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MOLOTOV

on

The RESULTS of the LONDON CONFERENCE of FOREIGN MINISTERS

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SOVIET NEWS, 630, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Sq., London, W.C. 2

6

1948

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V. M. MOLOTOV

on

THE RESULTS OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS



*Statement to Soviet
Press Representatives
December 31, 1947*



Published by "Soviet News"
London, 1948

In reply to questions put by correspondents of "Izvestia" and "Pravda" regarding the results of the London session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and in connection with the speeches made on this subject by Mr. Marshall, U.S. Secretary of State, and Mr. Bevin, Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, V. M. Molotov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., made, on December 31st, 1947, the following statement :—

BOTH the Moscow session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held last spring and the London session were called principally for the purpose of considering the German problem. The materials of both these conferences provide sufficient grounds for judging the attitudes of the United States of America, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union in regard to Germany.

Agreement on the German problem was not achieved in London. What matters, however, is not certain trifles to which references have sometimes been made in recent speeches. Agreement was not reached on two basic issues: firstly, on the peace treaty with Germany, and secondly, on the re-establishment of Germany's unity.

The Yalta and Potsdam Agreements, concluded by the heads of the Governments of the U.S.A., Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. in 1945, supply a solid basis for the solution of both these problems. If not only the Government of the U.S.S.R., but also the other Governments which signed these Agreements, adhere to the decisions they adopted, general agreement on the German issue will be achieved despite existing differences.

On the other hand, the Soviet Government has always stated that it would not depart from these Agreements and would not march in step with those who do not want to implement them and who are at present trying to impose a different policy with regard to Germany, a policy which departs from the principles of democracy and the security of the nations placed at the basis of the Yalta and Potsdam decisions on the German problem.

1. THE PEACE TREATY WITH GERMANY

The question of the peace treaty with Germany is important not only for Germany but for all European nations seeking to establish stable peace. The peace settlement with regard to Germany will mean the termination of the present indefinite situation and the establishment of general peace in Europe. Not only European, but all other peace-loving nations as

well, are interested in this. If we really wish to contribute to the consolidation of peace in Europe we must begin preparing the peace treaty with Germany, as well as the settling of all issues involved in the convocation of the peace conference on the German problem.

This was the attitude of the Soviet delegation, which, however, failed to meet with support on the part of the three other Ministers at the London Conference.

It is known that there also exists a different attitude. Early this year the U.S.A. advanced a proposal for a provisional status for Germany, which meant the shelving of the question of the peace treaty with Germany. At that time, as now, the Soviet Government was opposed to the proposal for a provisional status for Germany, which could only hinder the establishment of stable peace in Europe.

At the London Conference the Soviet delegation insisted on beginning the preparation of the peace treaty with Germany, without postponing this matter any longer. Our delegation insisted that the Council of Foreign Ministers should tackle its main task, for which it had been set up.

When the Council of Foreign Ministers was being instituted, the Potsdam Conference stated that its main task was to conduct "the necessary preparatory work for the peace settlements." This was meant to include not only the West but the East as well, and therefore China, too, was included in the Council of Foreign Ministers.

It was decided at Potsdam that the Council was to be engaged in the first place in drafting the peace treaties for Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland; and this was accomplished last year. The decision of the Potsdam Conference, however, also said: "The Council shall be utilised for the preparation of the peace settlement for Germany, a corresponding document to be accepted by the government of Germany when a government adequate for this purpose is established."

It is perfectly obvious that the time has come when the attention of the Council of Foreign Ministers should be focused on the problem of the peace settlement for Germany in the West and the problem of the peace settlement for Japan in the East. This is the right road toward the consolidation of general peace.

It is known that last year the Government of the U.S.A. also believed it necessary to begin preparation of the peace treaty with Germany. The American delegation advanced such a proposal as early as in April, 1946, at the Paris

Conference. At that time, however, attention was diverted to the preparation of other peace treaties, which made it impossible to proceed to the peace treaty with Germany.

A different situation has now arisen. Since the peace treaties with Italy, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Finland have not only been signed but have come into force, one might think that the time has come to tackle the peace treaty with Germany. Nevertheless, it is the U.S.A. which at present offers the most stubborn resistance to this. The U.S.A. has changed its stand and now, as distinct from last year, the Government of the U.S.A. no longer seeks to accelerate the solution of this problem. The London Conference proved that Great Britain and France are treading the same road.

The representatives of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France did not regard the problem of the peace settlement for Germany as vital for the London Conference. They sought either completely to remove it from the agenda or to postpone it and class it together with other secondary matters. Out of the totality of this problem they artificially singled out the question of Germany's frontiers. This was by no means dictated by businesslike considerations, but was a kind of playing on the Germans' nerves.

This issue can be settled only in the course of the consideration of the whole problem of the peace settlement for Germany, which, however, our partners did not want to do. Besides, in one of its previous decisions, the Council of Foreign Ministers had already found it necessary to set up a special committee for frontier affairs, along with other special committees for preparing the peace treaty with Germany.

At present, allegations are being made that the discussion concerning the preparation of the German peace treaty at the London session was fruitless, although this does not correspond to fact. This session—chiefly through the efforts of the Soviet delegation—adopted a number of decisions in which progress was made in co-ordinating the attitudes of the four Governments in regard to the procedure for the preparation of the peace treaty with Germany. For some reason this is now being passed over in silence. Consideration of this matter was not, however, completed; since the American delegation hurriedly undertook to disrupt the entire work of the London Conference.

No one has explained why it is that the U.S.A., which last year proposed to speed up preparation of the peace treaty,

does not consider this problem vital at present. In the meantime it is perfectly obvious that the establishment of peace in Europe cannot be completed without the peace settlement for Germany.

Facts prove that the Soviet Union alone insisted that the London session of the Council of Foreign Ministers should speed up the preparation of the peace settlement for Germany. It is perfectly obvious that this attitude meets the interests of all nations seeking to consolidate general peace.

2. RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF GERMANY'S UNITY

Along with the problem of the peace settlement for Germany there arose the question of a German Government, and in this connection also the question of the re-establishment of Germany's unity. The significance of the re-establishment of Germany's unity for the national development of the German people is clear.

On the other hand, it is important for all democratic and peace-loving countries that the principles of the democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany adopted by the anti-Hitler coalition at the Potsdam Conference should be implemented in practice throughout the whole of Germany. This is possible, however, only in the event of Germany's unity being re-established and not a single part of Germany remaining outside the joint control of all the four Powers charged with implementing these principles.

The fulfilment of Germany's obligations toward the allied countries which suffered from Hitlerite aggression and occupation also depends to no small extent on the re-establishment of Germany's unity.

At the London Conference no one openly opposed Germany's unity. Statements were even made to the effect that the re-establishment of Germany's unity was the principal task of the Conference of the four Ministers. It transpired, however, that the representatives of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France reduced this task merely to making certain agreements among the occupation authorities concerning the elimination of zonal barriers for the purpose of facilitating the movement of goods and so forth, while neglecting the participation of the German people itself and of its democratic forces in re-establishing the unity of the German State.

Consequently, it appeared that this was rather a matter of convenience for foreign export companies in selling their goods in Germany than of the actual re-establishment of the unity of the German State.

The U.S.S.R. delegation maintained a fundamentally different attitude. Indeed, can one speak seriously about re-establishing Germany's unity in conformity with the Potsdam Agreement without the active participation of the German people itself and of its progressive democratic forces?

It is not difficult to answer this question: it is impossible to re-establish Germany's unity on a democratic and peaceful basis without the active participation of the democratic forces of the German people in this matter.

Therefore, at the London session of the Council of Foreign Ministers the Soviet delegation advanced a proposal to proceed to the organisation of a central German government in accordance with the decision of the Potsdam Conference. It is perfectly obvious that had this proposal been accepted, the re-establishment of Germany's unity would have been placed on a firm foundation. However, the representatives of the United States, Great Britain and France rejected the Soviet proposal regarding the formation of a provisional central German government.

Our delegation also advanced another proposal as a first step towards the formation of a central German government. It proposed that, at the least, the decision of the Potsdam Conference regarding the creation of central German departments for finance, transport, communications, foreign trade and industry, as well as for agriculture and food, should be carried out. The formation of such economic departments for the whole of Germany would indisputably constitute a practical step towards the re-establishment of Germany's economic and political unity.

Lastly, the Soviet delegation proposed that a German advisory council be set up in Berlin, composed of representatives of the Laender and of the democratic parties of the whole of Germany, as well as representatives of the free trade unions and other important anti-Nazi organisations. This would also constitute a practical contribution toward the re-establishment of Germany's unity, and would open new prospects for the German people.

The proposals of the Soviet Union concerning a central German government, German economic departments and a German advisory council in Berlin indicated an effective way of re-establishing Germany's unity. Indeed, Germany's unity cannot be re-established without the participation of the German people itself, without enlisting its democratic

forces for this cause. Germany's democratisation and demilitarisation in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement calls for the formation of central German economic and political bodies, and consequently for the active participation of German democratic forces in this cause.

The proposals of the Soviet delegation, however, failed to meet with support from the Western Powers. The attitude of those Powers at the London Conference rendered all progress in re-establishing Germany's unity impossible.

All this indicates that there exist two principal political attitudes to the re-establishment of Germany's unity: the one maintained by the Soviet Union and the other maintained by the U.S.A., Great Britain and France, even though among the latter there exist certain differences in the formulation of their common position.

The Soviet Union alone consistently upholds the re-establishment of Germany's unity. As to the three other Powers, their attitude in this matter indicates a policy aimed at Germany's disintegration rather than her unity, a policy of separating the Western zones from the rest of Germany, which has already resulted in the actual splitting of Germany.

The policy, aimed at Germany's disintegration, finds its expression in the Anglo-Franco-American proposal that "all power should be invested in the Laender," with the exception of certain secondary functions which remain within the competence of central German bodies. This policy is dictated by a desire to see Germany dismembered, both politically and economically. As a result of such a policy Germany's democratic forces would not be able to unite effectively for the defence of the just national interests of their people.

This policy is dictated by the fear that Germany will re-establish herself as a serious competitor in the world market, over which the American monopolies and their affiliations in Europe are seeking to hold undivided sway and to dictate their will.

Such a policy can attract only small groups of German monopolists allied to industrial and banking monopolists in other countries. This policy can also be exploited in their own interests by German reactionaries from among the revanchists of every description, including the old militarists, who would like to appropriate the idea of Germany's unity in order to exploit it for their own anti-democratic and imperialist ends.

This policy contradicts the Potsdam Agreement, has nothing in common with the interests of German democracy, and is foreign to the interests of the nations which seek to consolidate peace and democracy in Europe. This anti-democratic policy is now being pursued in practice in Germany's Western zones.

The creation of the Anglo-American Bizonia facilitated the implementation of this policy, since Bizonia is virtually not controlled by the four Powers but subordinated to Anglo-American administration. The Soviet Union's unfavourable attitude toward federalisation prevented the extension of this policy to the whole of Germany. However, the Anglo-American authorities did not hesitate to take the path of splitting Germany for the sole purpose of clearing the field for their own policy, even though only in the Western zones.

A year and a-half ago the U.S.A. put forward the idea of the separate fusion of the two zones—the American and British. This was motivated by economic considerations. They spoke chiefly of their desire to reduce the expenditures of the occupying Powers in the Western zones, despite the fact that a considerable part of these expenditures did not and does not at present benefit the German population but goes for the upkeep of so-called "displaced persons," many of whom actively assisted the Hitlerites in the war against the allied States and for whose upkeep the same Germans must now pay.

It is no longer concealed that the separation of Bizonia from the rest of Germany also serves political purposes. Much has been written in the American and British press of recent months to the effect that a government of its own should be set up under one name or another in Anglo-American Bizonia, that Bizonia should have a constitution of its own, that a separate currency reform should be carried out there and its own currency issued, and the like.

Thus, all the practical activities of the American and British authorities in their merged zone are aimed at completing the splitting of Germany which was begun last year. Preparations are also in progress for incorporating the French zone into the Anglo-American zone, which will transform Anglo-American Bizonia into Anglo-French-American Trizonia.

All this shows that the statements of the British and American representatives in favour of re-establishing Germany's unity are in utter contradiction with the practical

activities of the Anglo-American authorities in the Western zones. In actual fact, the policy of the Anglo-American authorities, as of the French authorities in their zone, leads to the aggravation of the splitting up of Germany, which, however, cannot but result in undermining the prestige of those who pursue such a policy. The bankruptcy of this policy is inevitable because it contradicts the historical development of Germany and meets with condemnation throughout democratic Europe.

3. CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE

The London Conference demonstrated that differences on the subject of the peace treaty with Germany and on the subject of the re-establishment of Germany's unity are not accidental. In them are reflected two different approaches to the solution of the German problem.

It is now known that the intention exists to make Germany, or at least Western Germany, the objective of a definite American plan in Europe. Germany is promised thousands of millions of American dollars, ostensibly for her economic rehabilitation, food supply and the like. Germany's affairs are being discussed and settled by American Senators and American businessmen of every description, who are lording it in the Western zones and helping the American monopolies to penetrate ever deeper into the industry and banks in Western Germany.

It is now also known that actual power in Anglo-American Bizonia is shifting from the united Anglo-American bodies directly to the Americans, who have more dollars at their disposal. All this is being done ostensibly for the sake of Germany and not for the sake of implementing certain foreign plans. The German people, however, remains isolated from what is being done in actual fact, in accordance with these plans. It is not consulted about anything by those who are lording it on German territory and are already seeking to arrange economic and political conditions, at least in the Western part of Germany, for a number of years to come. They fix the size of credits for Germany and dictate the political and economic terms of these credits, without asking whether terms and credits of this kind are acceptable.

Statements of the desire to assist Germany's economic rehabilitation are in blatant contradiction with actual conditions in Anglo-American Bizonia. This year, as well as last, industry in Western Germany is dragging out a miserable

existence, and two-thirds of it are still idle. The industrial production index has attained only 35 per cent. of the 1938 level, which is considerably below the industrial index achieved in the Soviet zone, despite the fact that in the Soviet zone conditions for the rehabilitation of industry are considerably more difficult.

The policy being pursued in the Western zones is not one of assisting the rehabilitation of civilian industry, but of hindering the development and causing the stagnation of industry, as a result of which equipment which is not in use progressively loses its value, deteriorates and becomes dilapidated.

No land reform has been effected in the Western zones. The small peasants have not received any addition to their plots, as they have in the Soviet zone, at the expense of the rich Junkers and big landowners who formed the mainstay of German militarism and Hitlerite aggression.

Anglo-American credits for Bizonia, of which the Anglo-American authorities themselves have disposed at their own discretion, have become a heavy burden on the German population of the Anglo-American zone, while being of no help in the economic rehabilitation of that zone. At present the American plan provides for a further thousand million dollars of credits for Bizonia for a period of several years. These sums will bring about a further rapprochement between the German and American monopolists and will render still more difficult the position of the small and medium industrialists, not to speak of the bulk of the German population, whose opinion nobody consults in this case either.

These credits are not directed into the development of the numerous peace industries in Western Germany, but principally into the development of industries producing raw materials, such as coalmining and, in part, into the iron and steel industry. Many things which Germany could produce in her own factories will again be imported into Germany from abroad, and it is intended to secure in the first place an increase in imports from America.

The economic dependence of the Western part of Germany on foreign capital will grow still greater, and even now quite a few German factories have been bought up for a song by foreign monopolists. It will not be difficult to deal with an economically weakened Western Germany at the discretion of American creditors, especially in the absence of a central German government.

This plan to a great extent reflects the desire to convert the Western part of Germany into a base for extending the influence of American imperialism in Europe. The American plan includes a number of European States, whose rehabilitation is made dependent on certain economic and political terms dictated by the U.S.A. The undivided sway of American imperialism in the Western part of Germany is meant to contribute to the consolidation of its influence in other European countries as well; and the development in Bizonia of such industries as iron and steel and coalmining creates the prerequisites for exploiting Western Germany as a strategical base for the adventurist, aggressive plans of American imperialism.

It should be added that the American plan by no means envisages the fulfilment by Germany of her reparations obligations towards States which suffered from German aggression and occupation. It does not reckon with the interests of these States, and disregards the decision of the Potsdam Conference on this subject.

Allegations that the settlement of the problem of reparations for the U.S.S.R. is hindered by the absence of information from the Soviet zone are utterly unfounded. The Soviet Union has always expressed and still expresses readiness to present exhaustive information on this subject, if the Western Powers are prepared to proceed to the settlement of the reparations problem in deeds and not in words. As to the other allied States to which reparations from Germany's Western zones are due, it is an open secret that Anglo-American and French policy has reduced the Potsdam Agreement practically to nothing as far as those States are concerned.

Thus the American plan for Germany utterly disregards the interests of other States which participated in the anti-Hitler coalition. It is aimed at abolishing the Potsdam Agreement, which conforms to the interests of peace and the security of the nations of Europe. The present American plan is an expression of the interests of definite American circles, and the Western part of Germany is merely an objective being exploited in the interests of American expansionism.

After this, it becomes clear why the United States, which is engaged at present in carrying out its plan in Europe, shows no interest either in the preparation of the peace

treaty with Germany or in the re-establishment of Germany's unity. By maintaining for as long as possible the present unsettled conditions, in which the state of war with Germany has not yet been terminated, they can, without scruple, dictate to the Germans any recipes for German economy, and impose upon the Germans any obligations in payment for this so-called "aid."

Both the peace treaty and the re-establishment of Germany's unity call for the formation of a German government, but it is easy to see that the formation of a democratic government in Germany would mean reckoning more with the interests of the German people, which is evidently not envisaged by the present plan for so-called "aid." The longer such a government is lacking, the longer will those who are carrying out the American plan have a "free hand," as they say—at least in that part of Germany to which they have access. This is the only possible explanation of their unwillingness to deal in the Council of Foreign Ministers either with the peace treaty or with the re-establishment of Germany's unity, or with the formation of a provisional German government.

We are told that either the proposed American plan for Germany will be carried out, or else even the "paper agreements on the peace treaties" will not be concluded. Such frankness is useful for clarifying the present situation.

It follows from this that the U.S.A. makes the restoration of complete peace in Europe, as well as the re-establishment of the unity of the German State, without which the peace treaty with Germany cannot be concluded, conditional upon the acceptance of the American plan for Germany and Europe. Either accept this anti-democratic plan unreservedly, as it is dictated by the American expansionist, or there will be no agreement concerning the peace treaties—that is, the restoration of peace in Europe will not be completed.

This policy of *diktat* could not but encounter a rebuff on the part of the Soviet Union. This policy of *diktat* adopted by the U.S.A. resulted in the failure of the London Conference.

The London Conference ended in failure. Quite a few attempts were made to charge the U.S.S.R. with responsibility for this. Nothing came of it. The responsibility for the failure of the London session rests with the leading circles of the United States of America. In this instance once again, both Mr. Bevin and M. Bidault followed Mr. Marshall.

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