The Cold War: The Problem of Germany

I. Yalta Conference 2/45
   A. Big Three
      1. **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**--US
         a. Chief goal is to secure Soviet declaration of war on Japan
      2. **Winston Churchill**--Great Britain
      3. **Josef Stalin**--USSR
   B. Agreements regarding Europe
      1. USSR receives part of eastern Poland
      2. Poland compensated by moving western border to the Oder.
      3. USSR would receive largest share of the reparations from Germany
      4. Germany to be divided into US, British, French, and Soviet zones of occupation (ZOC)
         a. Berlin to be jointly governed by the Four Powers
         b. Democratic interim governments were to hold free elections in the liberated states.
      5. “democratic” and “free” proved to be enormously flexible.
   C. Agreements regarding Asia
      1. USSR would receive **Sakhalin island** and the **Kurile Islands**, plus rights in Manchuria (including the naval base at Port Arthur and the operation of the Manchurian Railroad): in other words, a return to the status quo ante 1905 (before the Russo-Japanese War)
      2. Outer Mongolia becomes a Soviet satellite
      3. Stalin promised to declare war on Japan between 60 and 90 days after Germany’s surrender.
         a. Stalin kept this promise to the day.
   D. A “Declaration on Liberated Europe” was issued
      1. Stalin once told Anthony Eden that a declaration was “algebra” and an agreement was “practical arithmetic.” Stalin did not disparage algebra, but he preferred practical arithmetic. (McCauley 55)
      2. Factors to Remember
         a. The Battle of the Bulge left the West in a poor bargaining position
         b. Location at Yalta gave Stalin a stronger bargaining position
         c. FDR’s military advisers were adamant on the subject of Soviet help with Japan. FDR has to pay Stalin’s price.

II. Potsdam 7-8/45
   A. Big Three
      1. **Harry S Truman**--US
         a. FDR had died 4/12/45
      2. **Clement Atlee**
         a. Churchill was defeated during the conference
      3. **Josef Stalin**
B. Stalin’s shopping list
1. Decide on German reparations
2. Liquidate the London Polish government
3. Internationalization of the Ruhr
4. Soviet trusteeship over Libya
5. Rupture diplomatic relations with Spain
6. Replace the Montreux Convention on the Straits with Russian control
7. Return to the Soviet Union of land lost to Soviet Georgia and Soviet Armenia in 1921
   a. While the first 3 can be tied to legitimate defense interests, the last four are fundamentally aggressive.
   b. These may have been bargaining chips, but Stalin does not drop them here.

C. Agreements regarding Europe
1. Truman recognizes the Lublin government in Poland, bowing to Stalin’s fait accompli.
2. Truman refused to acknowledge the governments of Bulgaria and Romania, with James MacGregor Byrnes citing violations of the Declaration on Liberated Europe.
   a. this position was later softened and we accepted the governments in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland.
3. The US accepts changes to the Polish-German border placing it on the Oder-Neisse Line (shifted westwards)
4. Byrnes offers Stalin not only reparations from his zone of Germany, but 25% of the Western zone as well.
   a. Truman regards both actions as evidence of a lack of good faith, but agrees in recognition of the Soviet sphere of influence.

D. Agreements regarding Asia
1. Korea was to be occupied by the Soviets north of the 39th parallel, and by the US south of that line.

E. Other issues were resolved by a conference of Foreign Ministers, usually in favor of Soviet demands.
1. This also leaves a bad impression on Truman.

III. Marshall Plan 1948-1952
A. Marshall left the Moscow Conference in 1947 deeply concerned by the lack of progress on Germany. “All the way back to Washington . . . [he] talked of the importance of finding some initiative to prevent the complete breakdown of Western Europe.” (qtd. In Dunbabin 90)
1. Proposed by General of the Army (now Secretary of State) George Catlett Marshall at a speech at Harvard
   a. The only general I know of who has won (and deservedly so) the Nobel Prize for Peace

B. Marshall said that the US would assist “the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.”
1. Ernest Bevin and French Foreign Minister Bidault called a conference in Paris in 1947, to which they invited
   2. Molotov walked out, which was a huge blunder.
      a. Poland and Czechoslovakia planned to attend
         (1) This is a threat, since their participation would inevitably orient their economies toward the West
         (2) Stalin cracked the whip, and the Eastern Europeans stayed away.

3. Stalin makes a second blunder by ordering Western Communist parties to sabotage the Plan
   a. 

   C. European Recovery Plan
   1. The US provided about $17,000,000 in aid.
      a. How that money was spent was determined largely by the Europeans themselves, in negotiation with the US
      b. Much of that money was spent in the US
      c. All European nations were invited, including Eastern block nations.
      d. The Marshall Plan was an enormous success, with most nations achieving higher production figures in 1952 than 1938

IV. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 1949

A. Original members were
   1. United States
   2. Great Britain
   3. Canada,
   4. France
   5. the Netherlands
   6. Belgium
   7. Luxemburg
   8. Italy
   9. Norway
   10. Iceland
   11. Portugal

B. Goal is to defend Western Europe against the Red Army
   1. An attack against one member of the alliance is an attack against all
   2. USSR creates the German Democratic Republic in 1949

C. The Federal Republic of Germany added in 1954
   1. Followed very difficult negotiations, esp. With France, which rejected one agreement.

D. The Warsaw Pact 1955 The Soviet equivalent of NATO
   1. Albania
   2. Bulgaria
   3. Czechoslovakia
4. The German Democratic Republic
5. Hungary
6. Poland
7. Romania
8. USSR

V. The German Problem

A. Zones of Occupation
1. Soviet Zone
2. British Zone
3. US Zone
4. French Zone
   a. Soviets would not agree to this until the US took it out of our zone

B. Allied Control Commission would govern the country

C. Issues of Reparations
1. Soviet reparations were to be the sum of all industrial plant in the Soviet zone plus 25% of that in the Western zone
2. The US insisted that Germany retain enough industry to maintain a standard of living equal to the rest of Europe
3. The US also insisted reparations be delayed until the Germans could support themselves
   a. this would avoid the errors of Versailles
4. The Soviets quickly demolished the industry in their zone and also cut off food shipments to the West
   a. This food was to be in return for 60% of the total industrial plant taken from the West
5. Germany was supposed to be governed as a single economic unit, but the issue of reparations broke cooperation down by July 1946
6. The US then suspended all payments to Germany until the Soviets administered Germany according to their agreements (Spanier 42-43)
7. At about this point, Byrnes gave up hope of successfully negotiating with Molotov

D. Bizonia 1947
1. Embryonic state formed of US and British zones.
   a. French later join.
2. Germans are given greater role in self-government
3. Bizonia is formed before the Marshall Plan proposed
   a. Currency reform instituted by US military when the Soviets walk out of negotiations for a single currency in 1948

E. The Berlin Blockade (1948)
1. The possibility of a revived Germany under US auspices threatened two Soviet goals
   a. Withdrawal of US forces and neutralization of Western Europe
   b. creation of a subservient Germany in partnership with the USSR
   c. A blockade of Berlin, which was 100 miles inside the Soviet zone,
would hold the entire population hostage.

2. In June 1948, Stalin cut off electricity and overland communications to Berlin.
   a. Stalin did not believe Truman would fight a war over Berlin
      (1) He believed that if the US backed off of Berlin, then the confidence of all Europeans in US promises would be irretrievably shaken.
         (a) If that happened, Western states might well re-evaluate their role in NATO
      (2) Truman understood this perfectly.

3. The Berlin Airlift
   a. Truman’s response was brilliant
      (1) He assumed that Stalin was not ready to fight for Berlin either.
      (2) Truman chose to supply 2,500,000 people entirely by air
         (a) previous attempts to supply armies by air in World War II had ended in failure.
         (b) Berlin required 4,000 tons daily
         (c) The US and British reached 13,000 tons daily
         (d) Planes landed 24 hours a day in 3 minute intervals in all weather
      (3) Berliners were not only eating better at the end of the blockade than at the beginning, they were eating better than Berliners in the east.
   b. The blockade lasted 324 days before Stalin called it off.
   c. The Blockade is a disaster for Stalin
      (1) In elections in the West sector, Berliners overwhelmingly endorsed their protectors.
      (2) The aftermath is a much stronger perception that protection against the Soviet Union was needed.

4. Establishment of the German Democratic Republic 1949

VI. Unrest in East Germany 1953
A. The origins of the crisis were that as late as the early 1950’s, Stalin was willing to trade German neutrality for reunification of Germany.
B. This was very much against the interests of Walter Ulbricht, who would certainly be turned out of power.
C. Ulbricht’s response was to increase the pace of industrialization in order to make East Germany too valuable to the Soviets to lose.
D. Stalin’s death raised hopes of an improvement in conditions
E. June 1953, demonstrators marched in Berlin, demanding that the leaders answer for their policies.
   1. The demonstrations were spontaneous and not well organized.
   2. The government had imposed new work norms, demanding an increase of 10% in productivity or else there would be a cut in wages of 33%
3. Since the state owned the factories in question, the protest and strikes were political as well as economic.
4. The demonstrators went on to demand a withdrawal of Soviet troops and free elections.
5. The Soviets intervened with tanks and troops (Vadney 192-194)

VII. The German Democratic Republic: “In 1952 Stalin allowed the Communist leadership in East Berlin to start the ‘construction of socialism’—a policy that quickly led to economic collapse and a flood of refugees to the West. Walter Ulbricht, the general secretary of the SED and the actual leader of the GDR, soon was bombarding Moscow with demands for assistance to cover the deficit of goods and money. The double threat — of West German integration into NATO and the economic collapse of East Germany—was a serious consideration for the Kremlin.” (Zubok and Pleshakov 160)

A. Beria was prepared to sacrifice the GDR for an agreement on Germany.
B. Molotov was adamantly against any such concession. He holds socialism in Germany as critical to holding the entire Eastern bloc together. Beria lost the vote
C. East German workers’ revolt in 6/53
   1. The result of austere economic conditions
   2. Russian armored forces were needed to restore order.
      a. Bertolt Brecht wrote his famous poem protesting the brutal suppression
      b. The sight of Soviet tanks running over civilians does not sit well with the American public.
   3. Khrushchev and Malenkov conclude in the aftermath of this that Beria was planning to seize power and purge the others. This led to Beria’s arrest, interrogation, and execution in June 1953
D. The German Democratic Republic and Ideology
   1. Khrushchev and other war veterans saw a socialist Germany as an affirmation of their suffering in World War II and the reward of their triumph. This is not the result of some careful analysis, but an emotional

VIII. Nikita S. Khrushchev begins emerging as the key Kremlin leaders, although he was never unchallenged.
A. Khrushchev’s personality and career
   1. He is a contradictory man, difficult to understand. Charles Bohlen believed that Khrushchev could not understand the West; (Zubok and Pleshakov 175) I am not certain but that I cannot understand him.
   2. His family were illiterate peasants. He worked as a youth in the coal regions of the Donbass and joined the Red Army as a political commissar. He was a political commissar at Stalingrad during the war, and had more first hand experience of war than most Soviet leaders. He achieved effective control of the Kremlin in June 1957 and was deposed in October 1964.
   3. He was a true believer in the Russian Revolution, and felt a profound sense of betrayal at Stalin’s despotism.
   4. He believed that the Great Patriotic War was won by the people, not the state, and was seared by the experience of the War. His fears of militarism
in the Federal Republic of Germany are deep and sincere.

5. He could and did act impulsively without careful forethought. (Zubok and Pleshakov 174-182)

6. Khrushchev felt that the West had badly treated by the US following the war.

7. He also believed that territorial expansion was deserved.

8. Was willing to pursue “peaceful coexistence”—the Cold War as a transitional period ushering in economic competition between the capitalist and socialist blocks (an attitude which recognizes the consequences of nuclear war) while also seeing many areas where the West was vulnerable, especially in the movement for decolonization. (Which is more the revolutionary-imperial paradigm).

9. Khrushchev regarded Dulles roll-back policy (cf below) as a threat, and the revolts in Poland and Hungary as direct consequences of that policy, and also feared Dulles’ policy of “encirclement.” (Cf below as well)

IX. The Second Berlin Crisis 1958-61

A. There was no official treaty recognizing the partition of Germany or the German Democratic Republic.

B. The Federal Republic of Germany was adamant on this point. Reunification remained a goal of most Germans.

C. One is not certain why Khrushchev chose to provoke the crisis
   1. Frankly, I find a lot of his decisions to be opaque.
   2. Zubok and Pleshakov point to the debates over building socialism in the GDR and to Khrushchev’s belief that the issue of Germany was the main issue preventing a “long truce” and the eventual victory of socialism by economic competition. (194)
   3. The flow of refugees from the East to West Germany was very heavy and may indeed have been so bad as to destabilize the East German regime.
   4. It appears clear that Khrushchev and the East Germans both firmly believed that the stability of the regime was indeed at stake.

D. November 1958, Khrushchev announced that if an “appropriate” agreement in the status of West Berlin in 6 months, the USSR would sign a separate treaty with the GDR that would leave the access routes to Berlin in the hands of the GDR, a sovereign state. The East Germans could be expected to be much tougher on all transportation into Berlin (I can attest to that personally) and at best, the US would have to negotiate with the GDR as a sovereign nation.
   1. Khrushchev is motivated in part by criticisms from Mao Zedong, who now regards himself as the leader of world socialism, and who considers Khrushchev to be soft on capitalism.

E. Khrushchev wanted either withdrawal of US troops from Berlin or the addition of Soviet troops to the Western garrison.
   1. Setting a time limit created fears that Khrushchev had some aggressive action up is sleeve.

F. Negotiations in 1959 broke down. The US was very worried, but Eisenhower remained firm.
G. Khrushchev’s visit to Washington DC brought no concrete results other than that Khrushchev withdrew his time deadline. Khrushchev left Washington for Beijing, which, it turned out, insulted Mao and the CCP leadership. The Sino-Soviet rift is brewing.

X. The U-2 Affair 1960
A. In the context of fears of Soviet nuclear buildup and a need for intelligence, with all negotiations for some form of arms control going nowhere, the US ordered overflights of Soviet territory by U-2 spy planes.
B. During a Paris disarmament conference, a U-2 piloted by Francis Gary Powers shot down, and Powers captured alive.
C. Eisenhower, told that Powers could not have survived, issued a categorical denial that any such flights took place.
D. Khrushchev then produced Powers in a show trial, embarrassing Eisenhower, and broke up the conference. The issue of Berlin is left open.

XI. John F Kennedy and The Vienna Summit 1961
A. Khrushchev has the opportunity to size Kennedy up. He is not impressed.
B. Khrushchev puts more pressure on over Berlin and JFK’s position is weakened by the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs.
C. Khrushchev demanded a peace treaty on Germany acceptable to himself or he would turn access over to the East Germans, which would effectively block access to West Berlin. He added that the Warsaw Pact would defend the East Germans.
D. Kennedy said that Khrushchev could do what he wanted to East Germany but Kennedy would not accept interference with access to West Berlin.
E. Khrushchev: “I want peace, but if you want war, then that is your problem.”
F. Kennedy: “If that is true, then it is going to be a cold winter.”

XII. The Berlin Wall
A. August 1961 the East Germans began stringing barbed wire across the heart of Berlin and constructing the obscene Berlin Wall.
B. September 1961, Khrushchev resumed nuclear tests in the atmosphere after a 3 year break.
D. Khrushchev renews his diplomatic pressure in September 1963
   1. Kennedy asked for authority to mobilize 150,000 reserves.
E. Khrushchev delays further discussions until after the congressional elections.
F. He then planned to address the UN.
   1. By that time, he expected to put nuclear missiles in place in Cuba, and presumably he intended to announce the changed balance of power then.
G. In other words, the Cuban Missile Crisis should be seen in a broader context (Dunbabin 210-222)