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Introduction by Norman M. Naimark, Stanford University

Jochen Laufer. *Pax Sovietica. Stalin, die Westmächte und die deutsche Frage 1941-1945 [Pax Sovietica. Stalin, the Western Allies and the German Question, 1941-1945]*. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2009.

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Introduction by Norman M. Naimark, Stanford University

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For historians of Soviet policy in Germany during and immediately after World War II, the opening of archives in the Russian Federation and the possibilities of working in party, state, and foreign ministry materials have provided a fresh gust of wind to the study of Soviet intentions in this crucial period and how they relate to the emergence of the Cold War and, with it, the establishment of two rival German states. The “German problem,” it is fair to say, stood at the geopolitical center of the hostility between the Soviet Union and the United States and therefore occupies a critical place in the study of the conflict as a whole. As pointed out in this roundtable, there are still problems getting access to relevant collections in Moscow to study this problem. In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive (AVPRF) remains among the hardest to use properly, given the closed archival guides ([opisy](#)) and the lack of access to important foreign ministry materials, most notably the cables to and from embassies and representatives abroad. Yet some remarkable new studies on the German question have been published from the accessible Soviet materials. None is more impressive in the breadth and depth of Soviet foreign ministry materials used than Jochen Laufer’s *Pax Sovietica*.

Laufer is a senior researcher at the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung in Potsdam. With the collaboration of Georgii Kynin of the Russian Foreign Ministry archives, Laufer has spent a good part of the last fifteen years editing, compiling, and annotating an extraordinary three volume series of documents, *Die UdSSR und die deutsche Frage 1941-1948*, published in 2004, and preparing for publication a new set of documents from the postwar period. This work is difficult and complicated, because one has to deal with the notable reticence of the Foreign Ministry Archives bureaucracy. It is also extremely important scholarship because no one is quite sure what the future of archival access will be in Russia. Complaints from Russian and Western scholars about inconsistent Russian policies about archives are no doubt justified. But the publication of these and other documents makes the opening of Soviet-era collections in some fashion irreversible.

Given Laufer’s unique experience in the Foreign Ministry archives, his monograph about Soviet policy in Germany during the war deserves careful attention and a wide scholarly audience. The H-Diplo discussion of his book provides precisely that. Perhaps not unexpectedly, Laufer’s immersion in the literature and familiarity with a previously inaccessible archival source base for the study of wartime Soviet policy towards Germany does not necessarily lead to a scholarly work that puts to rest the series of controversial questions about Stalin’s motivations, intentions, and actions during this period that dominate the historiography. On the contrary, as the following assessments show, Laufer’s conclusions are and will remain controversial. In this sense, it is particularly advantageous to have a diverse set of commentators explore Laufer’s arguments. Alexei Filitov is perhaps Russia’s best known, most prolific, and most widely cited expert on the history of Soviet foreign policy towards Germany. Filitov has also had the rare opportunity to work in some collections of the Foreign Ministry archives that are generally inaccessible to both foreign and domestic Russian scholars. Donal O’Sullivan, who teaches in the United States, worked in a number of archives around the world, including those in Russia, on his important book

*Stalin's 'Cordon Sanitaire'*, which touches many of the same issues as Laufer's. Wilfried Loth is a distinguished senior German political scientist and historian of the Cold War, who has written widely on Soviet policy toward Germany, especially divided Germany.

Filitov begins by praising Laufer for his knowledge of the literature, close reading of documents, attention to detail, and readiness to explore little known issues of Soviet war-time policy-making, including the Soviet POW question. But then he focuses quite rightly on the central thrust of Laufer's argument: that Stalin intended from the beginning of the war to divide Germany: in short, that the German Democratic Republic was, in some fashion, preordained by Soviet wartime policy. Filitov credits Laufer for not accepting the thesis – put forward by Gerhard Wettig, among others – that there was some kind of Soviet “master plan” for the postwar settlement. But Filitov reads the same documents differently: for example, Filitov writes, the crucial “Voroshilov Commission,” which provided the directives for the European Advisory Commission, assumed the existence of a central German government in its proposals for occupied Germany, while Laufer, says Filitov, looks at discussions of the central German government “as a mere ‘episode’ of little importance.”

Wilfried Loth similarly lauds the Laufer book for integrating a new archival base into the study of Soviet policy in Germany, especially in the context of understanding the Soviet negotiating posture vis-à-vis the other Allies. Laufer provides particular insights into three policy priorities, states Loth: the efforts of the Soviets to control a security zone in Eastern Europe (the “Pax Sovietica”); the need to continue cooperation with the Western Allies after the war – for how long, Loth correctly notes, is hard to say; and Moscow's determination to destroy the Germans' ability to make war against the Soviet Union again. Loth also states that Laufer has brought additional clarity to the proposition that Stalin personally shared considerable responsibility for the division of Germany. But, like Filitov, Loth believes that Laufer has over-argued his case for Stalin's intentions to divide Europe and Germany itself. Laufer does not give enough credence to the early Soviet plans for a “parliamentary” path to socialism, notes Loth, or to alternative ways, suggested by Ivan Maisky or Maxim Litvinov, of thinking about securing Soviet interests after the war. Loth challenges Laufer's interpretation of the famous June 4, 1945, “Wilhelm Pieck notes” of a meeting between Stalin and the KPD leaders, where Stalin famously is to have said, “Secure unity of Germany.” Laufer brings powerful evidence to bear for the argument that Stalin wanted a divided Germany. But both Filitov and Loth ask for a more complex view of Stalin's motives, which include – at least during the wartime period and immediately thereafter – the goal of a pro-Soviet and not necessarily communist united Germany.

Donal O'Sullivan's commentary emphasizes Laufer's important contribution to our still imperfect understanding of Stalin's “tight-fisted” control of Soviet foreign-policy making. Not even Molotov had much leeway to take initiatives or make decisions. O'Sullivan notes, as does Loth, that Laufer's narrative correctly underscores Stalin's fears of confrontation with the West. But he is more critical of the contention that there was – in Laufer's words -- no “trace of confrontational anti-Western postwar planning” in the Soviet sources. This discounts, as O'Sullivan suggests, the important role of ideology and its many articulations during the war in Soviet calculations. O'Sullivan is also skeptical of Laufer's interpretation

of Stalin's "success" when facing the threat of Hitler's invasion in the late spring and early summer of 1941.

Laufer's thoughtful response to his friendly critics begins with a recapitulation of his argument that from the very beginning of the war, meaning during the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, 1939-1941, Stalin was interested in forming a Soviet zone of influence in Eastern Europe as fundamentally a defensive measure. This continued during the war, as indicated by Stalin's discussions with Anthony Eden in December 1941, in which he recognized England's right to a zone of influence, as well. Here, Laufer's argument is reminiscent of Marc Trachtenberg's important scholarship, which emphasize the mutually acceptable understanding between East and West (first the British and then, with them, the Americans) about the division of Europe, or of Geoffrey Roberts' work, which sees Stalin's foreign policy as essentially defensive and decisively linked to the military might of the Soviet Union at the end of the war, which, Laufer claims, was "never indiscriminately used." Somewhat puzzling is Laufer's denial – in response to both Loth and Filitov -- that Stalin tried to cool off revolutionary programs among the left at the end of the war and beginning of the peace; there are no end to these warnings about "sectarianism" directed at European communists. This denial is linked to Laufer's belief, shared by a number of historians, the distinguished Russian student of Balkan affairs, Leonid Gibianskii, included, that Stalin was determined to control and Sovietize Eastern Europe, including the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany.

In a close reading of the relevant documents, including those of the "Voroshilov Commission," Laufer stands by his argument that the Soviets were not serious about instituting a German central government, contra Filitov. In response to Loth, Laufer adds that the Four Power occupation of Berlin, which Stalin agreed to, in no way represented Soviet willingness to countenance a joint Allied government. Similarly, Laufer takes up Loth's critique regarding the June 4, 1945 Wilhelm Pieck notes and argues that the evidence (including the detailed Kremlin visitor registers) indicates that Pieck was not at the meeting at all with Stalin on that day; only Walter Ulbricht, Anton Ackerman, and Gustav Sobottka were present. Laufer reiterates his belief that the statements about the importance of German unity came from the German communists themselves, not from Stalin, and that the documents surrounding what we know as the "anti-fascist, democratic transformation" of the Soviet Zone of Occupation indicate that Stalin fully accepted the fact that "two Germanys" would emerge, as also indicated in the Pieck notes. In *Pax Sovietica*, Laufer links up Stalin's two-Germany policy with his firm intent during the war to divide up the country into several pieces.

As with many such arguments involving Soviet foreign policy and the origins of the Cold War, we are left with an increasingly sophisticated source base and greater empirical knowledge, but with little consensus about Stalin's motivations and intentions. Filitov, Loth, and O'Sullivan agree – and I suspect Laufer would, as well – that Soviet policy during the war (and after) was driven by multiple, sometimes contradictory, goals and needs. Stalin was clearly in charge of making and implementing policy, but he, too, was riven by contradictory impulses, not to mention influenced by the distorted ideological preconceptions that infused his hard-scrabble vision of international politics. Historians live

with complexity and contradictory assessments of the same evidence. The case of Laufer and his critics is a perfect example.

Participants:

**Jochen Paul Laufer** graduated at Berlin Humboldt-University in 1986 as Dr. Phil with a dissertation on German policy towards South Africa 1890–1898 and the Anglo-German Rivalry. He is Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter at the Academy of Sciences of the GDR and is at the Potsdamer Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung. Laufer published the three-volume documentary edition “Die UdSSR und die deutsche Frage” (with Georgij Pavlovich Kynin) in Russian (“SSSR i germansky vopros 1941–1948,” Moscow 1996, 2000, 2003) and in German (Duncker&Humblot, 2004). A fourth volume on the Berlin crisis and foundation of the two German states is in preparation together with Rainer Karlsch “Die UdSSR und die Demontagen in Deutschland” (Duncker&Humblot, 2002). Böhlau published in 2009 Laufer’s main research project: *Pax Sovietica. Stalin und die deutsche Frage 1941–1945*. Laufer’s current research projects include Soviet economic policy and German/Soviet interaction in light of the Cold War.

**Norman M. Naimark** is Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies at Stanford, and Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution and the Freeman-Spogli Institute of International Studies. He is presently Axel Springer Fellow of the American Academy in Berlin, where he is working on a book length study of “Stalin and Europe 1944-1953.” Naimark received his Ph.D. at Stanford and is author of, among other books, *The Russians in Germany* (Harvard 1995); *Fires of Hatred* (Harvard 2001); and *Stalin’s Genocides* (Princeton 2010).

**Alexei Filitov** is a graduate of Moscow University (1960) and Chief Research Associate, Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, and a lecturer in Contemporary German History, Russian University for Humanities, Moscow. He has published monographs in Russian on *The Cold War: Debate in Western Historiography* (1991); *German Question: From Division to Unification* (1993); *Germany in Soviet Foreign Policy Planning, 1941- 1990* (2009) and various articles on the diplomatic history of the World War Two and of the Cold War. His current projects include editorial work on Volume Four of *The USSR and the German Question, 1948-49*, and a textbook on German History since 1900.

**Wilfried Loth** is Chair of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Duisburg-Essen / Germany. His major publications include: *The Division of the World, 1951-1955* (London/New York: Routledge 1987); *Stalin’s Unwanted Child. The Soviet Union, the German Question, and the Foundation of the GDR* (London/New York: MacMillan 1998); and *Overcoming the Cold War. A History of Détente, 1950-1991* (Houndsmills/New York: Palgrave 2002). His current research interest is “History and theory of European integration.”

**Donal O’Sullivan** is Associate Professor of History at California State University, Northridge. His latest book is *Dealing with the Devil. Anglo-Soviet Intelligence Cooperation*

*During the Second World War*, Peter Lang Publishers 2010. His research interests include Soviet and Russian foreign policy, German history, and historiography.

Jochen Laufer's book is a major contribution to our knowledge of how German issues – in their war-time and post-war aspects - were viewed from Moscow's perspective, and how they were discussed and dealt with in the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition. The range of topics and problems covered may be considered as too wide and immense for an author to address in one book: from the controversies around the Rudolf Hess abortive mission and Stalin's (mis)calculations on the eve of the German attack in May-June 1941 to the murky events that accompanied the German surrender in May 1945 and the final decisions on Germany achieved by the victorious powers at the Potsdam Conference.

To be sure, Laufer is not cultivating virgin land with his monograph. The list of more than two hundred books and articles presented in the bibliography speaks for itself. One may wish that Laufer and/or the editor had made the text more compact. The stories of lend-lease deliveries or of the Second Front are well-known and the corresponding sections of the book could be shortened. Some 'blank spots' were aptly found, however, and meticulously worked upon. Laufer's treatment of the largely neglected "humanitarian" dimensions of Soviet war-time planning deserves special praise. The less than successful initiatives to mobilize world opinion against German atrocities in the occupied areas, and the highly inconsistent and flawed approaches to the problem of the POWs are highlighted on a very wide and balanced basis. The theme of the war prisoners recently attracted the attention of Russian historians as well; one may mention among others the names of Viktor Konassov, Alexandr Kuzminikh, and Vladimir Vsevolodov.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, books and/or articles by these authors were not used by Laufer in preparing his monograph, and they are not included in the list of publications.

What facilitated Laufer's research efforts were the unprecedented opportunities he gained in the Russian Foreign Ministry (MID) archive as a co-publisher of three volumes of *Die USSR und die deutsche Frage*. As a result he amassed a huge collection of freshly declassified documents for the period covered in the monograph of which just a fraction was included in the documentary edition. More than that the expertise of Laufer's companion, the old "German hand" in the Ministry, Georgiy Kynin, enabled him to gain some insights into the files still inaccessible to ordinary researchers. This reviewer, who had been commissioned to write a chapter on Soviet war-time diplomacy for the semi-official "Outline History of Russian Foreign Ministry" [Vol.2, 1917- 2002, Moscow, OLMA-PRESS, 2002, pp.273-330] was able to penetrate deeply enough into hitherto untapped mass of MID archival documents,

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g.: Конасов В.Б. Международный комитет Красного Креста – Советский Союз: дорогой сотрудничества и конфронтации (1939- 1952). М., 1999 [Konassov V.B. International Committee of Red Cross and the Soviet Union: On the Road of Cooperation and Confrontation, 1939 -1952. Moscow, 1999]; Конасов В.Б., Кузьминых А.Л. Немецкие военнопленные в СССР. Вологда. 2002 [Konassov V. B., Kuzminikh A.L. German Prisoners of War in the USSR. Vologda, 2002]; Всеволодов В.А. Национальный комитет «Свободная Германия» для Запада// Новая и новейшая история, 2008. № 4, с. 91-99 [Vsevolodov V.A. National Committee "Free Germany" for the West, in: Modern and Contemporary History, 2008, No. 4, pp. 91-99]

but, frankly speaking, not with a degree of thoroughness and attention to details characteristic of Laufer's approach.

The documents from the Russian archives (apart from MID's archive, the Communist Party and Defense Ministry, and even Academy of Sciences archives were also consulted, albeit in less systemic way) were checked against and supplemented by those of Western origins, either uncovered by the author himself or taken from the published monographs and articles of his predecessors. Laufer refers frequently to the latter's analytical findings and conclusions – either in approving way, or with criticism. There are also the cases, where Laufer's judgement remained blurred. An example is his treatment of the above-mentioned "Hess affair": Laufer cites two historians who took opposite opinions on Hitler's role in planning his deputy's adventuristic flight, but Laufer does not specify his own position in this debate (pp. 46-47).

Sometimes Laufer's position is articulated categorically enough, but not always quite convincingly. Was Stalin aware of the "limited war capabilities of the (Red) Army and of (Soviet) state" in 1941, as Russian military historian Juri Gorkow and his American colleague Sally W. Stoecker asserted?<sup>2</sup> No, answers Laufer, there is "no proof" for this judgement, which originated from the "western military experts", who in turn proceeded from the idea of a failure of the Soviet policy of industrialization (p. 55). The logic seems a bit faulty: one may recognize the success of "three Five-Years Plans" (the third one was not finished as of 1941, by the way), and still consider it "limited" – in regard to the war readiness of the army. Laufer quite correctly remarks that Stalin took Germany's combat strength "more seriously than his military advisors", which explained his rejection of their pre-emptive strike plans. It seems just another way to express the same view of that of Gorkow and Stoecker: the Soviet leader was well aware of unfavorable "correlation of forces" between the Soviet Union and Germany and acted on this premise in a rather haphazard and inefficient way, as it were.

"Unproven" may be a fitting tag for some points forwarded by the author himself. The tragic cases of misconduct by the Red Army soldiers towards the German population have been interpreted by researchers (Norman Naimark and others) partly as a result of the negligent and/or nonchalant attitude to the matter by Soviet commanders up to the top level. Laufer goes further by stating that those deplorable practices were in fact ordered from above - "by oral or written (albeit until now unidentifiable) decision sanctioned by Stalin" (p. 498). It is rather strange way of writing history to try and find support for one's view in a source not found!

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<sup>2</sup> Juri Gorkow, "22 Juni 1941 - Verteidigung oder Angriff? Recherchen in Russischen Zentralarchiven", in Pietrow-Ennker, Bianka, *Präventivkrieg? Der deutsche Angriff auf die Sowjetunion* (Frankfurt/M, 2000, pp. 190-207 and Sally W. Stoecker, "Tönerner Koloss ohne Kopf: Stalinismus und Rote Armee" in *ibid.*, pp. 148-169.



To be sure, it would be unjust to utter a verdict on a book by citing the unfortunate examples of inconsistencies and speculative judgements. Those are rather the exceptions – as are some small factual errors, or perhaps, slips of a pen: Marshall Rokossovskij commanded the Second Belorussian (not Ukrainian) Front (cf. p. 493); the Soviet Government was called, up to 1946, the Council of Peoples' Commissars, not the Council of Ministers (cf. p. 361).

The careful reader will find in Laufer's text many of new documentary facts and also a lot of wise comments which may dispel many myths and legends around Soviet wartime policies and diplomacy. Well-founded is his critique of Gerhard Wettig's concept of a Soviet "master plan" to conquer Europe and Germany as a whole (p.561), of Lothar Kettenacker's thesis on the crucial role of U.S. diplomatic pressure in making the Soviet side agree to concessions on the terms of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty in May 1942 (p. 170). Of special satisfaction for this reviewer is the convergence of his and Laufer's interpretations (earlier widely differing) of a curious episode at the very end of the war, which could possibly change the history of post-war Germany. It concerns the problem of the so-called "Doenitz government". Could Hitler's designated successor play a role akin to that of Badoglio in Italy or of Renner in Austria, and thus preserve the continuity of the central government machinery in Germany? In the reviewer's article published in 2003,<sup>3</sup> the idea was broached that the victorious powers might consider such an eventuality - on the premise that Hitler's heirs would distance themselves unequivocally and convincingly enough from Nazi ideology and policies. Laufer, in his article of 2006<sup>4</sup> reacted to this hypothetical proposition ("die Vermutung", as he fittingly called it) in a categorical manner: "totally unfounded" ("völlig unbegründet"). In the monograph under review, after having analyzed some new documents (the most intriguing among them being the transcript of the talk, on May 9, 1945, between Ivan Serov, future KGB chief, in 1945 head of Soviet intelligence in Germany, and Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, later hanged in Nuremberg as a war criminal), he seems to have changed his verdict. Now, he is ready to admit that there are some reasons to believe that "the Allies contemplated, on short-time basis, the use of a German central government" (p. 537). From the ethical point of view, it would be correct, of course, to mention this revision of one's former position (and of former assessment of opponent's), but, anyway, it is a welcome development. Where Laufer does not budge from what in the reviewer's opinion, is an incorrect standpoint and where the outlook of both differ sharply as before, is his insistence on the preponderance of the "division intent" in the Soviet planning on post-war Germany. Repudiating, as was stated above, the Soviet "master plan" of controlling the whole of Germany, he continues to cling to the idea of another "master plan" – supposedly aiming, from the very beginning, at the creation of two German states – along the lines of zonal demarcation between Soviet and Western occupation armies.

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<sup>3</sup> "The USSR and the German Question: The Turning Points, 1941-1961" in Nataliya Yegorova, Alexander Chubarian (eds.) *The Cold War, 1945-1963. Historical Retrospective*, Moscow, OLMA-PRESS, 2003, p. 254, in Russian.

<sup>4</sup> "Die USSR und der alliierte Kontrollmechanismus für Deutschland 1943 -1948," in Andreas Hilger, Mike Schmeitzner und Clemens Vollnhals (Hg.) *Sowjetisierung oder Neutralität? Optionen sowjetischer Besatzungspolitik in Deutschland und Österreich 1945 - 1955*, Göttingen, 2006, p. 522

To avoid a misunderstanding on this issue: a plan, or, more precisely, planning ideas of this kind did exist – as well as those for the transformation of the united Germany in the direction of a “pro-Soviet orientation” (this was how Anton Ackermann, a German communist, war-time Moscow’s resident, formulated his view on Germany’s future). The question is what was a signal and what was a noise – to borrow those terms from the theory of communication? As for Ackermann’s ideas, they, as Laufer correctly remarks, “could not influence the planning on Germany in the [Soviet] Foreign Commissariat” (p.391).

This planning, reaching its climax in 1944, is covered in Chapter 7. Laufer himself points out that he considers this chapter to be “the main part” of his book. In many respects it reproduces the theses of the introductory article in the first volume of the documentary edition he published together with Kynin. The authors stated therein that among three “Commissions” created for this purpose, the “main place” was occupied by “Voroshilov Commission” where the directives for the London based European Advisory Commission were worked out. What was the main feature in the proceeding of this organ? Every time, as the specific aspects of the future occupation policy came under discussion, the existence of the central German government was considered as the natural and essential condition. This new government should have to pay the occupation costs (Diary of a meeting on March 25), remove the “militaristic literature” from the libraries (Diary of meeting on April 26), and punish the Nazi perpetrators (Diary of a meeting on May 4)<sup>5</sup>. None of those facts are mentioned either in the Laufer-Kynin edition or in Laufer’s monograph. He refers to the discussions on the central German government in the meetings on May 5 and 10, but interprets them as a mere “episode” of little importance (p. 465). Also absent in this chapter is the discussion on the problem of future legislation for Germany at the meeting on May 4. Characteristically, the “old” Weimar law system would be introduced after the collapse of the Hitler’s regime<sup>6</sup>. Both in the documentary volume and in the monograph the summary internment of NSDAP functionaries – “from *blockleiters* up” is described as the decided upon measure (p. 466) – with no mention of the fact that a preliminary document containing this clause was revised at the Commission’s meeting on May 4, where a more differentiated approach was accepted instead!

Laufer in his article of 2006 strongly denied that he pursued, in compiling the documentary volume, any “manipulative intentions”. Still, a selective approach to the available evidence is very much evident in his new monograph as well. The temptation to construct a clear-cut and noncontroversial image of the past is admittedly hard to resist. Reality is full of contradictions, however, and ignoring this truth leads to one-sided conclusions.

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<sup>5</sup> Archive of the Foreign Policy of Russian Federation (AFP RF), 06/6/15/150, p. 64, 84-88, 110-112

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 109

Jochen Laufer's book on Soviet planning and policy for Germany during the 1941-1945 anti-Hitler coalition constitutes a significant achievement in research. Many documents from the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF) have been made accessible for the first time, as well as some individual documents from the Archive of the CPSU (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, RGASPI) and the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). A selection of these documents had already been published in 1996 by Laufer together with Georgij P. Kynin.<sup>1</sup> Now, we have a comprehensive presentation that integrates the newly accessed material into the context of research on Allied postwar planning and that thereby significantly contributes to our understanding of the decision-making processes in Moscow.

Laufer's work expands our knowledge concerning the development of Soviet negotiation positions with the other Allies. It reveals an apparatus of subordinates who made zealous efforts to act in accordance with Stalin's wishes and who in the process sometimes represented conceptions very different from one another, and who—not surprisingly—remained dependent on Stalin's judgments. These were, however, sometimes not forthcoming or turned out to be different than expected. The consequences were a sometimes erratic course for Soviet diplomacy and a definite lack of effectiveness and consistency overall. Yet, some major policy elements can be discerned: firstly, efforts to secure a Soviet-controlled security sphere in Eastern European areas close to the Soviet Union; secondly, efforts to cooperate with the Western Allies even beyond the end of the war (whereby Stalin clearly wavered in his assessment of how long and how intensive such cooperation could be); and thirdly, efforts to protect the Soviet Union from a future German attack. Ambitions for world revolution had to take a back seat to these realistic goals. It was all the more the case that they could be subordinated because belief in the mortality of the bourgeois-capitalist world remained uncontested among Soviet leaders.

Laufer thus confirms and bolsters results of forty years of research into the origins of the Cold War. He demonstrates more clearly than heretofore that Stalin personally shares responsibility for the division of Germany after the Second World War: *firstly* and above all, because of his priority on having absolute control of his own occupation zone; and *secondly*, his refusal to send future occupation officers to London for training. Interesting too is evidence that at the Yalta Conference, Stalin much more clearly embraced the principle of the breaking up of Germany than is indicated in the published version of the Soviet protocols, which have clearly been sanitized.

Laufer's thesis of a "Pax Sovietica" as the goal of Stalinist foreign policy is, however, plainly overdrawn. He understands this as the creation of a stringently demarcated "area of

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<sup>1</sup> Georgij P. Kynin and Jochen Laufer (eds.), *SSSR i germanskij vopros 1941-1949. Dokumenty iz Arhiva Vnesnej Politiki Rossijskoj Federacii, T.1: 22 ijunja 1941 g. – 8 maja 1945, g.* Moskva, 1996. A German translation was published in 2004: *Die UdSSR und die deutsche Frage 1941-1948. Dokumente aus dem Archiv für Außenpolitik der Russischen Föderation*, Band 1: 22. Juni 1941 bis 8. Mai 1945, Berlin, 2004.

dominance” that would offer “possibilities for the construction of socialism” (pp. 8ff.). This included the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany, although that is not explicitly stated in the presentation of the thesis. In the course of elaborating that thesis, however, the “eastern portion of Germany” does appear as part of the area “over which Stalin sought sole control and in which he wanted to push through his conception of a lasting peace” (p. 422). This thesis overlooks not only the numerous warnings from Stalin and Georgi Dimitrov against excessive revolutionary zeal on the part of communists in Western and *Eastern* Europe as well as Stalin’s professed support for a “parliamentary” path to socialism, to which Geoffrey Roberts and I have called attention.<sup>2</sup> It also excludes evidence assembled by Laufer himself of Stalin’s focus on Germany as a whole—for example, the Soviet leader’s advocacy of the Western Allies’ participation in the occupation of Berlin or the call for instituting a “German central administration under the leadership of the Control Council,” which he raised at the Potsdam Conference. One cannot say that Stalin did “not advocate a decision on this issue,” as Laufer asserts (p. 577). The more reserved formulation of the Potsdam protocol (“certain essential German administrative departments”) can actually be traced back to intervention by British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin.<sup>3</sup>

It is not only at this juncture that Laufer’s attempts to glean information from the documents pointing to the victorious powers’ interest in a common solution to the German question are unpersuasive. The fact that Stalin’s mark is not found on the policy paper of 11 January 1944 by Ivan Maisky, in which cooperation with the Allies in the “democratization of the regimes in postwar Europe” was proposed, cannot lead to the conclusion “that Stalin remained skeptical of Maisky’s ideas” (p. 383). There is just as little evidence that Maxim Litvinov’s thoughts on the establishment of a neutral zone extending from Denmark to Germany and Italy had “not persuaded” him (p. 450). In actuality, Stalin decided in early 1945 to make use of the recommendations of the Litvinov Commission in negotiations on the division of Germany, and up to the time of the talks at Potsdam, Maisky remained an important participant in the implementation of his policy.

Wholly erroneous is Laufer’s assertion that the notes of 4 June 1945 by Wilhelm Pieck reading “Secure unity of Germany”<sup>4</sup> refer not to a meeting between Stalin and the KPD leaders Walter Ulbricht, Anton Ackermann, and Gustav Sobottka but rather to a “prior conversation of the German comrades among themselves” at an earlier point that same day (p. 564). What speaks first of all against this interpretation is the format of the notes, which begins with the words “Report – Walter 4/6. 8 o’clock p.m.” and is augmented by the

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<sup>2</sup> See Wilfried Loth, *Stalin’s Unwanted Child. The Soviet Union, the German Question, and the Founding of the GDR*, London and New York, 1998, pp. 15-19; *idem.*, *Die Teilung der Welt. Geschichte des Kalten Krieges 1941-1955. Erweiterte Neuauflage*, München, 2000, pp. 361-363; Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars. From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*, New Haven and London, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Wilfried Loth, “Die deutsche Frage und der Wandel des internationalen Systems,” in *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Band 10/2, München, 2008, pp. 201-378, here p. 339.

<sup>4</sup> Published in Rolf Badstübner and Wilfried Loth (eds.), *Wilhelm Pieck – Aufzeichnungen zur Deutschlandpolitik 1945-1953*, Berlin, 1994, pp. 50-54.

following words written above the original time: “at 6 o’clock with Stal[in], Mol[otov], Zhdan[ov].”<sup>5</sup> Above all, however, the contents do not fit an internal meeting of the KPD leaders: Firstly, a “question” is noted as to “complaints in the country,” which can easily be imagined as Stalin’s opening query to the KPD leaders returning from the occupied area. There then follows information about the drawing of borders for the occupation zones, permitting parties and trade unions, as well as plans for the dismemberment of Germany and Stalin’s reported opposition to it, which could not have come from the KPD leaders. Moreover, the fundamental strategic orientations that the text also contains could not possibly have been decided by the KPD leaders alone: “Secure unity of Germany” – “Completion of the bourg[eois]-democr[atic] revolution.”

That the focus on the “completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution” stems from Stalin is also attested by the account of Wolfgang Leonhard, who in 1955 reported on the directives given to the members of the KPD “initiative groups” before their departure for Germany in April of 1945.<sup>6</sup> Neither the internal planning of the KPD leadership nor the key demand stemming from it makes mention of “breaking power of the estate owners” or “eliminating remnants of feudalism.”<sup>7</sup> Laufer fails to take into account either Leonhard’s report or the planning within the KPD and so ends up with wholly false views on the relationship between KPD planning and Stalin’s requirements.

At a subsequent meeting with the KPD leaders on the evening of 7 June, Stalin persisted in postponing the formation of a “unified workers’ party”; this cannot serve as evidence that he “oriented” the KPD proclamation of 11 June (contrary to the intentions of the KPD leadership) “on the Soviet Occupation Zone” (according to Laufer, p. 570). This was actually only a correction of a provision in the KPD draft of 6 June,<sup>8</sup> which in the meeting of 4 June had not yet been so concretely determined. According to the notes of Anton Ackermann, Stalin justified this with reference to a perspective encompassing the whole of Germany: A unified party would “become a ‘hodgepodge party’ due to the anticipated meddling of the ‘imperial’ powers” (p. 567). Nor is evidence provided by the fact that in the draft of 6 June, reference to the necessary “liquidation of the large estates” was more concrete than in the meeting of 4 June or in the proclamation of 11 June: Here again we have a more precise formulation by the KPD leadership that clearly did not fit with Stalin’s

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<sup>5</sup> In the German original version: „Bericht – Walter 4/6. nachmittags 8 Uhr“ and „um 6 Uhr bei Stal[in] Mol[otov] Zhdan[ov]“. See too the facsimile of this note in *ibid.*, pp. 48ff.

<sup>6</sup> Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder*, paperback edition, München, 1969, pp. 288ff.

<sup>7</sup> On the development of the KPD objectives, see Peter Erler, Horst Laude, and Manfred Wilke (eds.), *“Nach Hitler kommen wir.“ Dokumente zur Programmatik der Moskauer KPD-Führung 1944/45 für Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Berlin, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> Inferred from a letter by Dimitrov to Molotov of 7 June 1945 examined by Laufer and translated into German in “Stalin, Dimitrov und der Aufruf der KPD vom 11. Juni 1945. Deutschland und die Pax Sovietica,” in *Deutschland-Archiv* 42 (2009), pp. 810-820.

views. The refusal to repeat the warning about a “dismemberment of Germany” does not offer proof that the proclamation of 11 June failed to aim for exactly what Stalin had meant: the “new construction of Germany” and “the issue of democratizing Germany.”<sup>9</sup>

As Laufer correctly observes elsewhere, Stalin strove for “opposing and contradictory things too” (p. 12). That he himself contributed in no small measure to the division of Germany does not indicate that the postwar European order developed as he wanted it to. Laufer occasionally gives rise to a different impression. That reduces the value of his otherwise praiseworthy account.

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<sup>9</sup> Proclamation of 11 June 1945, published in *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, 13 June 1945.

**Review by Donal O'Sullivan, California State University Northridge**

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Despite a plethora of publications on the Second World War, scholars still grapple with severe difficulties in researching the planning and execution of Soviet foreign policy. Hampered by inaccessible archives and untrustworthy official editions, successful research of Soviet war strategies has often relied on the writer's analytical intuition. In recent years, however, documentary publications as well as a range of interpretations have mounted a serious attempt to explain Soviet policy.<sup>1</sup>

In 'Pax Sovietica', Jochen Laufer attempts to outline the development of Soviet planning regarding Germany through the war years. Having previously edited a three-volume edition of documents from the Russian Foreign Ministry Archive, Laufer, currently a scholar with the Institute for Contemporary History (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Studien) in Potsdam, is uniquely suited to attempt an interpretation. His book is an important addition to the growing literature on Soviet policy during the war.

Although the author was able to use some recently declassified Soviet documents, his access was still limited, and crucial papers, especially instructions from Moscow to personnel abroad, were unavailable. For example, he quotes diplomatic memoranda at length but concedes that the Soviet leadership rarely read them. Like other researchers, he was not able to work with the registry guides, relying instead on the archivists to select files. These limitations result in an over-reliance on well-known British and American documents. Laufer's narrative suffers from a lack of critical analysis of Western policy, designating equal value to newspaper editorials and other peripheral sources. In discussing the repercussions of the flight of Rudolf Hess, Laufer relies on the since discredited Martin Allen documents (Allen smuggled forged papers into the British National Archives). His analysis would have benefited from using Vojtech Mastny's 1996 interpretation.

Laufer describes Soviet policy towards Germany as two-faced. Stalin, while continually advocating the dismemberment of Germany in Allied negotiations, suddenly shifted in 1945 to pose as a champion of German unity. Publicly, the USSR distinguished between the 'Hitler state' and Germany. Yet internal documents specified the dismemberment of Germany and drastic border changes in favor of Poland. According to Western records,

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<sup>1</sup> Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity. The Stalin Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996); Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars. From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003); Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace. The Making of the European Settlement 1945-1963* (Princeton University Press, 1999); Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion* (New Haven 1999); Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press 2008); Norman Naimark, *Russians in Germany: The History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1995); Wilfried Loth, *Stalins ungeliebtes Kind. Warum Stalin die DDR nicht wollte* (Berlin 1996; Bogdan Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland. Stalins Kriegspläne gegen den Westen*, Berlin 2008); Gerhard Wettig, *Bereitschaft zu Einheit in Freiheit? Die Sowjetische Deutschland-Politik 1945-1955* (München 1999; Zarusky, Jürgen, *Stalin und die Deutschen. Neue Beiträge der Forschung*, München 2006); Donal O'Sullivan, *Stalins 'Cordon Sanitaire'. Die sowjetische Osteuropapolitik und die Reaktionen des Westens 1939-1949* (Paderborn 2003).

Stalin recommended at the Tehran conference that “It was far better to break up and scatter the German tribes” (p. 375). After 1945, when the USSR wanted to portray itself as the champion for a unified Germany, these passages were carefully edited in Soviet official publications (p. 487). But the dismemberment plan may have been a fallback option in case the Red Army did not reach Berlin first. With the German capital in hand, Soviet options at determining the future of Germany as a whole looked much brighter, and the aim of securing the entire country seemed within reach.

Laufer’s archival evidence on Soviet decision-making confirms accounts by Zubok, Roberts, and Mastny, among others. Only a handful of lieutenants received updates on foreign or domestic policy, and everyone else relied on instructions from the ‘instantsiya’ (Stalin himself). Foreign policy experts like Maxim Litvinov or Ivan Maisky prepared long memoranda, yet there is little evidence that Stalin ever took them into consideration. Significantly, Stalin’s own diplomats were left without clear guidance which policy to follow (p. 297). Laufer concedes that Maisky’s reports or Litvinov’s January 1945 memorandum on spheres of influence never carried the stamp of Stalin’s approval and never influenced decisions (p. 383). While Litvinov correctly gauged his boss’ preference to divide up territory, there is no indication that his ideas (including the maximum goal of adding Norway, Sweden and Turkey to a Soviet ‘zone of security’) played a role for Stalin’s strategic thinking (p. 449). Laufer did not find any papers on consultations between Stalin and Molotov or other members of the Soviet delegation during the Potsdam conference, thus concluding that Stalin did not consult anyone regarding his tactics during the conference (p. 584). Laufer also confirms that Soviet planning for Germany went ahead without the consultation of exiled German Communists. Several scholars have identified this ‘tight-fisted’ approach as one of the main reasons for disasters like the surprise Nazi attack in 1941 and the establishment of an anti-Soviet bloc in the postwar years instead of a weak and unsettled Europe.

But interestingly, Laufer arrives at different interpretations regarding some of the key events of the period. In general, he exonerates Soviet policy as primarily defensive and realistic, based on Stalin’s assumption that the Red Army constituted his main instrument to achieve security. Although ‘Pax Sovietica’, was part of an aggressive, expansionist policy, it was ultimately restricted by the desire to uphold the Soviet system and therefore designed to create a barrier between the Soviet Union and the outside world (p. 603). In Laufer’s interpretation, the postwar situation resulted from the Soviet victories on the battlefields, and the Western Allies come in for criticism for delaying the Second Front, and for their “passive warfare” until 1944 (p. 236; it is unclear if this characterization is Laufer’s own or his description of the Soviet viewpoint).

Throughout the book, the author claims that the USSR earned the right to a sphere of influence by bearing the brunt of the fighting, and he characterizes Allied willingness, for example on the part of British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, to grant Moscow such a sphere as “pragmatism”. But Laufer confirms that Stalin, while preferring specific agreements on territory, realized that the ultimate issue was the military performance of the Red Army. He cabled Molotov in May 1942: “The border issue [...] will be settled by force” (p. 167).



Laufer considers the Soviet demand for a Second Front not as a propaganda campaign but as a litmus test regarding the cooperation of the Western Allies. The only way for London and Washington to enforce the Atlantic Charter, he states, would have been to open fronts “at suitable venues” (p. 605). While he has a point, his argument does not take into account that military success was not decisive in previous wars, for example, in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, when Russian victory on the battlefield was nearly reversed at the conference table. Stalin’s policy indicates his fear of an open confrontation with the United States in 1945. American economic power and the ability to use atomic blackmail rendered the Soviet territorial gains in Eastern Europe vulnerable.

In contrast to recent interpretations, Laufer also displays remarkable understanding concerning Stalin’s disregard for all intelligence reports on Hitler’s military buildup in 1941. Laufer believes Stalin simply overestimated the Red Army’s capabilities. Fully aware of a coming attack, Stalin, according to Laufer, hoped to “hand Germany the initiative in order to wage war with the broadest possible support inside and outside of the USSR as a war of liberation”. On 22 June 1941, Stalin certainly succeeded in handing Germany the initiative, at the cost of millions of lives. It is unclear how this can be interpreted as a success. Laufer also claims Stalin did not panic but received news of the Nazi attack calmly: “[His] eleven-day silence after the outbreak of war cannot be viewed as political inactivity or fear” (p. 64).

Later, Laufer denies there were any Soviet attempts at reaching a separate peace with Germany, although his rationale is unconvincing. He concedes that the fact that he did not see any documentary evidence of peace feelers does not rule out Soviet initiatives, for example in Sweden. But he believes that Stalin’s style of rule and the reality of war, namely the German goal of destroying the USSR, precluded any agreement (p. 209). But why would the USSR, without consulting with the Allies, establish the *Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland* if not to prepare for a separate agreement?

Equally controversial is Laufer’s bold statement: “In none of the currently available Soviet sources do we find any trace for confrontational anti-Western postwar planning” (p. 349). Many Foreign Ministry documents expected a renewed conflict between the capitalist powers after the end of hostilities, and the ideological prism remains important even if mostly overshadowed by geopolitical considerations.

Partly, the difficulties reconciling contradictory policies stem from the intentional ambiguity of Stalin’s governing style. He did not like to be pinned down, and preferred a strategy of “flexible opportunism”, calling it “creative Marxism”. Deeming himself the only capable strategist, he kept his options open, not risking confrontation, yet still clinging to an ideological prism as the January 1945 conversations with Yugoslav and Bulgarian Communists demonstrate. He told them that in this war, one faction of the capitalist world had sided with the USSR for tactical reasons to avoid the victory of the working class in Germany. Hitler’s brutal rule would have eventually led to revolution, and Britain and the United States wanted to prevent the triumph of the working class (p. 478). In this context, Laufer’s repeated comparisons of Stalin with Machiavelli seem rather unfair to the Italian.

Students of Soviet-German relations will gain much by reading Laufer's book, and his interpretations will certainly stimulate debate.

All historians concerned with the origins of the East-West conflict – the Cold War – as well as the attendant division of Germany, Europe and the rest of the world have been drawn to Soviet foreign policy before, during and after World War II. As soon as they begin researching, however, they are confronted with the problem, rightly pointed out by Donal O’Sullivan, that while quite a few sources at the Russian Federation’s Archive for Foreign Policy have been declassified – though still not all, by a long shot – there are still no archival finding aids available that would allow independent access to these sources. This situation is an expression – and at the same time a cause – of the relatively underdeveloped state of diplomatic history in Russia. In view of this dilemma, I decided in the early 1990s to work with Russian archivists and, for a number of years now, with Russian historians in preparing declassified documents for publication in a three-volume edition entitled *The USSR and the German Question* (published in Russian and German). This seemed to me the only viable strategy to make declassified Soviet sources available for research purposes and eventually initiate the release of further documents. Without the exceptional patience of all those involved, including our German sponsors, the strategy would never have yielded the results it did and helped develop a critical *understanding* of Soviet foreign policy.

Let me first of all say thank you to all the contributors, and to Tom Maddux as the organizer of this round table, by summing up an observation and conclusion of mine that may help explain the title of my book. From the early 1920s on, Stalin went from being a revolutionary to the master builder of a Russian-Soviet Empire. Though revolution and ideology were still key concerns of his, they were secondary to his imperial project – which always had clear limits. This is why the bourgeois states relatively distant from Soviet borders were less threatened by a revolutionary peace. The situation was quite different, however, for the states closer to the Soviet border, the ones that Stalin viewed as strategically vital to his empire, the eastern half of Germany included. For here a *Pax Sovietica*, a peace under Soviet rule, was likely.

It was a great pleasure for me to edit documents on Soviet policy toward the German question and subsequently analyze them in the broader context of research and scholarship. A key finding was that Stalin and the other Soviet protagonists involved in planning and executing the foreign policy of the USSR saw the “dismemberment” of Germany as the surest long-term solution to removing the threat of war with Germany, and this as early as November 1941. Yet I wouldn’t lay the blame for a divided Germany at Stalin’s feet. For as much as he wished the “dismemberment” of his main wartime enemy from 1941 on, he was essentially just reacting to the threat posed by Nazi Germany. Without the war envisioned by Hitler in 1933 and launched six years later, and without the concomitant weakness of the Western democracies, Stalin would never have had the opportunity to force his wishes on the peoples of Eastern Europe, least of all the Germans.

The question at stake here – whether and when the idea of a Soviet peace framework, a *Pax Sovietica*, became a cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy – is ultimately the question of when

Stalin first considered the creation of a Soviet “security zone,” a Soviet bloc in Europe. In answering this question, I emphasize the continuity of Stalin’s foreign-policy goals before and after June 22, 1941. In my view, the purpose of Soviet cooperation with Germany before this date was less, over time, to avoid a war against the USSR than to create a then still very limited zone of Soviet influence. This is the main reason why no anti-Hitler coalition emerged before June 22. No one was ready to make concessions – neither the USSR regarding the territory under its rule, nor Great Britain or the United States in recognizing the violent changes in the status quo perpetrated by the USSR. On the contrary, even in light of the growing threat of war, Stalin forced the Sovietization of his newly won territories instead of looking for allies or trying to prevent an – in his view – impending German-British peace treaty.

Stalin’s idea of a postwar European order divided in two under Soviet and British protection, which he proposed with unusual candor to the British foreign minister in December of 1941, is to my mind the first mention of a *Pax Sovietica* in some sort of coexistence with a *Pax Britannica*. In my investigations I repeatedly pointed out that Stalin’s endeavor to secure a Soviet sphere of influence included from the very start (that is to say, since his talks with Anthony Eden in December 1941) his willingness to recognize a British sphere of influence in Europe as well. For Stalin, as of summer 1941, this also meant respecting the supremacy of Britain in an as yet undefined Western part of Europe by cutting down on communist activities there (which effectively entailed the open and symbolic disbanding of the Comintern).

To the best of my knowledge, Soviet foreign policy was never based on a “master plan” – a term with admittedly negative connotations. Even regarding the division of Germany there are no indications of a rigid and unalterable policy on the part of Stalin. Until late 1943 there was not even a clear idea in Moscow of how many states Germany should be divided into, much less how to accomplish this. And even when, at the end of 1943, the Voroshilov Commission (responsible for preparing the armistice agreements with the Axis powers) decided on an alternative proposal for dividing Germany into zones – probably in response to leaks regarding British plans, however that came about – there was still some uncertainty as to whether and to what extent a Soviet proposal on the same issue would be accepted by the Allies. Instead of a master plan, I emphasize the decisive influence of Soviet military victories, and the enormous losses incurred by the Red Army in the process. It was this that gave Stalin his exceptionally powerful bargaining position vis-à-vis Germany and the Allies, and which the Soviet dictator made vigorous use of but never exploited indiscriminately.

The most difficult part of investigating Soviet foreign policy is still – and here I agree once more with Donal O’Sullivan – in interpreting the constant Soviet pressure for the rapid opening of a second front to Germany’s west and, secondly, verifying rumors of German-Soviet peace feelers. I have shown, however, that these two aspects converged in November of 1942 when the Soviet government not only redoubled its insistence on opening up the Second Front but simultaneously pushed for a joint Soviet-British warning against attempted negotiation, which London ultimately rejected. For Stalin, the formation of the National Committee for a Free Germany was primarily – and this is what I tried to

show – an answer to news delivered by Franklin Roosevelt that the opening of the Western Front had once again been postponed. To what extent this peculiar committee and its intended subversion of German morale by propagandistic means was a contingency plan for the possibility that the Germans might lay down their arms only in the West, whether, in other words, it was the Soviet counterpart to the British-American Rankin Plan, has yet to be clarified.<sup>1</sup> Though Stalin may have longed for the day when German generals on the Eastern front would do just what he feared they would do only in the West should an Allied landing there meet with success (namely, surrender), there is no reason to conclude from this that the Soviet Union was prepared to sign a separate peace treaty; it should be interpreted, rather, as an indication of the desire to improve their position at the bargaining table in the event of a future ceasefire.

I have long been of a different opinion than Aleksei Filitov with regard to the fact that the Voroshilov Commission repeatedly talked about a central German government. Unlike Filitov, I consider this of little importance, because the commission always assumed – following Stalin's cue, to be sure – that the future occupying powers would have to be granted exclusive sovereignty in their respective zones, and, moreover, because it long resisted the British idea of a central coordinating body run by all the occupying powers and exercising supreme authority over the whole of Germany. Neither in the proposals the commission presented to Stalin nor in the instructions Molotov passed on to Soviet representatives in the EAC (the European Advisory Commission in London) after consultation with Stalin, is there any talk about the long-term existence of a German central government. The latter was required merely to sign the surrender document. The joint occupation of Berlin was not at all part of original plans for Soviet administration. That the Moscow dictator accepted this British proposal without hesitation is not nearly as obvious an indication of Stalin's preparedness to preserve German unity as Wilfried Loth assumes. It was a concession under the given circumstances, not only allowing the Soviets to reach a rapid agreement with the Western powers but also precluding the British demand to be included in the occupation of Germany's eastern territories. Rather than letting Berlin be turned into a zone of joint occupation and control, as suggested by the British, Stalin urged that Berlin, too, be clearly divided into zones of occupation. It is well known that the Soviet autocrat turned down the very real opportunity to conquer Berlin in a joint operation of Soviet, British and American troops.

Wilfried Loth, whose work on the Cold War I greatly admire, formulated a serious objection to my book under discussion here. He criticized my interpretation of a document of key importance not only to Stalin's objectives in Germany but also to those of the German communists. Yet the statements recorded in this document are not so easily attributable to the German communists or Stalin as Loth would suggest merely by pointing out the times recorded by Wilhelm Pieck. The times indicated by Pieck do not correspond to those recorded in "Stalin's visitor register." According to the latter, *Kommunistische Partei*

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<sup>1</sup> The British and American Combined Chiefs of Staff prepared three Operation RANKIN Cases A, B, and C in 1943 do respond to changes in Germany's position. The plans provided for Allied action in case of (A) a decline in German forces that would provide an opportunity for a cross-channel attack before OVERLORD, (B) a German retreat to its 1939 boundaries, and (C) unconditional surrender by Germany.

Deutschland (KPD) Chairman Pieck was not even among those received by Stalin from 6:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on June 4, 1945, but only Walter Ulbricht, Anton Ackermann and Gustav Sobottka. If it were in fact a talk among KPD leaders led by Pieck, not before but after meeting Stalin, Loth fails to explain why Pieck did not correctly jot down the time the meeting started, why he only subsequently noted the participation of his three comrades in a consultation with Stalin, and why Stalin is only referred to once in the entire record. A meeting with the Soviet leader was an event the German communists must have eagerly awaited for more than 12 years – that is to say, a moment of supreme importance. Is it really possible that Ulbricht, Ackermann and Sobottka would have failed at first to mention such an important event to their party chairman?

Behind the old controversy about the timeframe recorded by Pieck is the much more important point of contention of who actually said what Pieck jotted down: the statement “Perspective – will be 2 Germanies – despite Allied unity” and the exhortation “Secure German unity / through unif[ied] KPD / unif[ied] Central Committee[,] unif[ied] Workers’ Party.” Did Stalin really want to secure German unity with the help of the KPD, or were the Germans discussing among themselves the situation in Germany and the tasks that lay before them? We can only offer a definitive answer when the Soviet documents recording this talk finally become accessible. Nevertheless, the research I have conducted has allowed me to come to some reasonable conclusions. I base these on the fact that the first appeal of the KPD after Germany’s total defeat – Ulbricht, Ackermann and Sobottka having been summoned back to Moscow to discuss it – neither warns about Germany’s imminent division nor calls for a unified Workers’ Party. From this I conclude that the statements quoted above were not made by Stalin but by the Germans. The fact that the appeal entailed a deeply invasive antifascist-democratic transformation of Germany as a whole but that the actual transformation was limited to the Soviet zone of occupation – where it was carried out at the behest and with the massive support of the Soviet occupying power – can in my opinion only indicate that Stalin, while posing as a champion of German unity, was in fact quite willing to accept the disintegration of social and economic structures along the western border of the Soviet zone – as a “Sollbruchstelle”.

Fortunately it was the course of history that the end of World War II saw not Hitler but the Allies – Stalin included – achieve their aims by forcing Germany’s unconditional surrender. In *Pax Sovietica*, I emphasize Stalin’s particular yet *not unlimited* notions of transformation (revolution), which he succeeded in pushing through in the Red Army-occupied zone of Germany. I should add, however, that *Pax Sovietica* can be better understood if Soviet policies in and towards the other states of the Soviet bloc in Europe, and thus developments after 1945, are included in the equation. The controversial and extremely stimulating discussion at this round table will surely encourage further research in this direction.

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