference in 1947 and the increasing organisation of the German zones according to the national interest of the Allies which would serve as a catalyst for the creation of the post-war international order. While the Sovietisation of Central and Eastern Europe was by no means complete until 1948 (and would suffer a serious blow in the Balkans with Marshall Tito's disaffiliation from the camp led by Moscow), *the Soviet 'sphere of influence' in the Continent was created in the zone occupied by the Soviet Union in Germany*. The very fact that the Soviet Union exercised direct zonal control in Germany, unlike central and Eastern Europe where they had to reckon with the tripartite agreement of the Allied Control Commissions, meant that the Sovietisation of one third of Germany was completed *before* the consolidation of a 'sphere of influence' in Central and Eastern Europe.

Likewise, Bizonia served as the most important milestone for the creation of a 'Western Policy' for Germany and the configuration of a 'Western bloc'. While this created a rational response to the problem of Germany, it also hotted up the nascent international order, which would also be based on confrontation and mutual distrust. While it is possible to say in hindsight that Sovietisation and Bizonia plus the occupation structure might have avoided an all out war over Germany, also contributed significantly to the division of the continent and to the tense relations between the West and the Soviet Union. Coupled with the atomic race, the volatile situation in Asia and the general aura of suspicion, it would give rise to an international order that, while in operation under rationalist and partly revolutionist conditions, was also under constant threat of disruption.

Because Germany was the ideological battlefield for the nascent political struggle over the shape of the post-war international order, the United States (with the influence of Britain) was forced to lay the foundations for the economic recovery of Western Germany and Western Europe with the Marshall Plan. The Brussels Treaty of 1948 and the creation of NATO (1949) would solidify the process of the creation of a political Western Bloc in Europe. While the Western powers endeavoured to secure

the Western part of Germany for their side and rebuild Europe on the basis of the Western political and economic system, the Soviet Union was forced to secure the Eastern part of Germany and abandon the idea of keeping Germany unified. That would in turn produce the consolidation of a East German state and the creation of a Soviet-led bloc in Europe. Its pillars were COMINFORM, the Warsaw Pact (1955), an organisation of military assistance founded in response to the formation of NATO, and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in 1949.

The political and economic organisation of occupied Germany proceeded along Realist lines and the confrontation which ensued from it finalised the end of four-power agreement over Germany and its partition into two states: West Germany, modeled along capitalist and liberal democratic lines and East Germany, organised along the political and economic lines imposed by Moscow. Two socio-economic systems confronted each other on the question of the political and economic organisation of Germany and a security dilemma, product of the mutual suspicion, built up rapidly, resulting in the division of Germany. This confrontation would entail the formation of two blocs that would gradually give meaning and order not only to the German question but to the nascent post-war international order as a whole.

Germany represented a challenge and a window of opportunity for a US-led Western bloc and the Soviet Union. For the Soviets, a Communist-orientated East Germany was the foothold required in Central Europe and a permanent say and shaping of the German Question. For the United States and the core group of Western European countries it represented the opportunity to, on one hand, create a system of multilateral free trade and political institutions which could facilitate the entrenchment of a Liberal economic order as well as the opportunity to harness, through economic and political unity, the vast industrial potential of Germany.

## **A Revolutionist perspective**

The rationalist framework put in place between 1943-8 created the conditions for the emergence of revolutionist elements in the nascent international order. In the general context, the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers compelled them to achieve a modicum of tolerance which would result in the ultimate co-existence of ideologies in the post-war international political system.

The treatment of the German Question contained the seeds of the nascent international order based on, to a considerable extent, cooperation and cohabitation of the main two ideologies that defeated Nazism. The fact that during the war the Allies had to operate under a rationalist framework contributed to them having to cooperate in the efforts to organise the post-war international order. In regards to the German Question, the transformation of the German political and economic system through the occupation, the ridding of Nazism as the dominant ideology and the administrative, political, cultural and educational reform put in place where the elements that would revolutionise Germany, Europe and international political system after 1945.

The Western zones of occupation were by the end of 1946 on their way to greater economic and political interdependence with Western Europe. For the Western Zones (and the West German state from 1949), a politically emasculated Germany meant the possibility of true cooperation within the framework of European integration. This was facilitated by the permanent nature of the United States in Europe; a permanence secured by 1947 with the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic institutions that would preserve the peace in Europe.

The Eastern Zone became the first political set up in Europe to have a close resemblance to the Soviet political system. The presence of the Soviet Union in Central and Eastern Europe (as per Moscow's fears of another encirclement by the West) meant the threat of a Soviet advancement into Western Europe. This in turn would compel integration between West Germany and its former foes and present the United States with an opportunity to create a 'One World' Liberal economic order in the Western half of Europe.

The Marshall Plan, its implementation, its refusal by the Soviet Union and its Eastern satellites and the consolidation of two European blocs finalised the process initiated with the Sovietisation of the Eastern zone and the creation of Bizonia in the 1945-6 period.

This set of circumstances gave both superpowers an impetus to help with the integration of their respective blocs through the policy of economic planning which, although orientated towards free market policies in the West, were both aimed at securing a political foothold in both Germany and Europe. The Marshall Plan was intended to exercise a political as well as an economic influence for both blocs. It

created the Western bloc and galvanised the process of Continental integration and the Europeanisation of the German Question, rehabilitating Germany not as the master of the Continent but as its true economic engine. This process, which took an impressive impetus with the Nazi occupation of Western Europe, was consolidated at the London Conference of Six Power in June 1948, which provided the framework for close economic and political cooperation in Western Europe.

The strong military presence and the reorganisation of Germany by the zonal and inter-Allied administrations meant that Germany would become not only the chessboard but also the most important pawn in the realignment of world politics. This subordinate position of Germany, which constrained the ability of the Germans to deal with the German Question themselves, produced a change of attitude in the mindset of ordinary Germans. By 1948, there was no rancorous feeling among the Germans unlike 1918. In the same way Monarchism had failed in 1918, so had Nazism in 1945.

The legal provisions laid down at wartime stated the unanimous and unambiguous will of the Allies to reform what they perceived was the militaristic, warlike disposition of Germany, with its potential to disrupt the international political system, as was the case twice in the twentieth century. It was in the Allies interest to de-prussianise the character of German society and its system of government. The Western Allies did by way of setting up political and economic foundations akin to the liberal democratic and free-market systems in Washington, London and Paris. The Soviets did it by imposing socialistic measures that were directed against the big landowners and captains of industry and banking that supported Hitler's rise to power and its war of aggression on the international order.

The experience of the Nuremberg Trials, the education reform and cultural policies implemented throughout the zones of occupation, coupled with the denazification of life in society produced a political reformation in Germany, whose legacy survives to this day.

## **Conclusions**

The elements of conflict, legality and cooperation overlapped and shaped the final outcome of the German Question. This approach is also useful for determining the contribution of the treatment of the German Question to the post-war

international order and the very origins of the Cold War. The combination of factors involved in the making of the post-war international order were vast and complex. The very existence of two different ideologies created a system by which toleration came at the cost of a split in the international order; a split that spread from Germany to the rest of Europe. This puts in to perspective both the orthodox and revisionist positions. The United States and the Soviet Union had a to deal with a vacuum of power in Germany and as such they had intervened decisively in the configuration of the post-war international order.

Like the treatment of the German Question, the realignment of the post-war international order unfolded within the boundaries of highly calculated political moves, which although responding to the national interest, were highly restrained. The Allies gave the German Question a most comprehensive treatment, setting the path for the reconciliation between Germany's legitimate claims for political respectability and the elimination of the possibility of a post-war German challenge to the international political system.

The Cold War international order would end in the same way it began: through the orderly resolution of the German Question. The reunification of Germany and the European continent in 1990 would have similar characteristics to the process of partition: conflict and cooperation, framed within the highly complex legal and diplomatic system. That was the international order that the Allies created.