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From Monopolar to Bipolar World: Key Issues of the Classic Cold War[1]

The following question periodically comes up among circles of historians: should the end of World War Two, or more specifically 1945, be viewed as a break that would be respected by historians in their periodization of history? At first glance, it would appear that the historical continuity of certain key processes was not interrupted mid-century: for example, the momentum and development that man put into motion with the industrial revolution and the rapid development of technology continued. Nor can we imagine cultural life after 1945 without the cultural life that preceded the war. Moreover, the spiritual understanding of the era and even of the catastrophic war that consumed it did not undergo a sufficiently fundamental change to cause us to discuss a break in continuity. The only factors that might successfully convince opponents of the argument that the end of World War Two represents an important historical rupture belong in the fields of politics and ideology. And yet all ideologies, social systems, and political structures after the war were also present before the war and indeed could be traced all the way back to the nineteenth century. All the political and ideological currents in both West and East that animated the post-war world, that caused sparks to fly, and in their interdependence caused each other to engage in an ongoing tug-of-war, have roots, historically speaking, in the European political consciousness triggered by the French Revolution. And, as we know, the French Revolution itself did not come out of thin air but

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was itself the consequence of earlier events. It could not have occurred, for example, without the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, all of these caveats are not sufficient to change my conviction that the end of World War Two, 1945, represented a break in human life and thus in human history. To understand this point of view, it is necessary to distinguish large historical currents that flow through the centuries and belong to what might be called the development of humanity, from smaller currents and breaks that characterize smaller historical periods and thus may represent the end or beginning of new historical eras. The European Middle Ages, for example, had its roots in antiquity and emerged from antiquity, and yet the fall of the Roman Empire was the end of antiquity and the beginning of feudalism. The year 1945 could be viewed in a similar manner: as the end of World War Two, and as a specific point in history that marked a decisive turn in the development of human history.

The end of World War Two brought about not only the military and political destruction of Nazism and Fascism, but also a fundamental transformation in the distribution of power and the world order. The most important characteristic of the new world order as a direct consequence of the end of the war resided in two crucial facts: the first that Europe had passed the zenith of its global dominance, and the second that the world had shifted from being politically monolithic or monopolar to a phase of political bipolarity.

Until 1945, Europe was the absolute centre of the world. World War One had caused the world and Europe to be rearranged once again. After that war, Great Britain and France became the two dominant great powers, the United States retreated into the politics of isolation and political events in the world continued to be negotiated within the framework of internal European political events. It appeared as if all the threads of history still flowed from Europe and influenced the rest of the world; it seemed that countries outside Europe, especially colonies and dominions, continued to be drawn into the knots of Europe disagreements and wars; it also seemed that even the independent countries of the world could not escape the complications of European political (and particularly foreign political) disagreements. Even the most substantial of these countries, the United States of America, could not.

After World War Two, this picture fundamentally changed. The fate of Europe and the rest of the world was no longer decided by great European powers, but by one power outside of Europe (the United States), and by one with more than half of its territory and population extending from Europe into Asia (the Soviet Union). These two powers began their ascent after World War One. They did not share the same social system, as did France and Great Britain after World War One, yet paradoxically they left a wider and deeper imprint on Europe than either France or Great Britain did. Precisely because of their conflicting ideologies, both the United States and the Soviet Union began to expand after World War Two, their expansion being an effort by each to leave its mark

on its own part of the world and to create a zone of satellite countries. This created the basis for the so-called classic Cold War that lasted until the mid-nineteen-fifties and during which, among other things, the most important problems of Central Europe were addressed.

The only possible alternative to American-Soviet dominance and decision-making would have been Great Britain, but it soon became clear that it was a mere satellite of the United States and far too weak economically to be an equal partner. This is why 1945, in the scope of world history, signifies the moment when European global dominance ended. It signifies the beginning of the end of European patronage, which for many of its subjects and their peoples had been a form of servitude. After 1945, these countries came directly or indirectly into spheres of influence and authority outside of Europe. This remains one of the most convincing arguments for the claim that 1945 represents an important historical break.

In addition to this fundamental turn in global historical development, a number of other processes began after 1945 that to a great degree defined the long post-war decades and present a series of additional proofs supporting the claim that 1945 represents a decisive break in world history. At the same time that the European countries, previously great powers, declined, the historical period of classic imperialist colonialism came to an end. We could make the argument that decolonization began with the end of World War Two in 1945. If classic imperialist colonialism reached its peak after World War One, the period after the second global war characterized by a world that had become a stage for anti-colonial striving. To a great degree, these sentiments had been shaped during the war itself; after the war, they were supported and guided by socialist and communist movements. The European colonial powers, weakened by the war, were incapable of stopping the rising wave of anti-colonialism. Decolonization started a new hitherto unknown process. It set in motion a process that created the so-called 'third world' or, as these countries called themselves 'the non-aligned movement.' At the same time, a parallel process began. The struggle for political domination over former colonies created new forms of colonization, forms that did not have physical occupation or annexation of territory as their goal, but instead political, technological and ideological domination by the leading powers of one of the two emerging camps: neo-colonialism.

The creation of a bipolar post-war world was conditioned by the political and military ascent of the Soviet Union. After World War Two, the Soviet Union became a global power, something it emphatically was not during the inter-war years. This became clear at the Potsdam Conference, if not before, where the Soviet Union played one of the most important roles and established the starting point from which it would manage in the coming years to significantly increase its influence in the countries that had been liberated/occupied by the Soviet Union in the closing chapters of the war. On the other side, the United States experienced an even steeper ascent. Not only had the United States

emerged from its political isolation during World War Two, but winning the war confirmed the conviction that the American way of life was the only way of life. Immediately after the war, America took up the mantle of 'the protector of democracy' or, as it has often been characterized in the media, as 'the world's policeman'. This was not only out of principle; economic reasons also played an important role. As proof of this, one statistic says it all: during the war, European countries owed the United States some 4 billion dollars; after the war, this debt grew to 11.5 billion dollars.

Immediately after the war, the Soviet Union set about implementing policies such that by 1952 all the European countries that had been under its direct influence – where the Red Army had been present – became communist countries, i.e. countries with people's democracy (Yugoslavia on November 29, 1945, Albania on January 11, 1946, Bulgaria September 15, 1946, Romania December 31, 1947, Czechoslovakia May 9, 1948, Hungary August 17, 1949, and Poland on July 22, 1952). The United States pursued an actively anti-communist policy based on the military-political containment of the Soviet Union. During the presidency of Harry S. Truman (1945–1953), and specifically in 1947, America articulated its global strategic relationship toward the Soviet Union and other socialist states. This strategy was called the Truman Doctrine (March 12, 1947) and ten years later it would be supplemented by the Eisenhower Doctrine which covered military aid to countries attacked by communist countries. American policy aimed to use any means necessary to protect western democratic countries, especially those in Europe, from the communist menace, and the Truman Doctrine was the first important military-political tool formulated for that purpose. Another equally important element used in the pursuit of this policy was the Marshall Plan (June 5, 1947, George C. Marshall, American Secretary of State from 1947–1949) with which the United States offered economic aid to all countries harmed by World War Two. When the Soviet Union and its bloc (Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia had formed a delegation in Paris to negotiate for aid under Marshall Plan aid when the *nyet* from Moscow arrived) declined 'imperialist' assistance, the United States began to provide economic/financial support that would eventually amount to approximately 13 billion dollars to Western European countries and in particular the west-occupied zone of Germany. It is precisely this level of financial aid that was responsible for the later economic miracle in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRD) as well as for the stabilization of Great Britain and the gradual recovery of its economy.

The Soviet Union countered the American policy with the establishment of an information bureau of the communist and worker's party (Kominform and Informbiro). The opening conference for this organization took place from September 22 to 27, 1947 in Sklarska Poremba, Poland and was attended by all the East European communist parties (from Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union) as well as by the communist parties of Italy and France. Informboro was intended to be a replace-

ment for Komintern, which had been discontinued in 1943. Its purpose was to create the 'golden unity' of the eastern bloc under the protection of the Soviet Union, or in other words to squelch any thoughts of individual Eastern European countries taking their own 'independent path to socialism'. The clearest example of this tactic was Stalin's dealings with Yugoslavia in 1948 (the so-called Informbiro conflict) that was meant to be exemplary and thus to eliminate any attempt to deviate from the Soviet model or flee outright from the Soviet camp. The fundament goal of the Soviet Union was the export of communist revolution.

The bipolar world and Europe itself was not only divided along political-ideological lines but also had a well-known physical line of demarcation that Winston Churchill had dubbed the Iron Curtain. The military power of both camps was considered substantial and equal enough that neither of the two dared to begin a global war in an effort to dominate the entire world.

It is said that war is the continuation of politics with other means. International politics and the division of power after World War Two, the period known as the Cold War, was the continuation of war with other means. It was also the consequence of the bipolar division of the world. By definition, the Cold War was a condition of 'neither war nor peace', the content of which was an ongoing political, and at times military, confrontation between the two post-war superpowers i.e. the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective blocs. As a historical category, the Cold War denoted the relationship between fundamentally opposed social-political, economic and military systems in a period where other substantial transformations had taken place in the international community. The Cold War was a period during which two distinct blocs existed. It was also a process that took on various forms and was conducted with varying intensity until 1989/1990. Nevertheless, the historical period of the Cold War is generally divided into two parts: the first from 1945 to 1959, and the second from 1959 to 1990. The first represents the historical period that emerged directly from World War Two and its immediate aftermath – we could call this the classic Cold War. The second was a period that no longer had direct links to World War Two and its consequences, but rather was the direct result of post-war political conditions around the world.

In the time of the classic Cold War, there were three fundamental problems in Central Europe that needed to be resolved: the German question, the Austrian question, and the Trieste question. These problems were felt most acutely immediately after the war and their resolution would determine to a great degree the political development of Central Europe. All three issues were the subject of much debate because they would determine the conditions of the bipolar world, in particular conditions along the border of the Iron Curtain. All three issues were eventually resolved by compromise which became the characteristic tactic for the resolution of the hottest post-war problems. The fate of other important Central European countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, had been decided by the presence of the Red Army that lasted until 1952 and caused

these countries to automatically fall into the East, that is into the communist part of the bipolar world. The importance of these countries in terms of determining the shape and development of Central Europe was therefore minimal, at least on the level of dictating relations between East and West. Of course, the end of the war had an influence on all countries adjacent to the Iron Curtain, but in terms of political, ideological, military and ethnic-national issues, the most crucial decisions were made during the resolution of the three most important issue of the classic Cold War period in Europe.

The German Question

In the period after World War Two, the blocs were in no way united on how to deal with European and global issues. Both the East and West wanted Germany to follow their specific model. The western allies wanted a united Germany that would be capable of meeting the obligations of the peace. The Soviet Union wanted a divided Germany that would never again be able to threaten its security. It was not possible to solve this dilemma through military means, but it was also not possible to negotiate a conclusive peace treaty until this dilemma was solved. All negotiations seemed to lead down a dead-end street. Therefore, each side solved the German question in its own way and throughout this period both sides pretended that its main goal was a united Germany.

It should be noted that even the three principle western allies did not share the same views regarding the fate of West Germany. France, similar to the Soviet Union and as a consequence of historical experience, did not want a strong and united Germany. Nevertheless, on January 1, 1947, it joined the American and British occupation forces in the so-called Bizone (dual zone), which became the basis for the economic and eventually the political unification of Germany. In this zone, Germans themselves conducted their economic affairs, a situation of which the Soviets emphatically disapproved. When the western occupation authorities introduced a reformed West German currency in June 20, 1948, the Soviets imposed a blockade on Berlin. This was the first Berlin crisis. It lasted thirteen months and West Berlin only survived because of the airlift with which the western allies supplied the city.

The two Germans states – the Federal Republic of Germany (FRD) which came into being on May 23, 1949 and the German Democratic Republic (DDR) which came into being on October 7, 1949 – became the main protagonists of the Cold War, the ongoing tension between the two blocs inevitably flowing through them. The United States and its allies did not want to give up on the idea of Germany as a large state that could have, based on its relationships with its allies, an important position in the western world. The West could make use of such a German state in its potential for dealings with the East. For this reason, the United States increased the autonomy and sovereignty of the West German entity, one of the most crucial steps in its evolving policy. The General

Contract was signed on May 26, 1952 and provided the basis for the annulment of the occupied status of West Germany. West Germany, along with West Berlin, gained limited sovereignty and could begin the process of integration with western economic, military and political organizations. Two years later, the so-called Paris Protocols were signed from October 19 to 23, 1954, the next step toward full sovereignty of West Germany. The following year on May 5, 1955, the three western occupation commissioners formally annulled, based on the protocols, the occupation status of Germany, and that day was proclaimed the West German 'day of sovereignty'. The new country's sovereignty was confirmed on other occasions during that same year. Namely, on January 15, 1955, the Soviet Union finally proclaimed the end of war with Germany (most other involved countries had done the same in 1951). Finally, when NATO held its ministerial session from May 9 to 11, 1955, West Germany formally entered the western military pact which represented its final acceptance as a sovereign nation. Two years later in late March of 1957, West Germany would become one of the founding members of the newly-created western economic organization, the European Economic Community (EEC).

Ideological interests, security interests and, not least economic interests led the Soviet Union to become the principal carrier of the idea that the development of Germany must be controlled and above all that there should be no rush to reunite the German nation. For decades after its emergence in 1949, the western states, and particularly West Germany, did not recognize the East Germany as a legitimate representative of the German people. In 1955, West Germany promulgated the so-called Hallstein Doctrine whereby it automatically discontinued diplomatic relations with any country that recognized East Germany. It was first exercised on October 19, 1957 against Yugoslavia. As a result, the international activities of East Germany began to be increasingly concentrated in the East (for example, in 1950 it helped to resolve the Polish border question between the Oder and Nisse Rivers) and it largely functioned within the framework of the Soviet bloc (for example, the Council for Mutual Economic Aid established in 1949 – SEV, COMENCON-SEV). On July 25, 1954, the Soviet Union enhanced the sovereignty of East Germany, though not to a greater degree than the sovereignty of West Germany had been enhanced by the 'German treaty' in 1952. The Warsaw Pact was established between May 11 and 15, 1955 as a military counterbalance to NATO. East Germany was among the founding members and thus emerged the relationship and general conditions between the two German nations that would remain in place until the unification of the two German states in 1990.

The Austrian Question

The resolution to the Austrian question came almost on the same day in 1955 as the resolution to the German question, the former being an essential compo-

nent of the latter. Similar to Berlin, post-war Vienna was run by 'four men in a jeep'. Like Germany, Austria had been divided into four occupation zones. The western and eastern alliances each claimed that Austria belonged in its sphere of interest. Because of this, negotiations for the treaty establishing the final status of an independent and democratic Austrian state lasted nearly ten years. The Soviet Union used the potential solution of this problem as a bargaining chip in the resolution of the Trieste question. On May 15, 1955, the Treaty for the Establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria (known as the Austria State Treaty) was signed at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna.[2] With this treaty, Austria was re-established within its January 1, 1938 borders. Formally, it belonged to neither the American nor the Soviet sphere of influence. On October 26, 1955, the day the last occupation soldier left Austria, it declared 'permanent neutrality.'

A condition of Austria's new status as a sovereign and neutral state, was that it agrees to Article 7 of the Austria State Treaty by which Austria committed to protecting its Slovenian and Croatian minorities. In November 1955, Yugoslavia cosigned the same document, also committing it to protect the same two minorities within its country and to retract all territorial demands on Austria.

The Trieste Question

Trieste became a burning crisis point in large part because of its strategic position. It was the most southern point on the emerging Iron Curtain and the port nearest to the heart of Europe. After World War Two, Yugoslavia recovered most of the Slovenian ethnic territory lost after World War One and now lobbied for the annexation of Trieste to its hinterland. In accordance with the Yugoslav plan, Trieste would have the status of a free port under international control, but this solution did not suit the western allies. The allies had hoped that a compromise solution would be found in the negotiations for the peace treaty with Italy (signed February 10, 1947 in Paris and becoming valid on September 15, 1947). The result was the establishment of the Free Territory of Trieste. The western allies had authority in the territory of Zone A (Trieste and its environs), Yugoslavia in Zone B (the Istrian peninsula along with the Koper and Buje municipalities). The Free Territory of Trieste should have had its own governor but because of the increasing tensions between the blocs and within

[2] It should have been called the Treaty on Austria since it was efectively imposed on Austria by the allies. Formally, Austria was not allowed to directly participate in its own emergence as a state and was given the opportunity to accept the conditions that assured its future independence. For more about this, see Dušan Nećak: *Zgodovinski pogled na državno pogodbo o ponovni vzpostavitvi neodvisne in demokratične Avstrije (ADP)* [A Historical Glance at the Treaty Re-establishing an Independent and Democratic Austria (ADP)]. In: Javna uprava, 2005, no. 2/3, pp. 263–268, and Dušan Nećak: *Slovenci v drugi avstrijski republiki* [Slovenians in the Secodn Austrian Republic], Ljubljana 1983.

their camps (specifically the conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union), the Free Territory never really functioned properly. To the contrary, disagreements arising around the status of Trieste brought Yugoslavia to the edge of military engagement with the West. The issue was solved at least temporarily following direct negotiations between the western allies, Italy, and Yugoslavia. A Memorandum of Understanding, according to which Trieste and its surroundings (zone A) were annexed to Italy, and the Koper and Buje municipalities were annexed to Yugoslavia, was signed in London on October 5, 1954.

Italy viewed this division as a demarcation line; that is as a temporary arrangement. Only in 1975 was the issue permanently resolved with the signing of the Osimo Agreements. At that point, the demarcation line at last changed into an actual border between Yugoslavia and Italy; before 1975 it had been one of the most open borders in Europe and certainly between two countries with radically different social systems.

At least two of the above-mentioned issues facing Europe in the post-war period – the German and Trieste questions – were of a serious enough nature that they might have sparked a third global conflict. The solution of these two open issues in the mid-nineteen-fifties was actually the result of a stalemate between the two blocs accompanied by a good deal of sabre-rattling. Events resolving the Austrian question were similar though not as dramatic. It was not possible to unify Germany according to either a Soviet or American model. Austria did not become a satellite of one or the other ideological political option, but instead remained neutral. Yugoslav demands for the correction of its western border could not be entirely rejected despite the country's ideological orientation, and ultimately Yugoslavia got a good deal of the territory it was demanding, though not the symbolically most important part: the city of Trieste. What became clear was that after World War Two, the affairs of the world would be resolved by the superpowers and that the resolution of such affairs would have little to do with notions of justice, truth, or reason, but above all would be guided by global strategic interests. If it wasn't possible to arrive at a straightforward solution, tactics of compromise would be employed.

However, this did not mean that the superpowers sought compromise solutions within their own camps. The Soviet Union, in particular, did not. In the same period that the three Central European questions that emerged as a direct consequence of World War Two were peacefully resolved, bloody conflicts took place in the heart of the Soviet bloc that had as their goal violent homogenization, specifically in Poland and in Hungary in 1956. Similar events had taken place in East Germany several years before. These events all took place after Stalin's death, that is during the period defined as de-Stalinization, a time supposedly characterized by the relaxation of the hard Bolshevik style of communism.

After Stalin's death in March 1953, a thaw was felt not only in the Soviet Union but also in the countries under wider Soviet influence. De-Stalinization proceeded in a number of Soviet satellite countries and, though it was often dif-

ficult and bloody, it generally led them on the path from international communism to national communism. After a period of great agitation, such a process took place in Poland in 1956 and during the same period Romania began to follow an even harder line of national communism in its foreign policy.[3] In East Germany, reformist efforts expressed in massive demonstrations in East Berlin and other large cities in the country were violently suppressed in June 1953.

But it was Hungary that experienced the worst. Events in Hungary, and also in Poland, decisively and violently preserved the so-called 'golden unity' of the eastern bloc. What happened in these countries discouraged the de-Stalinization process of others, Czechoslovakia being the most noteworthy case.

The Polish Crisis

After Stalin's death and in particular after the verbal renunciation of Stalinism in the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (February 14 to 25, 1956), the countries in the eastern socialist bloc began, more or less intensively, the process of the thaw. Not only did they launch a massive overthrow of the party leadership, but they also began the process of rehabilitating the dead and living victims of Stalinism. Among the more important steps of the thaw was the disbanding of the Information Bureau of the communist party (Informbiro and Kominform) that took place on April 18, 1956. In Poland, where Informbiro had actually been founded, the process went even deeper. Specifically, the Polish government in exile, the non-communist *Armia Kraova* (or home army), was rehabilitated. This was the same army that in Polish national memory remained most vivid as a victim of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, the army which the Red Army left to perish though they could have come to its aid.

During this period, a process of democratization began within the Polish socialist system. Wladisaw Gomulka, the reform 'nationalist communist', was released from prison. Substantial reforms took place within the Polish government and the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. In the economic sector, workers' salaries were increased. Nevertheless, conditions in the eastern bloc, Poland included, were extremely bad and this material improvement was not viewed as sufficient. The population of these countries, and the workers in particular, saw in these reforms the real possibility for real improvement of their general conditions and for political democratization. In Poland, this led to a massive uprising of workers in the industrial city of Poznań on January 28 and 29, 1956, the rallying cry of which was the demand for higher pay. When a delegation returned from Warsaw carrying the message that these demands had been rejected, the workers took to the streets, attacking a number of public

[3] In Romania, the regime of Nicolae Ceausescu, who became the General Secretary of the ruling communist party in 1965, became one of the cruelest in the eastern bloc. This would cost Ceausescu his life when the changes of 1989 arrived.

buildings, among them the security bureau. The authorities responded with force, both police and military. After two days of unrest on the streets of Poznań, fifty-three people were dead and more than three-hundred wounded.

Yet the process of democratization, though slowed and in a barely perceptible form, could no longer be stopped, especially not in Poland and Hungary. Several of the protestors were brought before the court in Poznań, in particular those accused of being organizers of the uprising, so-called 'adventurists and agents provocateurs'. But the punishment was relatively mild. The most visible steps in the direction of de-Stalinization were the measures taken at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Carty that began on October 19, 1956. In terms of the future development of Poland, the session's most important act was the rehabilitation of the recently released Wladisaw Gomulka and his induction into the Central Committee along with several other very visible Polish communists from his circle. At the same time, a number of measures were debated and adopted involving the quicker democratization and decentralization of the country as wall as the lifting of censorship. The public was informed of these measures, and the government and a number of incompetent ministers were strongly criticized.

The debate at the plenary session of the Polish Communist Party set the red light blinking in Moscow. Already on the night between October 19 and 20, a Soviet delegation headed by Khrushchev himself arrived in Warsaw. Three Soviet marshals in the delegation served to instill fear. Allegedly, a Stalinist group in the Central Committee (led by Marshal Rokovski a former Soviet marshal and since 1949 the top commander of the Polish Army) invited the delegation to Warsaw. Khrushchev wanted to prevent the Central Committee from rehabilitating Gomulka but achieved nothing. He returned to Moscow, leaving his marshals in Warsaw.

It became clear from Gomulka's speech at the plenary session that he was heading toward a communist orientation similar to that taken by Yugoslav President Tito. After dedicating much of his speech to the poor economic situation in Poland and to a criticism of the ruling government, he tackled international political themes. He emphasized that the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party represented a historical break away from the path of violence, corruption, and subservience. He was impressed by the self-initiative of the factory workers and underlined the importance of a variety of paths to socialism. He also condemned the cult of personality. He saw the only way forward as the democratization of the country and its society, albeit within a socialist system.

Moscow used press outlets to criticize the situation in Poland. The Polish media had been enthusiastic about the beginning of the transition to a new socialism. They called it "the October spring". On October 29, the plenum voted in new leadership for the Central Committee, the Politboro, and the secretariat. They removed the Stalinist core, retired Marshal Rokovksy, and passed a reso-

lution that emphasized the strengthening of parliament, the elevation of living standards, and advocacy of privately-owned businesses and stores. The example of the Soviet Union was mentioned, though hardly prominently. A new government took power in order to put the new policies into motion. In a moment of political pragmatism, the new government wisely decided not to challenge 'big brother' too much and, despite it all, continually emphasized the importance of the relationship to the Soviet Union.

Gomulka, along with the policies announced at the eighth party congress of the Central Committee and Poland's new political orientation, exerted a strong influence on events in Hungary which had begun to move in the same direction as Poland. But by October 23, 1956, a violent backlash had already begun in Hungary and columns of Soviet soldiers were heading toward Poland. In order to avoid simultaneous conflicts in two such important countries in the Soviet bloc, Khrushchev made a call to Gomulka, confirmed the new Polish policies, and called off the troops in their advance to Warsaw. Thus Poland was saved from 'friendly intervention' and did not suffer the same fate that Hungary did the same year and Czechoslovakia would in 1968. The Polish October spring survived for a while. The Poznań demonstrators were called in from the streets. Cardinal Wyszynsky was returned from the internment camp where he had been held since 1953 and became the Polish primate.

Given political developments in Poland, it was no surprise that, when Gomulka first traveled outside the eastern bloc, he paid a visit to Belgrade to see his main political model. He certainly could not have imagined that the visit of the Polish delegation to Yugoslavia would have such long-term consequences for the host country and for its relationships to East Germany.

The Hungarian Crisis

In addition to domestic political and party developments in Yugoslavia, the events that took place in Hungary in the fall of 1956 and not least Yugoslavia's role in them, placed a heavy burden on Soviet-Yugoslav relations and later, during the time of the Kádar regime, on Hungarian-Yugoslav relations. The resulting distrust on both sides had an indisputably direct and negative influence on the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and East Germany. The events in Hungary, and especially Tito's comments on the Soviet military intervention in Hungary (particularly in his Pula speech on November 11, 1956), cast a shadow on both bilateral and inter-party relations for a long time to come. Immediately after the speech, an extensive correspondence began between the Soviet and Yugoslav communist parties regarding these issues, and the highest Soviet party and national functionaries continually reproached Tito and Yugoslavia for hypocritical behavior that harmed the socialist cause.

What exactly were the events that occurred on the fateful days between October 21 and November 11, 1956?

In Hungary, the process of de-Stalinization also swept away the old party leadership. On July 18 of that year, Matyas Rakosi, the first secretary of the Hungarian Workers' Party stepped down because of "age, sickness, excesses in the cult of personality, and the breaching of the socialist legal order." He was replaced by Ernö Gerö. This followed the general trend of de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe in terms of spreading democratization, strengthening the role of parliament, and rehabilitating communists imprisoned during Stalinism. Janos Kádar, who had been imprisoned because of his so-called "Titoism" was released from prison as was Imre Nagy, the most important figure in the 1956 Hungarian uprising.

The democratizing possibilities of de-Stalinization were first felt by university students who organized large demonstrations in Szeged in which some 3,000 students participated. Together with students from Budapest and Pecs, they made demands for freedom of the press, an end to the death penalty, human rights, better living conditions, and university autonomy. In solidarity with their Polish colleagues, they demanded that Imre Nagy be returned to the position of president of the government and leader of the communist party. The demonstrations begun by students continued. On the night between October 23 and 24, a crowd of 100,000 demonstrators pulled down a statue of Stalin and removed red stars. The demands of the demonstrators expanded to include the reorganization of the economy and respect for old Hungarian national symbols (in particular, the coat-of-arms).

In the early morning of October 24, Budapest Radio aired a statement of a minister in the National Council: namely, that the uprising was being conducted by reactionary and anti-revolutionary elements that were attacking public buildings and security forces. Nevertheless, the minister respected their demands and said that both Kádar and Nagy had been inducted into the Central Committee, but Gerö would remain first secretary. Nagy was named Prime Minister; the serving Prime mMinister Hegadüs was named Deputy Prime Minister.

This announcement did not calm the situation. The movement begun by the students only intensified, and Gerö and Hegadüs turned to the Soviet government for help. Unaware of this, Nagy called on the demonstrators to surrender at six in the evening of October 24 but the Soviet military already arrived by afternoon. This was the first Soviet intervention that put down with military force Hungarian desires for democratic reforms and more violence followed.

By October 25, the resistance of the uprising was broken. Gerö stepped down and Janos Kádár took his place. Like Nagy, he immediately called on the population, and particularly the young, not to support the uprising, that the problem with the Soviet Union would be resolved on the basis of equality. Nevertheless, in certain cities the uprising continued and on October 26 others joined the original participants: communists, malcontents, and right-wing elements. They demanded that the leaders of the uprising should become part of

the government, that Hungary leave the Warsaw Pact, amnesty for all prisoners, retreat of the Soviet soldiers, and a public trial against the Minister of War, Farkas. The result of their demands was a massive number of dead. Imre Nagy called in vain for the insurgents to lay down their arms, saying that he would personally negotiate with the Soviet Union for the withdrawal of their troops from Hungary. But his calls fell on deaf ears and the bloodshed continued.

The following day, though half of Hungary remained in the hands of the uprising, Nagy established a national coalition. In order to calm passions and the Soviet Union, he announced publicly that the uprising in Hungary was not anti-revolutionary but a democratic movement. He promised the disbandment of the secret police and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. He advocated a law increasing salaries and pensions, promised to raise living standards, build housing, improve student conditions etc. He ordered the Hungarian Army to cease fire and shoot only when attacked. He established a national guard.

The Security Council of the United Nations responded to events in Hungary following an extraordinary session on October 28. The Hungarian government had put in a protest to the UN General Secretary, claiming that these were internal political matters and any action by the Security Council would be a violation of Hungary's sovereignty. Nevertheless the session was held and there was only one item on the agenda – the situation in Hungary. All delegates, including the Yugoslav delegate (albeit with the notable exception of the Soviet delegate) condemned the Soviet intervention. The Soviet government claimed that their soldiers were only in Hungary at the request of the government to help in the struggle against fascism. Therefore it was not surprising that Soviet politicians insisted that the army would leave Hungary only when order had been imposed.

The following days were crucial for Hungary's future development. But this was not because the Yugoslav President Tito responded to events in neighboring Hungary with a letter on October 29 to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party. In the letter, he expressed a certain sympathy regarding the demands of the population but called for the end to the bloodshed and the defense of socialism. Essentially, the government of Imre Nagy began to accept the demands of the uprising. Once again, he called on the people to lay down their arms in order that the Soviet troops would keep its promise of leaving twenty-four hours after the last insurgent group had capitulated. On October 30, an announcement was made that the Soviet troops would in fact be withdrawing from Budapest the following day which, with few exceptions, in fact happened. The most crucial or indeed fateful event was the announcement made by President Nagy on October 31. First he emphasized that no further meddling in the internal events of Hungary would be tolerated and that the 'Hegadüs-Gerö gang' that had called in the Soviet troops and proclaimed a state of siege had been removed. Then he continued: "Today we will begin to debate Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of all Soviet forces from the country. Hungary will become a neutral core in Central Europe, but it will

be necessary to turn to foreign countries for material assistance. We have submitted a letter to the Soviet government requesting the immediate engagement of a ministerial delegation to negotiate the withdrawal of all Soviet forces."

Nagy was the rooster that crowed too early. He overestimated his own position and poorly judged the moment in Soviet politics, underestimating the determination of the Soviet Union. On the night between October 31 and November 1, Budapest was quiet, but it was the calm before the storm. The events had already claimed roughly 15,000 dead and wounded on the Hungarian side and 2,500 on the Soviet side.

The second Soviet intervention began on November 1, 1956. Soviet forces surrounded Budapest and all of the airports. They claimed this was necessary to evacuate the wounded. The Hungarian Army received a strict order not to use their arms. On the same day, Nagy formally announced Hungary's neutrality and its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. He notified the UN that new Soviet troops were arriving and requested the assistance of western powers in defending Hungarian neutrality. The following day the Hungarian government submitted three documents to the Soviet Union. In them was the demand that the Soviet Union recognize Hungarian neutrality, the notification of withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, and the demand for all Soviet troops to leave Hungary. In Budapest itself, communist leaders were rounded up and executed without trial.

Prior to launching a general attack on Budapest, the Soviet Union started a series of secret diplomatic talks with government leaders of the communist camp: with the Poles, Czechs, Romanians, Chinese, and with Yugoslavia as well. Two of the highest functionaries of the Soviet party, Nikita Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov (until September 1953 the Prime Minister of the government), flew to Brioni on the night between November 2 and 3 to meet with President Tito. It might have seemed that the visit was both proof of renewed Soviet trust in the Yugoslav leadership and a test to see if Tito had truly returned to the communist camp and recognized the leadership of the Soviet Union over it. But in fact the delegation only came to inform the Yugoslav leadership about the intentions of the Soviet Union in Hungary, that is of the Soviet plan to establish a new government under János Kádár and of the military intervention of Soviet troops that would ensure the effectiveness of the new government. The Soviet delegation left Brioni convinced that they had received consent for their plans from the Yugoslav side.[4] When Edvard Kardelj at the federal parliament session on November 1 and President Tito in his Pula speech on November 11 condemned the Soviet intervention in Hungary, relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslav took a dramatic turn for the worse, coming close to the chill between 1948 and 1953. The Soviet leadership accused Tito and the Yugoslav leadership of disloyalty, particularly in light of the fact

[4] SAMPO BArchiv, DY 30/3641, SED ZK – Büro Walter Ulbricht, Pismo CK KPbSZ, CK ZKJ, 10. 1. 1957, str. 1/2.

that Tito spoke publicly, and claimed that Yugoslavia was actively interfering in Hungarian events. However from the more extensive correspondence that took place at the time between the central committees of the two communist parties, it is clear that the Yugoslav party leadership actually supported the establishment of the new government since they believed that socialism was under threat in Hungary. Nevertheless, the opinion was expressed that the Soviet military intervention must not be the most important prop to the new government. The Yugoslav leadership believed that the consequences of the October outburst of dissatisfaction in Hungary would have to be addressed by Hungarians alone, that is by their own revolutionary government. It also claimed that the uprising included anti-socialist political currents – and indeed it reproached Imre Nagy for his anti-communism and for allowing the execution of communists by leaders of the uprising.

The Red Army attack on Budapest began on the morning of November 4, despite the fact that the UN Security Council which met the same day opposed the attack. The passing of a resolution to this effect was prevented by the Soviet veto. The attack was massive. Some data indicates that the Soviet Union used fifteen percent of its armored divisions. Events that day unfolded quickly. At eight in the morning of November 4, the legitimate government of Imre Nagy received an ultimatum, demanding that it step down or the Red Army would begin to bombard Budapest. Cardinal Mindszenty took shelter at the American Embassy, Premier Nagy at the Yugoslav. At one o'clock in the afternoon, Radio Moscow announced that the Hungarian counter-revolution was crushed and a government had been formed under János Kádár. The government of Irme Nagy had been dissolved and all 'honorable patriots' had resigned from it. Kádár's government had asked the Soviet commander for assistance in serving the needs of "the people and the working class." But the Hungarian uprising was far from defeated on the afternoon of November 4. In addition to a general strike that was called that day, four independent radio stations were still broadcasting Hungarian events and the uprising itself persisted in a number of larger industrial centers (Csepel, Pecs). As late as November 11, even Kádár had to admit that peace in the country – which is to say in Budapest and most of the hinterland – had been established only a few days later. He promised a number of reforms that on the symbolic-national level would advance parliamentary democracy: a government of national unity that would include all the parties that derived their ideology from people's democracy, members of the various parties would be allowed to hold public office, the secret police would be dissolved, the Hungarian coat-of-arms of the national hero Lajos Kossuth from 1848 would replace the red star, the Hungarian national holiday would be March 15, the symbolic date of the 1848 revolution, Hungarian soldiers would wear traditional rather than Soviet uniforms. Many promises, but none were ever delivered.

In accordance with the unwritten rule that the two superpowers would not interfere in each other's internal affairs, western countries did not intervene in

events in East Germany, Poland or Hungary. Nor would they intervene in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. It was not in their interest to do so.

Povzetek

Od monopolarnega k bipolarnemu svetu. O ključnih problemih "klasične hladne vojne"

Konec druge svetovne vojne ni prinesel le vojaškega in političnega zloma nacizma in fašizma, temveč je v temeljih spremenil razmerje sil in ureditve na svetu. Najpomembnejši značilnosti nove ureditve sveta, kot neposredni posledici konca druge svetovne vojne, sta zagotovo dejstvi, da je Evropa prešla zenit svoje pomembnosti in da je svet iz politične monolitnosti prešel v fazo politične bipolarnosti. Prav zaradi teh dveh značilnosti moremo trditi, da pomeni letnica 1945 pomembno zgodovinsko prelomnico, ki jo moramo upoštevati pri periodizaciji najnovejše zgodovine.

Do leta 1945 je bila Evropa središče sveta. Najpomembnejši velesili sta bili Velika Britanija in Francija. Politično dogajanje v svetu je bilo pogojeno z notranje evropskim političnim dogajanjem. Videti je bilo, kot da vse niti zgodovine, ki še vedno potekajo iz Evrope, vplivajo na svet; videti je bilo, kot da so izven evropske države še vedno zapletene v klopčič evropskih nemirov in vojn, zlasti kolonije in dominioni, a videti je bilo tudi, kot da svobodne države po svetu ne morejo uiti godlji evropske politike in zunanje političnih nesoglasij na evropski celini, niti največje ne npr. ZDA.

Po drugi svetovni vojni pa se je ta podoba bistveno spremenila. O usodi Evropi, pa tudi sveta nista več odločali evropski velesili, temveč ena povsem izven evropska (ZDA), druga pa z več kot polovico ozemlja in prebivalstva segajoče iz Evrope v Azijo. Njun vzpon se je nakazoval že ves čas po prvi svetovni vojni. Toda ne samo to, da sta bili to deželi, ki nista imeli enakih družbenih sistemov, kot sta jih imeli Francija in Velika Britanija po prvi svetovni vojni. Ti dve državi sta dali Evropi dosti večji in globlji pečat, kot po prvi svetovni vojni Francija in Velika Britanija. Zaradi nasprotujočih si ideologij sta se državi takoj po vojni razšli, vsaka pa je dala svojemu delu sveta svojstven pečat. To je bila osnova za tako imenovano klasično hladno vojno, ki je trajala nekako do srede petdesetih let in v času katere so se med drugim reševali tudi najpomembnejši problemi Srednje Evrope.

V tem času je bilo treba rešiti tri najpomembnejše probleme Srednje Evrope, ki so se kot najbolj akutni pojavili tako po koncu druge svetovne vojne: nemško vprašanje, avstrijsko vprašanje in tržaško vprašanje. Osrednja pozornost posvečena tem vprašanjem, še posebej prvim dvema, ki so najbolj determinirali politični razvoj v Srednji Evropi. Vsa tri vprašanja so bila namreč predmet razprav

in odločanj v odnosih bipolarnega sveta ter ob "železni zavesi". Usoda drugih pomembnih srednjeevropskih držav, kot so Češkoslovaška, Madžarska in Poljska je bila odločena že z dejstvom, da so zaradi prisotnosti sovjetske RA, do leta 1951 postale komunistične in s tem prešle v vzhodni, komunistični del bipolarnega sveta. Njihov pomen za razvoj srednje Evrope je bil s tem zmanjšan na minimum oziroma na raven odnosov med vzhodom in zahodom.

Časovno bo predstavitev naslovne problematike segla do srede petdesetih let, ko se je kazalo, da so to trije problemi, povzročeni z drugo svetovno vojno, dokončno rešeni. Pokazalo pa se je, da je bila njihova rešitev potisnjena še kar nekaj desetletij v bodočnost.

Konec druge svetovne vojne je sicer vplival na vse države ob "železni zavesi", vendar je bilo politično, ideološko, vojaško in etnično-narodnostno dogajanje najpomembnejše prav pri naštetih treh najpomembnejših vprašanjih "klasične hladne vojne" v Evropi.