



## **DECISION IN GERMANY**

# DECISION IN GERMANY

by Lucius D. Clay



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## Introduction

**T**HIS record of four years in Germany is written in the hope that it will contribute to a better understanding of the German problem. We are well on the way to its solution within a framework acceptable to the free countries of Europe. We have not reached the goal. A self-supporting and self-responsible Germany is essential to the restoration of stability, and without a stable Europe lasting peace is impossible.

The American people have a huge stake in peace. Twice within the century, still only half run, 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. Meanwhile we have declared our intent to share in the common defense in our support of and adherence to the North Atlantic Pact.

Solving the German problem will be a major constructive step toward peace. It is a complex task. A new political and economic life had to be reconstructed from the chaos of total defeat. Under these

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conditions the administration of the American Zone of Occupation alone was a difficult undertaking. The establishment for the four zones of occupation of a government responsible to the people, and the rehabilitation of economic life sufficiently to promise them a reasonable standard of living under security measures which would make future aggression impossible, would have taxed the competence of the Allied Control Council even if there had been full co-operation among its members and between it and the German people.

Unfortunately there was never full co-operation. Three of the four occupying powers had signed the Potsdam Protocol which formed the directive for the occupation. France was not a party to this understanding and therefore did not feel bound by its provisions. But French unwillingness to abide by the Potsdam decisions was the major cause for dissent within the Control Council for only a few months. It soon became apparent that the Soviet Government interpreted the decisions very differently than did the British and American governments. The Russians wanted to create conditions that would provide opportunity for Communist penetration and domination of German political life and economic resources.

Thus the effort to rule Germany by unanimous agreement of the representatives of the four occupying powers failed. As this failure became evident, vital decisions had to be made in Germany. The American and British zones of occupation were merged into an economic unit to facilitate and expedite the industrial activity which was required for recovery in Europe. While the French had stood firmly with us and with the British in resisting the Soviet effort to build a Communist Germany, they were not satisfied with security measures and therefore did not join their zone with the bizonal area. Although plans to this end were laid, they did not become a reality until the North Atlantic Pact united the Atlantic countries for the common defense. Then France agreed to the setting up of a West German Government, elected by the people and given a large measure of responsibility for internal affairs and the development of economic self-sufficiency.

The success of the European Recovery Program and the planned formation of West German Government led to the Soviet blockade of Berlin, a ruthless attempt to use starvation to drive out the Western Powers, thus re-creating in Europe the fear which favored Communist expansion. The airlift prevented the blockade from accom-

plishing its purpose. There were risks involved in our determination not to be driven out of the former German capital. We understood and accepted these risks as my story will show. To do so was essential if we were to maintain the cause of freedom. The firm stand of the Western Powers in undertaking the airlift not only prevented terror from again engulfing Europe but also convinced its free people of our intent to hold our position until peace is assured.

Western Germany is a reality. It is a member in its own right of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation and is learning to work with others in a common cause. Its people have lived next door to Communism for four years and have decided that they do not want to live under Communist domination. Its government has been given only limited responsibility. It has not been received back in the comity of nations. Germany remains divided. Even when it is united security measures, if enforced, will suffice to prevent it from again becoming a threat. The German people also have a right to security, and it remains to be determined how this will be provided. Germany's free neighbors, who have suffered much from German hands, must be willing to accept its return to a free and independent status. This is the German problem which must be solved finally and fully before we can be certain of lasting peace.

Time, patience, and understanding are required, for we *must* find the right answer. American policy, taking into account the views of Germany's neighbors, is proving successful in clearing the way to solution. This policy must be continued in the months and perhaps years ahead until full success is achieved. It will be continued if it has the firm support of the American people. It will receive that support if they are fully informed and understand the problem in its many aspects.

This understanding cannot come about merely from a study of our administration of German affairs. During the past four years many international discussions have been devoted to the attempt to reconcile the conflicting views of the four governments and, when it became apparent that this was impossible, to bring the three Western governments together. Quadripartite conferences broke down because the earnest effort of the Western representatives to reach accord failed to prevent Soviet representatives from using the meetings for invective and propaganda purposes. Each of these international gatherings immediately affected relationships among the

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occupying powers in Germany, and thus at least indirectly the administration of their separate responsibilities.

Therefore, to understand the situation it is necessary to know something of the task of administering military government, the influence of international conferences, the difficulties encountered in political and economic reconstruction, and the security measures effected so that a revived Germany will not be a threat to peace.

I had not planned to write of my four years in Germany, and in fact for three years intentionally avoided keeping a record so that I would not be tempted. In January 1948 a draft of the official history of Military Government, prepared in the Historical Section of the Military Government staff, was placed on my desk. It was an admirable compilation of important documents combined with an accurate chronology of major events. It did not record the many discussions and exchanges of cables which led to major decisions, and thus it lacked spirit and animation. These cannot be provided from files. After reading the official draft I began to dictate from memory the incidents and discussions which preceded the principal decisions so that I should have a record of my participation if only for my own use. My associates, who had access to this record, urged that it be used as the basis of a book which might prove helpful to those interested in the German problem.

During my four years in Germany I served as deputy military governor to Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and Joseph T. McNarney for two years, and as military governor for two years. In these capacities I served under three Secretaries of War (Army)—Henry L. Stimson, Robert P. Patterson, and Kenneth Royall; and under four Secretaries of State—Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Justice James F. Byrnes, General George C. Marshall, and Dean Acheson.

With my political adviser, Robert D. Murphy, I attended two four-power conferences in Paris, one in New York, one in Moscow, and one in London, at which the United States was represented by the Secretary of State. I also attended six conferences in London, Paris, and Washington which were held to resolve differences among the Western Powers. Ambassadors W. Averell Harriman and Walter Bedell Smith from Moscow, and Ambassador Lewis W. Douglas from London visited Berlin frequently to keep abreast of current developments. Each day in Germany significant events were reported by radio to both the State and War (Army) Departments.

Of course in these four years many different American viewpoints had to be reconciled. They resulted from the honest thinking of able and sincere officials, and were presented and argued vigorously in sound democratic tradition, until agreements were reached or decisions made by the responsible authorities. Except for occasional flare-ups which quickly died out and made it possible for us to work more closely together, they created no personal antagonisms among the group which worked together for so many months in the endeavor to find a solution to the German problem. Some familiarity with the causes of these differences is necessary to a full understanding of how our policy developed and was reconciled with the policies of the other countries interested in Germany.

It is difficult to select from an eventful period of four years the significant events, items, and discussions which convey the magnitude of the task and the spirit in which it was executed. It is, however, the only way to tell the story, and it should be told so that in future the mistakes of the past may be avoided and the successes continued in application.

Having taken part in these events and discussions, I have formed deep convictions and can write of my experiences only with them in mind. I do not claim to be dispassionate in my recording of these years.

We have created a West German Government which has assumed major responsibility for the internal affairs of 45,000,000 persons. They form a force which must be duly considered if we want a stable Europe with an economy which offers the promise of reasonable life. They are separated from 20,000,000 Germans in the Soviet Zone. No lasting stability may be expected as long as 65,000,000 persons in the heart of Europe are divided against their will. Their natural desire for a unified country will remain until east and west Germany are reunited. Extreme nationalism is certain to develop from this division.

Of utmost importance to the future of the world are the questions of how and when West Germany is readmitted to the fellowship of nations and how and when it may reunite with eastern Germany, from which is it separated now by the barrier of Communism. In executing the measures which guarantee that Germany will not again become an aggressive threat we should not forget that there must also be security for its people, and that security against Germany must be considered in its relationship to world security. Now that we

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have created a partial government we must determine its place in world affairs, and in this determination lies the hope of peace.

Since this is largely a record of events in which I participated and as I remember their occurrence, it has been impossible to avoid the use of the personal pronoun. I am convinced that the small group of devoted and able Americans who were my close associates in Military Government will understand that its use does not in any way detract from their contribution, individually and collectively, which made possible any accomplishments Military Government may have achieved. It is because of my faith that their work was well done, and that consistent adherence to the established program for Germany will prove of lasting value in its contribution to peace, that I have written this book.

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