

Declaration of the Foreign Ministers (Warsaw, 24 June 1948)

Caption: On 24 June 1948, at the end of the Warsaw Conference attended by the Foreign Ministers of the USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe, a declaration is adopted condemning the measures adopted in London by the Six-Power Conference on Germany.

Source: Soviet news. 25.06.1948, n° 1968. London: Press Department of the Soviet Embassy in London. "Declaration of Warsaw conference of Foreign Ministers", p. 1-4.

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Declaration of Warsaw Conference of Foreign Ministers (Warsaw, 24 June 1948)

On June 7 there was published a communique on the conclusion of the London Conference of Three Powers — the United States, Great Britain and France — on the German question. The communique contains a summary of the decisions adopted at that secret conference on the principal political and economic questions concerning Germany, as well as on the change of Germany's Western frontiers, although the reports that appeared in the press indicate that the communique passes over in silence certain decisions adopted at the conference.

The London Conference was called in violation of the Potsdam Agreement, according to which questions concerning Germany are to be decided upon by the four Powers — the U.S.S.R., the United States, Great Britain and France — while examination of these questions is entrusted to the Foreign Ministers' Council composed of representatives of these Powers.

It is also impossible to overlook the fact that the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg) were also invited to take part in this separate Conference of Three Powers, although States bordering on Germany such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well as other directly interested countries, did not take part in it.

The convocation of the separate London Conference on the German question attests to the fact that the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France, who organised this Conference, set themselves the purpose of liquidating the Council of Foreign Ministers, established at the Potsdam Conference, as well as of liquidating the quadripartite control machinery in Germany set up still earlier upon agreement among the four Powers.

This violation of former agreements among the United States, the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and France on the German question, as well as the violation of undertakings concerning consultations with interested countries, is taking place before everybody's eyes and leads to disruption of the Potsdam Agreement on the demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany, an agreement aimed at preventing a repetition of German aggression in the future.

These violations of existing Agreements concerning Germany affect the vital interests not only of the four Powers occupying Germany and of States which suffered German aggression, but of all European countries striving to establish firm and lasting peace in Europe.

It is known that the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements set the aim of disarming Germany and abolishing her war industry, undermining the very foundations of German militarism and preventing Germany's resurgence as an aggressive Power, and thus converting Germany into a peace-loving and democratic State. Moreover, the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements provide for Germany's obligation to pay reparations and thereby, even though partially, to repair the damage to the countries which suffered from German aggression.

The decisions of the London Conference of Three Powers, with the participation of the Benelux countries, pursue different aims. These decisions cast aside the tasks of the demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany and the tasks of converting Germany into a peace-loving, democratic State, and completely pass over in silence Germany's reparations obligations.

The London decisions are not aimed at preventing the possibility of new German aggression but at converting the Western part of Germany, and primarily the heavy industry of the Ruhr, into an instrument for re-establishing Germany's war potential in order to utilise it for the military-strategic aims of the United States of America and Britain. Clearly such a plan cannot but create favourable conditions for a repetition of German aggression.

At the same time the decisions of the London Conference show the true meaning of the "Western Military Alliance" recently established by the Governments of Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg under the patronage of the United States of America.

Still more frankly than the “Western Military Alliance,” which comprises the above five States, the London Conference, in which the United States of America also took part, did not set itself the purpose of preventing a new German aggression, but had totally different aims. Acknowledging that it is impossible to draw the whole of Germany into the military-strategic plans of the United States and Great Britain, the London Conference strives to use the Western zones of Germany as a base for these plans, tearing these zones away from the rest of Germany.

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1. The decisions of the London Conference are directed toward the consummation of the splitting and dismemberment of Germany.

Having renounced even verbal recognition of Germany’s political and economic unity, announced previously by the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France, the London Conference prepared the establishment of a Government for the Western part of Germany detached from the rest of Germany by the separate actions of the above Powers.

For this purpose there was envisaged the convocation of a specially picked Constituent Assembly composed of representatives of the Laender of the British, American and French occupation zones, which had to secure the formation of a puppet Government for the Western part of Germany comprised of such German elements as suit the occupation authorities in the Western zones and are bound by close ties with the American and British capitalist monopolies, but are not connected with the German people and treat inimically its democratic aspirations.

This means that the United States, Great Britain and France concluded a deal with a view to effecting the political and economic splitting and dismemberment of Germany and to creating such a separate Government in the Western zones as must oppose the legitimate demands of the German people for Germany’s unity and democratisation.

In addition to the above-mentioned measures for effecting the political splitting and dismemberment of Germany, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France are now also carrying out new measures for the economic splitting and dismemberment of Germany.

Directly following the termination of the London Conference, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France began carrying out the separate currency reform for the Western zones of Germany announced on June 18, despite the fact that the above-mentioned communique passed over in silence the decisions of the London Conference on this subject.

The separate currency reform in the Western zones of Germany was effected contrary to the obvious necessity of a single currency reform for the whole of Germany to be carried out upon agreement among the U.S.S.R., the United States, Great Britain and France, as had been proposed by the Soviet Government. Instead of the single currency system with a single mark for the whole of Germany which existed until now, as had been established by agreement of the four Powers, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France separately carried out a currency reform and introduced a special mark for the Western part of Germany.

This erects an economic barrier between the Western part of Germany and the rest of Germany and creates numerous new difficulties in the way of the elimination of economic dislocation and of the economic rehabilitation Germany.

The entire currency reform in the Western zones of Germany is being carried out with a view to securing advantages to big property owners, and primarily to those German monopolies which maintain close connections with the American and British capitalist monopolies, and this creates the menace of a growth of unemployment and a deterioration of the material conditions of the working people in Western Germany,

and will lead to fresh difficulties in economic relations with other countries.

Such are the inevitable consequences of the London Conference, the decisions of which lead to the consummation of the political and economic splitting and dismemberment of Germany.

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2. The policy of splitting and dismembering Germany thwarts the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, without which it is impossible to put an end to the drawn-out state of war and to the occupation regime in Europe.

It is no accident that the communique of the London Conference does not contain a single word about the peace treaty with Germany and does not as much as touch on the question of the preparation of the peace treaty.

The decisions of the London Conference of the United States, Great Britain and France, with the participation of the Benelux countries, confirm that the Governments of these Powers and German circles closely connected with them are not interested in the early conclusion of a German peace treaty or in the early withdrawal of the occupation troops from Germany. Instead of a peace settlement for the whole of Germany, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France prepared the introduction of a so-called occupation statute in the Western zones of Germany, at which the London communique hints in deliberately nebulous terms.

Whereas the interests of all peace-loving peoples demand the early conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, which must abolish the occupation regime in Germany and fully restore to the German people conditions of peaceful and democratic development, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France do not want to permit the early conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and strive to impose upon Germany's Western zones their "occupation statute" in order arbitrarily to prolong the occupation of Germany, loading the German population with the burden of occupation expenditures for many years to come.

This policy of the American, British and French authorities, which leads to the enslavement of the German population and to the delaying of the peace settlement in Europe, is incompatible with the tasks of Germany's transformation into a peace-loving and democratic State, as well as being incompatible with the striving of the peoples for the earliest establishment of a democratic peace in Europe.

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3. The decisions concerning the State structure in the Western zones of Germany are imbued with an anti-democratic spirit.

All preparations for the convocation of a so-called Constituent Assembly and for creating a German constitution have been placed in the hands of the three Military Governors and the Prime Ministers of the Laender of the Western occupation zones of Germany. The democratic parties, trade unions and other democratic organisations representing the interests of the German people have been completely removed from this work. The interests of the peace and security of the peoples of Europe call for the elimination of the Hitlerite centralisation of the State administration in Germany, which destroyed the Landtags and autonomous administration of the Laender, and for the restoration of the decentralised administration which existed prior to the Hitler regime and for the re-establishment of the Landtags and of two Chambers for the whole of Germany.

This will ensure Germany's unity and the transformation of the German State on a peaceful and democratic basis, on condition that the democratic organisations will be accorded the possibility of free activities.

The decisions of the London Conference take an entirely different direction. On the pretext of preventing the

restoration of a centralised Reich, the London Conference tries to push Germany back and to impose on the German people a federalist State in which the principal authority is vested in the separate Laender, while the central Government administration is confined to functions of secondary importance, despite the fact that this is in contradiction with the modern development of democratic States.

This Anglo-Franco-American plan is aimed at dismembering Germany, which entails the destruction of an independent German State. Implementation of this plan for the federalisation (dismemberment) of Germany places the idea of Germany's unity in the hands of German chauvinists and revanchists who strive to restore Germany as a militarist country dominating other peoples.

As a result of this, the idea of revanche will rear its head; chauvinism, for which there exists favourable ground in Germany, will gain strength, and conditions will arise for the emergence of new Bismarcks, or even new Hitlers.

If the German people's aspiration for a united Germany again becomes a tool in the hands of German chauvinists and militarists, who have already received many encouragements from the occupation authorities in the Western zones of Germany, this will inevitably lead to a repetition of German aggression, with the gravest consequences for the peoples of Europe, including the German people, which compels the peace-loving peoples to intensify measures of struggle against the fomenters of a new war.

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4. The policy which is being pursued by the occupying Powers in the Western zones of Germany encourages German revisionist elements.

These elements are conducting a campaign against the agreements adopted at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences with regard to the democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany, her obligations to repair the damage caused by German aggression, and against the well-known decisions on the transfer of German population, and attempts are being made to exploit this population for a purpose hostile to neighbouring States.

The campaign of the German revisionist elements is especially directed against the Polish-German frontier along the Oder and the Western Neisse, which is an immovable frontier — a frontier of peace.

The London Conference passes by the question of the revisionist campaign, thus encouraging the aggressive tendencies of German reactionary circles. In these conditions measures against all revisionist activity form one of the most important conditions for the consolidation of peace and the security of the peoples of Europe.

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5. The decisions of the London Conference of Three Powers subordinate the economy of Western Germany to the aims of the United States of America and Britain, rendering it dependent on the implementation of the so-called Marshall plan in Europe.

This means that industry and other economic branches in Western Germany will be put in the fetters of the plans of the American, as well as of the British, capitalist monopolies which are striving to subjugate the entire economic life of the Western zones of Germany and are by no means interested in the genuine rehabilitation and progress of the German peace industry, which they regard as their competitor.

This policy of expansion is aimed at increasing still more the dependence of countries connected with the Marshall plan upon the American and British monopolies.

Far from contradicting the interests of other peoples, the rehabilitation and development of Germany's peace industry complies with the tasks of economic recovery in Europe. The German people should be granted

broad opportunities for restoring and developing peace, industry, agriculture and transportation, as well as foreign trade, since otherwise Germany cannot exist and discharge her reparations obligations toward the countries which suffered from German aggression.

Along with this, four-Power control must be preserved for a certain period in order to prevent the restoration of German war industry and German militarism.

The inclusion of the economy of the Western zones of Germany in the “Marshall plan” means that this part of Germany is to be included in the division of the whole of Europe into two camps which is being carried out under the “Marshall plan” — the camp of European States which adopted the “Marshall plan” and are for this reason subordinated to the control of the United States of America, on the one hand, and that of the European countries, among them the U.S.S.R. and the people’s democratic Republics, which do not agree to foreign intervention into their domestic affairs, on the other.

Thus the London Conference not only completes the implementation of the plan for splitting and dismembering Germany but at the same time, in accordance with the “Marshall plan,” further deepens the division of the countries of Europe into camps opposing each other. Clearly this policy has nothing in common with the true interests of the peoples of Europe or with the economic rehabilitation of Europe.

There is no need to mention that the implementation of this policy of the United States, Great Britain and France places the economy of the Western zones of Germany in unbearable conditions of subordination to the expansionist plans of foreign capital, which does not in any degree consider the interests of democratic Germany.

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6. The London Conference passed a special decision on the Ruhr.

It has been decided to set up a special agency for controlling the distribution of Ruhr coal, coke and steel, composed of representatives of the Powers which took part in the London Conference, while the production of coal, coke and steel has been withdrawn from the control of this agency, which ensures the preservation of the domination of American and British financial and industrial monopolies over the Ruhr industry.

Thus, instead of transferring the Ruhr coal and metal trusts and cartels to the German people as its possession on which the Soviet Union as well as the other participants of this Conference insist, the Governments of the United States and Great Britain actually keep the Ruhr heavy industry in their own hands, without the participation of France and the U.S.S.R. in the control of production, and without any influence whatever of the German democratic organisations.

This facilitates a deal between the American and British monopolies on the one hand, and the German coal and steel industry barons in the Ruhr on the other, which creates the possibility of re-establishing Germany’s war potential and creating a seat of new German aggression.

It is not difficult to see that this policy is absolutely incompatible with the interests of peace, with the interests of the German people and the other peoples of Europe. Only the transfer of Ruhr heavy industry to the German people and the institution for a definite time of control over production and distribution of the output of Ruhr industry by the four Powers — the U.S.S.R., the United States, Great Britain and France — which jointly are able to ensure the development of Ruhr industry for peace purposes only, would create the possibility of solving the Ruhr problem in the interests of peace and the security of the peoples of Europe.

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7. All of the above shows that the London decisions constitute a gross violation of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements on the unity of Germany, on the demilitarisation, denazification and democratisation of Germany, on the destruction of Germany’s war potential and the elimination of conditions which might

facilitate new German aggression.

In view of this, the assertion of the London communique that the London decisions are bound to facilitate subsequent agreement of the four Powers on Germany must be considered utterly untenable. The untenable nature of this assertion is evident even from the fact that the London decisions utterly contradict the decisions taken previously at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences and thwart both the agreement on quadripartite control machinery for Germany and that on the examination of the German question in the Council of Foreign Ministers with the participation of the four Powers.

Far from being able to facilitate agreement of the four Powers on Germany, the London separate Conference of Three Powers, with the participation of the Benelux countries, and the London separate decisions of those Powers undermine the confidence of the peoples in international agreements to which the United States and Great Britain are parties. It is not difficult to see that violation of international agreements cannot inspire confidence in those who violate these agreements.

In view of the above, we refuse to recognise the legal validity or any moral authority whatever of the decisions of the London Conference.

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8. In accordance with the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements on Germany, the Governments of the U.S.S.R., Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania and Hungary believe that the following problems should be settled in the first place, without any delay:—

- (1) Implementation of the measures ensuring the final demilitarisation of Germany, by agreement among Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., France and the United States.
- (2) Institution for a definite time of control by the four Powers — Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., France and the United States — over Ruhr heavy industry with a view to developing peace branches of Ruhr industry and preventing the re-establishment of Germany's war potential.
- (3) Establishment, by agreement among the Governments of Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., France and the United States, of a provisional democratic, peace-loving Government for the whole of Germany, composed of representatives of the democratic parties and organisations of Germany, for the purpose of creating a guarantee against a repetition of German aggression.
- (4) Conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany in accordance with the Potsdam decisions, so that the occupation troops of all Powers should be withdrawn from Germany within one year after the conclusion of the peace treaty.
- (5) Elaboration of measures for the fulfilment by Germany of her reparations obligations towards States which suffered from German aggression.