EUROPE'S PASSAGE TO DEMOCRACY 1944 - 1950

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Like other great watersheds in European history, such as the revolutionary upheavals of 1789 1815, or 1848/ 1849, or the end of World War One, the passage of France, Germany, and Italy from dictatorship or occupation to postwar democracy deserves to be examined from a long-range perspective. The extraordinary changes and strong emotions in popular opinion, and the breaks in the composition of political elites in the space of only a few years cannot be properly understood without such a perspective, nor can we hope to understand prominent individuals and their decisions. Despite the obvious differences among these three countries and their reactions to the historic cataclysm, moreover, systematic conceptual and diachronic comparison may permit us to rearrange their respective experiences during this passage in such a way as to yield revealing insights about the process of transition itself, here and in other appropriate cases, and about the significance of important turning points in the passage of each particular society. Some conceptual clarification, however, will have to precede the detailed comparative discussion of events if we are not to lose our way in the particulars and idiosyncrasies of each case. Obviously, the case of Nazi-occupied France and its collaborationist Vichy regime is quite different from that of its fascist neighbors. There was a functioning democratic system in France before the war and before Vichy, although it did not perform terribly well and finally succumbed as much to its own fatal weakness and defeatism as to the onslaught of the German armies. There were also major differences between the twenty-year rule of Mussolini and his eventual overthrow in 1943 and the much shorter Third Reich. Postwar Germany could attempt to take up important aspects and personnel of its democratic Weimar interlude in a way that has no equal in pre-Mussolini Italy.

Political postwar Italy, on the other hand, could be built on the foundation of a broadly-gauged and triumphant Resistance Movement for which Nazi Germany offers only the palest kind of equivalent.

Monistic Versus Pluralistic Interpretations

Describing momentous, chronological changes often tempts historians to simplify their account in a "monistic" fashion: To show the striking change of public opinion before and after a great victory or defeat, they may speak of how "the French" felt before their surrender in 1940 or under the benign first phase of the German occupation, under the increasingly repressive later phases of occupation rule, or right after the liberation. But in reality they know very well that these descriptions of "the French" at any time, at best, give merely an abbreviated impression of what may be the turns of opinion of a volatile majority, or even just of a prominent and vocal minority behind which there may be a large and silent majority of people who have remained uninvolved and have not taken sides in the great confrontations of the day. An accurate account of even the shortest period would have to render the infinite variety of groups of opinion, partisan, social, ideological, regional, or simply, ranging from officialdom or the activists in confrontations to the uninvolved or silently tolerant masses of ordinary people. Such pluralistic interpretations of course run the danger of confusing the mind of the reader with the infinite shadings and variety of the smallest groups, including individuals, and to obscure the clear line of macro-changes over time. There is both clarity and profundity, for example, if not pluralistic accuracy in Charles De Gaulle's comment on the French euphoria following the liberation:[1]

> "But just as the convalescent forgets the crisis he has survived and imagines his health restored, so the French people, savoring the joy of their freedom, were inclined

to believe that all their trials were at an end. In the immediate circumstances, the widespread sense of euphoria had its justifications. But at the same time, many permitted themselves illusions which were the cause of as many more misunderstandings."

De Gaulle sensed the buoyant upsurge of a sense of national solidarity at that moment without denying, of course, that Vichyites and collaborators might not share, or be permitted to share, in the glorious moment. As Stanley Hoffmann wrote of the latter, distinguishing no less than four different groups, collaborators, their over-compensating enemies, Resistance men, and the adherents of the Vichy regime:[2]

"The collaborators played in 1944-45 the sad but useful role of scapegoats, and the shrillest of their enemies were often men who had first put their faith in Pétain and shared in Vichy's integral nationalism of 1940-41. The myth which the Resistance men gladly endorsed -- that all of France was <u>resistante</u> in 1944 -- contributed to healing some of the wounds which the clash between Vichy's forces and the Resistance had opened."

Vengeful pursuers, whatever may have been their true motives, of course, have to be separated from the pursued in all three countries after the war. If we are describing the Italian Resistance going after notorious blackshirt leaders or the local land owners or business men who supported the fascist regime, or the German denazification authorities trying local Nazis, there is an infinite variety of degrees of guilt and involvement to account for,[3] as well as important shadings of their subsequent resistance to the new regimes, or eagerness to support it in ways that might compensate for their earkier misguided illusions and complicity. "After the Liberation," Hoffmann writes of France,[4]"a sense of

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[1]Charles DeGaulle, <u>The War Memoirs of Charles DeGaulle, Salvation 1944-46,</u> New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960, p. 3

[2]<u>In Search of France,</u> Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 35.

[3]In the case of denazification, the bureaucratic distinctions between the <u>Mitläufer</u> (mere followers) and Nazis guilty of misdeeds

shame or embarrassment which many of the leaders of business felt, at a time when the business community was widely accused of having collaborated wholesale with the Germans, probably contributed to making these men almost eager to prove their patriotism by cooperating with the new regime for economic reconstruction and expansion." For conservative German or Italian businessmen, likewise, past complicity seemed to be dissolved most easily in the new Christian Democratic aura of religious revival, European federation, and societal pluralism. The German CDU/CSU, the Italian Democrazia Cristiana, and the French MRP helped to funnel new supports from rather discredited individuals and groups that had once been rather vulnerable to certain Nazi, fascist, and Vichy appeals to the Monnet Plan and to the postwar democratic institutions of all three countries. The Left of the revived socialist and communist parties rarely shared the European inspiration. The SPD of Kurt Schumacher and the Nenni Socialists (PSIUP) and Communists (PCI) of Italy had little appreciation for the vision of a united Europe, except as a diversionary maneuvre perhaps to distract people from the pressing task of righting the wrongs of bourgeois class society.[6] On the other hand, the Left, at least of France and Germany, had rediscovered nationalism and la patrie at precisely the moment the conservative right was ready to abandon national egotisms for a more inclusive, European union. Kurt Schumacher took a surprisingly nationalistic tack for the SPD

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or of noticeable roles of support, moreover, changed rapidly with the passage of time as the vengeful fervor of the occupation authorities cooled who had ordered it in the first place.

[4] Ibid., p. 40.

[5] Ibid., p. 39. This is not to deny the autonomous inspiration of people like Carlo Roselli of the Partito d'Azione or of the European federalist movement. See Roy Willis, Italy Chooses Europe. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 4-6.

[6] Ibid., p. 9.

[7] See also Merkl, German Foreign Policies, West and East, Santa Barbara: Clio Press, pp. 209-210.

because he realized belatedly that his party's internationalism had lost the working masses to the nationalist agitation of Adolf Hitler.[7] The astonishing nationalist fervor of the French Communists (PCF) in the Resistance and Liberation era offered emotional relief and, perhaps, expiation for the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact (1939-1941) when they had opposed the war against Germany and refrained from offering any resistance to the occupation. All the more reason for patriotic enthusiasm once the red maquis began their determined campaign of resistance and against all Vichy "traitors" and collaborators with the alien occupiers."The word patrie, banished by a section of the Left before 1939, and used by Pétain in his motto Travail, Famille, Patrie, had resumed its former value against the Germans and Vichy."[8] Even Palmiro Togliatti's PCI struck a nationalistic note of sorts when it proclaimed la via italiana al socialismo instead of the old proletarian internationalism.

First Reactions to Triumph or Defeat

No less important than a pluralistic interpretation at significant turning points is the periodization of these points and the opinions typical of them. Comparable reactions in the three continental nations can be sorted according to whether they occurred in the rage and euphoria of the first hours of liberation, still before it, or at a later, more deliberate stage. Not only are the precise dates of partial or complete liberation and at the onset and end of later stages very important, but time-specific analysis is really the only way to understand the swiftly changing climate of opinion. To the liberationists of the first hour, such as the Italian Committees of National Liberation (CLN) of 1943-1944, "democracy" meant first of all to root out fascist control and punish the fascists who had been tarred by association with the Germans.[9] The militant saboteurs and communist unionists of Turin

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[8]Jean Baptiste Duroselle in Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 331. Hoffmann even calls the executions "ritual murder(s)...more than evidence of civil war." Ibid., pp. 35-36.

[9]Margaret Carlyle, Modern Italy, rev. ed., New York: Praeger, 1965, pp. 49-51.

of May 1, 1942, meant by democracy the struggle against the capitalist bosses who had supported Mussolini. Giustizia e libertà and the Partito d'Azione meant by it a "liberal revolution" by workers and the lower middle classes, a revolution that was no more willing to accept Marshall Badoglio and the royalists than it would put up any more with the fascist regime. To the French Resistance groups in the province, likewise, democracy was inextricably linked with a deeply felt need for revenge:[10]

> "Too much outrage, accumulated over four years, was fermenting under the lid to avoid an explosion in the chaos following the enemy's flight and the collapse of his accomplices. Many resistance units were going to proceed with punishments and purges on their own. Armed groups, appearing out of the woods, yielded to the impule to render justice against their persecutors without due process of law. In many places, public anger exploded in brutal reactions."

The French also organized a National Purge Committee of Men of Letters, Playwrights, and Composers to blacklist or ban from publication intellectuals who had disgraced themselves. Leading figures of radio and the daily press were even executed, but only one writer (George Brasillach) suffered this fate. A few months after the liberation of Paris, already, the avenging angels began to be divided, as François Mauriac and others regretted their earlier vengeful zeal -- Mauriac calling for charity in the conservative Figaro -- while Albert Camus in Combat still demanded "human justice with its terrible imperfections". Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir also still supported the blacklist of the National Committe of Writers (CNE) because "certain people had no place in the new world [they] were trying to build." But it did not take very long for the blacklisted writers to make a comeback and some eventually rose to new fame.[11]

The timing and course of the liberation of Italy associated

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[10] De Gaulle, op.cit., pp. 9-10. In the days immediately preceding or following the liberation in Germany, too, a number of acts of sabotage and retribution took place, but more often for the settlement of personal grudges than for political causes.

the revenge against fascists also with the takeover of the Germans who, after Mussolini's fall, became a repressive occupying power that simply would not permit Italy to withdraw from the war. This circumstance also cast the Resistance in the heroic role of patriotic defenders and rebels against brutal foreign masters as well as horrible Nazis.[12] There was no such association possible in the final days of the Nazi regime at home even though a clandestine German Resistance had motivated its attempts on Hitler's life with his utter corruption of the ethical traditions of Germany and Prussia. But neither he nor his minions could be cast in the role of a foreign occupying force. Moreover, the degree of physical devastation, deaths, and hunger at the end of the war, and the excesses of the invading Russian armies and occupying French soldiers against the civilian population -- rapes and pillage mostly excused with the atrocities committed by German troops in occupied territories -- depoliticized most Germans and made for an intense preoccupation with sheer physical survival. Since the occupation authorities organized and supervised the denazification trials by special German courts, furthermore, there was no need for Germans to take the initiative and purge the Nazis on their own.[13] There was universal agreement among postwar Germans at this hour, however, that the guilty should be punished severely, especially after the disclosures about German concentration camps and genocide. There was a great deal less support for the way it was done, that is with the elaborate denazification procedures and the series of war crimes trials according to newly-made law.[14]

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[11]See Herbert Lottman, Left Bank: Artists, Writers, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War, New York: Viking, 1982, pp. 222-227. There were some parallels to this in Germany, such as the controversy involving the movie director, Veit Harlan.

[12]See also Frederick W. Deakin, The Brutal Friendship: Mussolini and the Fall of Fascism, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962.

[13]See esp. Wolfgang Benz, Von der Besatzungsherrschaft zur Bundesrepublik. Stationen einer Staatsgründung 1946-1949, Frankfurt: Fischer, 1984, pp. 12-19.

[14]Although there are no representative polls available and many

There is one more aspect of the first reactions that deserves mention, at least in the case of Germany and Italy. The end of the war in Italy, in a curious way, brought a series of ethnic minority and border problems to the forefront, just as if the Italian nation-state was coming apart at the seams. It was not just the problem of Trieste but also that of the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol and of the French-speaking one of the Val d'Aosta. Even the long-slumbering autonomist setiments of Sicily seemed to reawaken with the final bells of peace.[15] In Germany, the phenomenon was even more dramatic: Ethnic minorities such as the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein and some people along the Belgian and French borders asserted themselves and there were rumors of separatist stirrings in the Rhineland and Bavaria. At the same time, Austria once more became independent and Eastern Europeans expelled the bulk of their German ethnics to form a westward trek of some twelve million unfortunates, mobilized further by the advance of the Red Army and the eventual redrawing of the German-Polish border along the rivers Oder and Neisse. East Prussia became Russian and Polish and, in the end, even East Germany became a separate country.[16] Small wonder that some conservatives thought this to be the final unravelling of Bismarck's nation-state and of German nationalism, and that a return to federalism and to European orientations seemed appropriate to the Christian Democrats. These sentiments of the first reaction are not easy to recall today because

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people with critical opinions were afraid to speak out, German criticisms appear to have centered on the ex post facto nature of most of the charges -- "victors' justice" -- and on the bureaucratic Fragebogen (questionnaire) procedure of denazification. Germans would have preferred to see justice done according to German laws against murder and mayhem, as indeed became their policy in the 50s.

[15] See Norman Kogan, A Political History of Italy: The Postwar Years, New York: Praeger, 1983, pp. 7-8, and Rosario Mangiameli, "Separatismo e autonomismo in Sicilia fra politica e storiografia," Italia Contemporanea, 32(1980), no. 141, 89-98.

[16] Hannover too asserted its old claims against Prussia from 1866 and, with the formal dissolution of the latter in 1947 and the establishment of the Land Lower Saxony, eventually won its case.

their saliency in people's minds soon receded behind the pressing organizational tasks of reconstruction.

Organizational Concerns

If the preoccupation of the first hour of liberation was heavy with emotions and ideological beliefs, including in the rebirth of genuine democracy, more pragmatic concerns soon won the upper hand. While it may be difficult to say when the"first hour" ended or how much it may have overlapped with the "second hour", there is no mistaking the inevitable turn to such questions as how to organize both the organizatinnal fabric and the constitutional basis of the political order to come. Charles DeGaulle at this point, for example, was appalled to see the Third Republic, "le systeme", reemerging.[17]

> "What particularly struck me about the regrouping parties was their passionate desire to accord themselves all the powers of the Republic in full at the earliest opportunity, and their incapacity, which they revealed in advance, to wield them effectively. In this respect, nothing promised any sort of improvement in regard to the futile maneuvering which comprised the regime's activity before the war and which had led the country to such a fearful disaster."

Yet even France, which was the least distant from its democratic past, was headed for a great deal more innovation in the ways of the Third Republic than DeGaulle would have us believe."If we look at developments in society at the end of the war," as Hoffmann was to write later,"we see that the groundwork of postwar change was laid during the war years. The phenomenon which was perhaps of greatest importance was a kind of rediscovery of France and of the French by the French, because of the defeat and in reaction against Vichy. An essentially psychological change, it was the necessary condition of the more tangible transformations of the major features of the stalemate society.[18]Even the conservatives reacted to

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[17] Op.cit., p. 116. Hoffmann calls it the "returned of unreformed parliamentarism" which would bring the reformers of the Resistance back to orthodox behavior. Op.cit., p. 48.

the political lessons of the decade of 1934-1944 by backing away from the "totalitarian delirium of the Laval-Darnand period" and returning to their prewar politics, though with one significant innovation: They had learned to concentrate on a more effective organization of their parties and groups than before.[19] The Left and the MRP had learned this lesson of power and control even more thoroughly as the incipient pstwar system headed into the, for Third Republic ways amazing, years of tripartisme, the well-coordinated cooperation of the MRP, the SFIO, and the PCF.[20] As the popular defeat of the first constitutional draft and its replacement with a document favoring checks (president, upper house) on the power of the parties in the national assembly and cabinet showed, this concentration of partisan power was at times regarded as too much of a good thing by the French electorate. After the Communists were forced out of this well-lubricated coalition in 1947, unfortunately, disorganization and political decay in time brought the new Fourth Republic back to a semblance of the Third.

Italian Reconstruction: Italy also showed this syndrome of strong partisan cooperation among the five or six anti-fascist parties already during the formative years of 1943-1947. The Committees of National Liberation (CLN) of the "armed resistance" of 1943-1945 were a model of close coordination under trying circumstances among the PCI, PSIUP, Partito d'Azione, DC, and Liberals, and the Labor Democrats. Luigi Longo, the later PCI general secretary, commanded the Garibaldi Brigades while Ferruccio Parri of the Partito d'Azione commanded the Giellisti; both served under a Socialist chief of staff and had Liberal and Christian Democratic vice chiefs of staff. This mode of running the armed resistance worked surprisingly well, considering that each partisan element had an equal voice and that unanimity was required for most decisions. The

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[18] Ibid., p. 34.

[19] Ibid., p. 45.

[20] Another telltale example of the straigthforward approach of most of these postwar parties to securing their access to power was their cynical calculations regarding the selection and manipulation of electoral laws. None of them seemed concerned about questions of

Partito d'Azione even dreamt of making the CLNs the political foundation of a decentralized state, but their dream soon faded when CLN president Parri was replaced (CLN president) by Prime Minister Alcide De Casperi of the DC in November of 1945. Their plans for a constitutional Convention and a continued role for the CLNs were frustrated by the Catholics who preferred to resurrect the power of the old prefects, parliamentary goverment, and the House of Savoy. Togliatti (PCI) was no help either when, in the "turn about of Salerno", he took his party into the royal cabinet in the south. In those years, the entire country seemed to be severed in two, with the northern partisans attaching the fascist last stand, the Republic of Salò, while in the south the CLNs had to fight Pietro Badoglio and his king. Parri and his righthand man Valiani were proud of how his men had succeeded in suppressing fascist rule in Upper Italy and mobilizing an effetive insurrection of workers and the urban and rural lower middle classes. But in the South, increasingly under an Allied occupation which accepted Badoglio and the monarchy at the same time that the American OSS and British SOE gave every support to the mostly anti-monarchist CLNs in the North, it was rather a different story.[22]

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electoral justice or democracy, but only about their respective advantage under different electoral systems, See Edward G.Lewis "Electoral Changes after World War Two" in Arnold J.Zurcher, Constitutions and Constitutional Trends since World War Two, New York Univers.Press 1955, 36-66.

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[21] See esp. the exellent survey of the literature on the Resistance by Charles F.Delzell, " The Italian Anti-fascist Resistance in Retrospect: Three Decades of Historiography", Journal of Modern History, 47 (1975), 66-96. The first CLN president, Ivanoe Bonomi, wrote a revealing diary on his experience of 1943/1944 and Leo Valiano, another Azionista, wrote

The questions of how to organize postwar Italien politics naturally played a major role in breaking up the initial cooperation among the antifascist parties some of which had only been founded or reformed rather recently (DC) or consisted more of prominent individuals (PLI) than of a well-established organization. To be sure, if there had been no Resistance in the Val d'Aosta, Venezia Giulia, or Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy might have lost these areas to foreign claimants. On the other hand, the fading of the Resistance from the political scene in late 1945 -- some of its ideas did find their way into the constitution -- was the origin of the slogan of the rivoluzione mancata, the unfinished social-political revolution. According to Giorgio Vaccarino, the division was simply between those who were hoping for a popular uprising (PCI, PSIUP, Partito d'Azione) and those antifascist Catholics and Liberals, ex-Popolari, and neo-guelfi who"hoped for royal initiatives" because they really preferred the centralized prefascist state to reemerge rather than to risk a revolutionary upheaval. Parri bitterly denounced these Christian Democrats and Liberals at the time of his overthrow as the kind of people who had made it so easy for fascism to arise and to conquer the country in the first place, back in 1919/1922 when Italian democracy was more appearance than reality. DeGasperi, whatever his great merits, clearly shied away from fundamental socio-political changes, then and

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an illuminating account with his Tutte le strade conducono a Roma, Florence, 1947.

[22]See the account of Benedetto Croce who was one of the towering figures of the Liberals in the South, Quando l'Italia era tagliata in due, Bari: Laterza, 1948. See also Stefano Vitali, "Fra classe operaia e ceti medi: note sulla base sociale del Pd'A," Italia Contemporanea, 32 (1980), no. 141, 61-88, and Luigi Longo, Continuità della Resistenza, Torino: Einaudi, 1977 where his Garibaldi Brigades naturally receive most of the attention. Also Sergio Cotta, Quale

later, although he maintained a coalition with the Left until mid-1947.[23]

Under DeGasperi's stewardship, the political forces were assembled in 1946 to make the important constitutional decisions, after he and the Left had prudently turned over the decision about the continuation of the monarchy to a popular referendum. The parties all held their first postwar conventions in early 1946 (or late 1945) and then faced their first parliamentary elections which showed the great strength of the Left (46%) even though the radical democratic Partito d'Azione proved no match for the PCI and PSIUP. Togliatti's PCI, the only Resistance party to endorse a real revolution, continued its cautious course of appeasing the Christian Democrats in many ways and finally even endorsed the continued validity of the Lateran Accords of 1929,[24] after which DeGasperi dropped them and all the other coalition parties from his government, probably having no further use for their cooperation. The constitution meanwhile emerged as a rather progressive instrument -- featuring regional government, women suffrage, initiative and referendum, an elective senate, presidential veto, an economic council, and a constitutional court and judicial council -- if a little shy of provisions to carry out all its promises, such as the establishment of the ordinary regions. Some of these progressive features were supposed to be the reward for the would-be revolutionaries to forget about their revolution.[25]

Resistenza ? Aspetti e problemi della guerra di liberazione in Italia, Milano: Rusconi, 1977.

[23]Giorgio Vaccarino,"Wiederherstellung der Demokratie in Italien (1943-1948)," Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 21(1973), 285-324. See also Giogio Amendola,"Riflessioni su una esperienza del governo PCI (1944-1947)," Storia Contemporanea, 5(1974), 701-736, and the series of articles by Harald Neubert in the East German Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft, 23(1975), 1117-1134; vol.24 (1976), 255-274; and 25(1977), 411-429.

[24]Among other things, the PCI also cooperated in granting amnesty tomost ex-fascists, after an earlier purge of the administrative service had already shocked many observers with its curious

The surface agreement between DeGasperi and the PCI should not obscure the furious struggle going on at the same time over control of the renascent trade unions. The prefascist labor movement had been deeply divided along ideological lines which was a major reason for labor's weakness in the face of fascism. There were fervent hopes that labor would reemerge as one unified labor confederation, the CGIL, and the American and British labor unions, not to mention Military Government in Italy, did everything they could to bring all the forces together. The PCI, PSIUP, and Christian Democratic unionists readily agreed and, at the great CGIL congress in Naples in 1945, proletarian unity was declared "the most important conquest achieved so far." The euphoria of proletarian unity -- which even figured in the new name that galvanized the various strands of the old Socialist party into action again as Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP) -- soon faded as it became obvious that PCI activists had within months taken over the CGIL with the help of a PCI-PSIUP majority. Protests of Christian Democratic unionists (ACLI), beginning in December 1945, were of no avail and soon the exodus began: The Christian Democrats left and eventually founded their own union (CISL) while the Saragat Socialists (PSDI) and Republicans followed a few years later with FIL (now UIL). The final straw -- following the pitched electoral battle of 1948 in which DeGasperi defeated the joint forces of PCI and PSIUP -- was the general strike of mid-July 1948, really a "bold attempt...to bring down the shaky democratic political structure by revolution."[26] The drama of the postwar Italian labor

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combination of harshness toward the lesser ranks with leniency toward the high career bureaucrats, including most fascist prefects and quaestors, analogy of sorts to the miscarriage of denazification in Germany. Togliatti showed his cards only once, when he sided with the claims of Eastern European communist states for disputed territory.

[25] Vaccarino, op.cit., pp. 306-323.

[26] See Joseph LaPalombara, The Italian Labor Movement: Problems and Prospects, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957, pp.13-25.

movement, of course, had its parallel in France which likewise emerged with a Communist-dominated CGT and separate unions for the Catholic and moderate socialist unionists. The Christian Democratic electoral triumph in 1948 ended the formative periods of Italian postwar politics and ushered in decades of rightwing dominance, tempered only marginally by the "opening to the left" of the 1960s. There was no revolution other than the overthrow of Mussolini's regime and the abandonment of the monarchy.[27]

German Postwar Reconstruction: In the case of postwar Germany, the organizational concerns and the beginnings of the political struggle were molded profoundly by the changing international situation and the predominant role of the occupying powers who anticipated some of the most basic decisions of the Germans. The most fundamental, of course, were those making for the division of East and West Germany and for the development of a communist party state in the former and a liberal democratic rump state in the latter. But there were others of almost equally great significance even though their impact owed much to the accident of timing. The initial reluctance of the French occupation to cooperate with any Anglo-American or German scheme -- and there were many as early as 1945/1946 -- to build up German institutions beyond the Länder level, for example, had a disproportionate impact not only in strengthening federalism and decentralization at the time, but also in tipping the scales in favor of the eventual dominance of the CDU/CSU and FDP over the centralistic and dirigistic SPD.[28] The bias of American military government in the same direction is well known. Coming in the formative years of 1946/47 -- the French Zone was withheld from the superzonal level until 1948 -- and against a backdrop of rising East-West tensions, French frigidity made the Anglo-American authorities all the more eager

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[27]See also Kogan, op.cit., chapters . Also Martin McCauley, ed., Communist Power in Europe, 1944-1949, London: Macmillan, 1977, and Franco Catalano, L'Italia dalla dittatura alla democrazia, 1919-1948, Milano: Leriyi, 1962.

[28]See esp. Benz, op.cit., pp. 58-59.

not to alienate the French by precipitate action. The Germans of the northwest and the south were sharply divided on the issue too and French reluctance provided the minimal margin to help the southern conceptions of the future state to win out. The Americans, besides strengthening the hand of the southern minister presidents, also played the more direct role of initiating the currency reform and the Marshall Plan and in the ensuing East-West confrontations, not to mention their squelching of the article in the new Hessian constitution authorizing nationalizations. Since all these interventions occurred at a crucial time they probably helped to launch West Germany on twenty years of conservative rule.

There is no mistaking the presence of the occupying powers with respect to the first stirrings of German democratic politics either. Immediately upon the collapse of Nazi authority in the big cities, for example, Antifascist Committees (Antifas) arose, generally from among workers of leftist (KPD,SPD) or trade union background who proceeded to identify and arrest local Nazis and to draft them for public services such as clearing rubble from the streets.[29] In some industrial areas, plant committees were formed from similar elements for the same purpose. The occupation viewed these committees with considerable suspicion, at least in the West, and simply discouraged or dissolved them as it established its own authority over German affairs. The rest were replaced by occupation-appointed German administrators. This may have been the closest equivalent to a grassroots leftwing liberation movement after the decimation of all Resistance ranks following the assassination attempt on Hitler of July 20, 1944.[30] The Western occupation authorities similarly discouraged the first German attempts to revive the pre-Nazi trade unions, in striking con-

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[29] For a sample of Antifa manifestoes or programs, see Hans-Jörg Ruhl, Neubeginn und Restauration. Dokumente zur Vorgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1949, München: DTV, 1982, pp. 180-182. They were mostly concerned with purging the Nazis from German local officialdom, a typical reaction of the first hour.

[30] See Westdeutschlands Weg zur Bundesrepublik 1945-1949, a symposium by members of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München:

trast to their reception of militant unionists in wartime Italy. Comparison suggests that the Western allies refused even the benefit of the doubt to any leftwing elements stirring in Germany in the first hours of defeat and collapse.[31]

After considerable delay, and after the occupation had carried out the first steps of institutional reconstruction at the local level and with handpicked German officials,[32] German parties were permitted to form at a local and state level, albeit under stringent screening and licensing provisions. Since the occupation so carefully controlled the steps of institutional growth, including the creation of new Länder entities, before permitting the new parties and their leaders a freer reign, a curious kind of institutional politicking -- especially through the South German Länderrat -- became the tail that wagged the dog of early West German party politics. The revived or newly created parties, of course, had organizational and constitutional ideas of their own,[33] but those had to await the writing of Länder constitutions and, at last, the drafting of the Basic Law in 1948/1949. In the meantime, the priorities revolved around such questions as whether to build up a Western rump state at all -- thus sealing the German division -- and whether to do this in a federalist, Länderrat way or by recreating centralized authority similar to the collapsed Reich, or how to react to the division of the old states of Baden and Württemberg by the American-French zonal boundary. The contrast between the more centralized traditions of the British zone (Prussia) and the old states of the south, as well as be-

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Beck, 1976, pp. 91-92.

[31]On the unions, see also Ruhl, op.cit., pp. 234-270. The Soviet Union, by comparison, immediately recognized such groups and entrusted them with local authority, presumably also because they were likely to lend initial popularity to the German communists.

[32]The British and American military had brought with it lists of politically acceptable persons, mostly Weimar politicians and administrators who had been dismissed or retired during the Nazi years. See, for example, Marie Elise Foelz-Schroeter, Föderalistische Politik und nationale Repräsentation 1945-1947, Studien zur

tween British and French and American conceptions still overshadowed the partisan compromises during the constitutional deliberations on the Basic Law.[34]

Thus the organizational concerns of postwar Germany were determined first by international factors and institutional quandaries among the occupying powers before German political decisions were allowed to shape the political system to emerge. The emphatically "provisional" constitution of 1949, the Basic Law, otherwise resembles the constitutions drawn up in France and Italy in some basic respects: There was at least the same distrust of governmental authority, and it took the same path of strengthening party government and the executive at the expense of parliament.[35] The framers of the Basic Law, moreover, distrusted the people as well and made certain to eliminate plebiscites almost entirely -- unlike the Italians -- and, like the Italians, were not eager for popular ratification for their constitution.[36] There was the same shift towards a "judicialization of political decisions" in the form of the creation of constitutional courts with the power of judicial review, if anything, more powerful than the French and Italian efforts in this direction,[37] and a

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Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart: DVA, 1974, pp. 15-17, for a perceptive account of some of the first such appointments at the state level.

[33] See the first proposals in Benz, op.cit., pp. 56, 59. There is a large literature on the foundation of the new parties, such as the CDU/CSU, but also on the prevailing constitutional opinions of revived parties such as the SPD. See for example Karlheinz Niclauss, Demokratiegründung in Westdeutschland, München: Piper, 1974.

[34] See Foelz-Schroeter, op.cit., pp. 9, 21-24 and passim, where the focus is on the new Länder governments as the first German agencies given real authority by the military governments.

[35] In the Basic Law, this meant an emphatic shift of power to the chancellor (at the expense of the president and parliament) and an electoral law that protects the major parties against secessions and smaller protest movements.

[36] "Both Vichy and the Fourth Republic," Hoffmann wrote about France, "helped to alienate the people from politics; if there was

new concern for the sanctity of human rights. There was the same interest in guaranteeing social rights and entitlements, though, unlike France and Italy, not to the extent of reviving the economic council of Weimar. And there was the same willingness to subordinate national sovereignty to international organizations and law. The Basic Law, more than the other two, indeed embodied a kind of "negative revolution"(Carl Friedrich) against the "excesses of popular rule" of the early thirties.

Finally, postwar German organizational concerns were characterized also by an emphatic preference for the unification and consolidation of groups that had been riven by multiple ideological and social divisions under the Weimar Republic. In place of the old fragmented labor movement, for example, there arose a giant trade union federation, the DGB -- unlike French and Italian labor never communist-dominated -- even though some white collar employees and civil servants still maintain unions outside the DGB (DAG and DBB).[38] The competing farmers' organizations of old were now well-unified in the DBV and similar conditions seem to characterize the entire interest group spectrum of postwar Germany. The fragmentation of the Weimar party system similarly was abandoned in time even though the first Bundestag still contained eight parties of which none commanded more than a third of the seats. Subsequent polarizing developments extended the movement towards consolidation to the remaining bourgeois parties in a remarkable build-up under the leadership of the first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, so that the party system became essentially bipolar, with the FDP (until

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any continuity, it was in keeping 'le peuple absent,' as Maurice Duverger has written." Op.cit., p. 51.

[37] The French and Italian constitutions, on the other hand, strengthened emergency powers to an extent far greater than the framers of the Basic Law who remembered all too well the debacle of constitutional emergency powers under the Weimar Republic. See Carl J. Friedrich,"The Political Theory of the New Constitutions," in Zurcher, op.cit., p. 28 and Karl Loewenstein,"Reflections on the Value of Constitutions in Our Revolutionary Age," ibid., pp. 191-224.

1983) the only smaller party to escape the realignment.[39]

Lines of Continuity

If the second phase of the postwar passage to democracy was characterized by organizational concerns such as the formation of a party system, the drafting of the new constitution, or the consolidation of interest groups, what is it that comes next ? Is there a set of issues of a third stage ? There is of course a period after most of the organizational concerns have been resolved and the new governments established so that we could speak of a third phase: At this point the great emotions of the transition have cooled, external pressures wane, and rapid change -- mancata la rivoluzione or not -- gives way to oasis. Everyone settles down to the normal processes of democratic politics, including possible future changes and crises.

For France, this point was already reached in the late forties although soon new disequilibrating forces came into play that originated with the deterioration of the French empire over Indochina and, subsequently, Algeria and were not resolved until the early sixties. Nevertheless, politics as usual was going on even during most of those years with the possible exception of the hiatus between the Fourth and the Fifth Republic. Italian politics seems to have reached the point of equilibrium more likely in the sixties when the rigid left-right polarization of politics came into motion at the same time that the country experienced an unprecedented period of economic growth. Throughout the fifties, there was still a sense of siege and crisis, as right-of-center coalitions defended a rather authoritarian version of liberal democracy against the menace of a

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[38]There was also a small Christian trade union movement, but the overall effect of consolidation was clearly in sharp contrast to the presence of three major and several smaller unions before 1933.

[39]The story of the simplification of the West German party system could also be told as the shift from all-party coalitions towards competition, as the occupation regime retreated from its earlier dominant role. See chapter one of Sven Groennings et al., The Study of Coalition Behavior, New York: Holt,Rinehart, 1970.

leftwing takeover that threatened to destroy liberal democracy itself. For the Federal Republic, Allied occupation did not really end until 1955 when its external sovereignty was restored. Until then, and perhaps a little longer, the main opposition party was often tempted to cast itself in the role of opposing "Allied-inspired"foreign and defense policies, a pose it did not really overcome until 1959/1960. Until the end of the fifties, furthermore, the bipolar party system had not really taken shape either. Hence it would appear that West Germany reached a relative state of political stasis only then. There are obviously subjective judgments involved in this periodization, including at which point a given political culture turns its attention from the past to the present and future.

More interesting than the fixing of a date between the second and third phases, perhaps, is a look at the lines of continuity that tie the present to the past in various ways. The cataclysmic end of World War Two sometimes seems to obscure the fact that, despite the striking changes, there were some people, some trends, and some developments that did not change very much, if at all. It goes without saying, for example, that most of the individuals in these three systems in the heady days of the Liberation were still the same who probably supported -- or at least did not rebel against -- the old fascist or Vichy regimes. After the brief upheaval of revenge and retribution, they too turned to the organizational tasks at hand and may have participated right along with the Resistance forces proper. Consider, furthermore, the vast numbers of ex-Nazis and ex-fascists at the end of the war: Even if only one out of ten, or fewer of them, remained convinced in his heart that Hitler or Mussolini were right, this would have amounted to a very large popular base for a neo-fascist movement. Did we expect them all to become staunch democrats overnight, or simply to disappear ? There were neo-fascist movements in both, Germany and Italy, and they were composed mostly of old party stalwarts and, frequently, of their children who were often reinforced in their Nazi/fascist beliefs by the perceived humiliation and punishment of their parents. How many decades have to go by before such neo-fascist movements are mostly the products of

new issues and of new people who were neither old fascists nor their sons and daughters ?

A look at the current rightwing radical fringe of all three countries gives the impression that most of the relevant movements passed the point until they were hostages to the past in the early seventies. Today's MSI, Ordine Nero, NPD, National Front, or rightwing terror groups draw their strength from things other than World War Two or the liberation.[40] Their current inspiration comes from xenophobia, the thrills of extreme violence (incl. at soccer matches), a depressed social milieu, and a deep-seated cultural pessimisim. The recipe may sound familiar but there is little real or personal continuity today, although there must have been a lot of it in the first decade or two after 1945. The suppression of neo-Nazism first by the occupation and then by the court action against the SRP in 1951 thus may have been a very effective way of squelching the comeback of the old Nazi elements. The NPD was already largely the product of other radical right sources and its following contingent on new protest issues and protest voters.

There was continuity also in certain associations and interest groups that had flourished under fascism or Vichy without disgracing themselves by excessive political involvement with it. Many professional associations, doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, and engineers fit this category and so did most business groups and industrial associations.[41] After the war most of them claimed to have been unpolitical and exclusively preoccupied with their subject, craft, or skill. Economic circumstances permitting, they soon were flourishing again, this time lending their support to the moderate Right or Christian Democrats who at least were reliable democrats. In most cases, there may have been genuine conversions involved as erstwhile conservative authoritarians and elitists reacted to the horrors of dictatorship and war.

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[40] Nevertheless it is very common in all these movements (including the Red Brigades) to couch political appeals in the language of World War Two and the Liberation, or a defense against the latter. See esp. Leonard Weinberg and the chapter on neo-Nazism in Merkl, ed. Political Violence and Terror: Motifs and Motivations, Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming.

A special if by no means isolated aspect of continuity has been the role of planners, bureaucrats, law enforcement officers, and professional soldiers in bridging the cataclysm of 1945. The French Resistance was in some ways quite compatible with Vichy as both shared an impatience with the backwardness and inefficiency of the French economy. They shared a technocratic impulse that even DeGaulle found praiseworthy in Vichy. The wartime Ministry of Industrial Production could compel a long-needed standardization of production techniques during the war and its technocrats and state engineers readily served the socialist Liberation and the postwar regimes as an instrument of planning and economic expansion. Vichy's Committees of Organization (COs), employers's groups in each branch of industry that brought together industry representatives and the Ministry's civil servants -- shades of postwar Japan -- were also continued by the governments of the Left between 1945 and 1947.[42]

In postwar Germany and Italy, the continuity of planners and technocrats is not as easy to ascertain because the first postwar regimes were ideologically opposed to planning. Nevertheless, many of the technocrats and planners under the fascist regimes continued to serve in postwar administrations and, given time, planning itself was revived, often using ordinances and preliminary studies that had been developed in the 1930s or 1940s. A close examination, for example, of the reemergence of spatial and regional planning in Bonn and at the Länder level in the 1950s and 1960s reveals considerable continuity under the guise of the objective and scientific guidelines of the activity. Unless planning itself was ostracized as a"totalitarian activity" per se -- an argument common among some conservatives -- it was only logical that postwar planning activities should build upon the

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[41]Under the Labor Charter of Vichy, for example, professional orders of lawyers, doctors, etc. were established between 1940 and 1944 which made themselves useful during the shortages and confusin of the Liberation, and continued under different names. The Resistance never really proposed a return to "prewar individualism" even though it took a dim view of Vichy corporatism. Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 38.

maps and models of the otherwise discredited past.[43]

The question of the continuity of civil service tenure, especially of law enforcement, and of military personnel is highly controversial and we will only suggest perspectives here rather than offer a full-scale comparison. The involvement of prominent civil servants and generals, and particularly of judges and police officials with the repressive apparatus of Vichy or the Nazi/fascists in theory made them prime targets for the purges of the first hour, but in practice many not only escaped the wrath of the Resistance by clever evasions, the esprit de corps (or code of silence)of their units, or simply the confusions of the moment.[44] Many of them soon returned to active service in the police, judicial, or military service of postwar democratic regimes, possibly having forgotten little and learnt nothing. Leniency and outright amnesties, major enactments assuring their tenure or, at least, pension rights -- such as the article 131 added to the Basic Law as an afterthought -- eased their way back into the system upon promises of good behavior. Indeed, why should not the minions of a repressive regime be permitted to "convert" as long as they had not individually been convicted of foul conduct? Even if they became less than zealous (or uncomprehending) democrats, at least they would not be encapsulated in a new hostile subculture plotting the overthrow of democracy.[45] A wise political leader such as Konrad Adenauer clearly preferred to win over the mass of ex-Nazis, including minor officialdom, to creating enemies for the fragile new democracy he was building. Italian postwar leaders including Palmiro Togliatti similarly sought to woo the millions of ex-fascists and tens of thousands of

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[42]See Richard Kuisel,"Technocrats and Public Economic Policy: From the Third to the Fourth Republic," in John Cairns, ed., Contemporary France: Illusion, Conflict, and Regeneration, New York: New Viewpoints, 1978, pp. 240-243.

[43]For details, see Patricia Gibson and Merkl, Small Town in Bavaria, forthcoming, chapter two.

[44]In the case of Nazi enforcement personnel, such as concentration camp or Einsatzkommando officers, the death or illness of victims, the confusion of jurisdictions among occupied territories

officials, among other reasons, because they viewed the earlier popularity of fascism as an understandable lapse grown from poverty and social predicaments.

Finally, the new democratic regimes often made special efforts to create a new democratic spirit at least in the military, for example by means of selecting and training new officers differently -- as in the Inner Guidance program of the new West German army -- changing its procedures and providing for correctives such as grievance committees for disciplinary abuses. The upshot of all this was the substantial presence in the public services, especially during the first decade or two after 1945, of personnel that was socialized, trained and educated, and actually working under the regimes of before 1945 as well as after. They may even have passed on their way of discharging their duties to the next generation of minor officials until the authoritarian contagion finally faded away. Thus there must have been, in spite of their overt conversion to democracy, a strong continuity also in the conduct of bureaucrats, police, and professional military men towards civilians and towards the public before and after 1945. Popular complaints about "old Nazi" hanging judges or the "Gestapo-like" behavior of the police during the first post-totalitarian decades, therefore, were often far more than verbal hyperbole.

The last strands of continuity over the passage from dictatorship to democracy are political. In a striking aside about German opinion in 1945, for example, Wolfgang Benz reminds us of the extent to which certain kinds of German nationalist, even racist rhetoric survived the fall of the Third Reich[46] and could be heard from unexpected quarters. The political discourse in

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and the ease of changing one's identity or disappearing into the vast streams of refugees often facilitated their escape from judgment.

[45]In one of his early studies, Student und Politik, Jürgen Habermas threw a revealing light on the alienated subculture of Frankfurt students in 1951, many of whom reacted to the denazification and humiliation of their parents not only by rejecting West German democracy but the entire syndrome of the values of modern society.

[46]Benz cites a protest by a prominent Protestant bishop to the French occupation regarding military bordelloes in which white pro-

post-Liberation France and Italy undoubtedly featured similar occasional lapses into authoritarian or fascist polemics that revealed the continuing fixation of many people on concerns and prejudices of the not so distant past. Many non-Resistance politicians active in the postwar years, by the same token, can probably be related to pre-1945 backgrounds. Postwar German politicians, as we said earlier, frequently had been active in Weimar politics and administration and had survived by retirement or by switching to innocuous occupations in order to escape the wrath of the Nazis. A systematic and detailed comparison of political backgrounds of postwar politicians in all three systems, by careers, antecedents, ages, and involvement (or lack thereof) with the Vichy/Nazi/fascist regimes might bring out similarities and differences more accurately than these impressionistic remarks. Suffice it to say that the non-Resistance and presumably authoritarian backgrounds may well have made up a majority in all three systems.

Conclusions

We have come a long way now from before the liberation of France, Italy, and Germany to the normalization of democratic politics on the continent, and it is time to look back upon the whole enterprise. We began with the first hours of reaction, with the overthrow and punishment of the oppressors. Then came the organizational phase, sometimes preceded or at least interrupted by the onset of political struggle over the political shape of the future. This competition and the actual organization of the political structures together provided the setting for normal give-and-take of democratic politics, although in the cases of Italy and Germany, special circumstances suggested an additional interval between the writing of the constitution and "normality." We did not forget the ample strands of continuity that connect these postwar democracies with the regimes before liberation. Whatever the reader may think of this periodization and functional differentiation, we also promised comparative "insights about the process

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were subjected to French African soldiers even though the latter had "totally different conceptions of women, morals, and sex." Op.Cit., p. 13.

of transition itself", a theoretical model that could be applied to similar transitions elsewhere and at different historical periods.

What kind of a model could this be ? It could hardly be the dialectic of Hegelian idealism because the "men (and women) of the Resistance" and their reckoning with Vichy and Nazi/fascist figures were not exactly an antithesis of ideas that could be said to have eventually produced the synthesis of postwar democracy. Vichy plus Liberation by the Resistance simply did not equal the Fourth Republic and similar equations for Italy and Germany are equally dubious. A Marxist or materialistic dialectic yields no revelations either: It would be a gross simplification to interpret the ultra-conservatism of Vichy or the brutal (in the Nazi case, racist) imperialism of fascism merely as the forces of bourgeois capitalism. In fact, Mussolini's fascism from the very beginning combined certain proletarian overtones -- especially those of the "external proletariat" under the boot of foreign imperialists -- with the preservation of the propertied classes and the same can be said about the Nazi movement. The advancing CLN forces in Italy, furthermore, were not merely the spearhead of working-class interests and the PCI and PCF conquest of the labor movements, if anything, merely divided the working classes again. Marxist theories, it would appear, are not pluralistic or differentiated enough to record the drastic changes from period to period or to appreciate the crucial importance of the organizational phase and of the political structures to which it gave birth.

The model to apply, evidently, must be a multi-level and multi-stage, pluralistic one that can accommodate all the relevant aspects of the three cases and explain how these countries progressed from each stage to the next. It must be multi-level in order to account for the extraordinary impact of the international situation -- conquest, Allied occupation, and the rise of East-West tensions -- upon the formation of the political systems at the national and lower levels. The German division and the formation of a Western rump state cannot be explained any other way. And we cannot ignore the significance of occupation policies and of a kind of symbiosis between the occupation and the new German elites in the formation of the postwar systems either. In the In the French and Italian cases, the international impact seems

smaller at the outset although the actual Liberation could not have succeeded without the Allied landings and campaigns to drive out the Germans. As soon as the Cold War is replicated domestically by sharp left-right polarization from 1947 and a permanent opposition role for the Communists, clearly the international situa- once more casts its shadow. Later French developments also reflect north-south tensions in the form of the decolonization of Indochina and Algeria.[47]

An adequate model of transition also has to be pluralistic to account for the development and change of different groups as well as for the evident elements of continuity we have pinpointed. It also has to be ready to distinguish different stages and their predominant concerns since the preoccupations of liberation and purges, crucial as they may be at the time, soon run their course and hardly seem to carry over into the serious business of the organizational phase. This latter stage appears to be the one that really set the continental postwar democracies on their course: Here the most basic decisions were those making for the future political alignments even if this stage opened with all-party or grand coalitions -- or patterns of Communist cooperation with DeGasperi's Christian Democrats. Such organizational consensus only sets the stage for the competition to come. The party and interest group systems of the future were also established at this point while new constitutions and electoral laws laid down the rules of the game for the foreseeable future.

At the same time, factors of timing appear to play a particularly important role during the organizational stage. Certain international influences, such as occupations or external pressures and conspiracies have a crucial impact only at the beginning and then, as the political structure jells and the domestic positions become more entrenched, progressively less. In the end, the new system exhibits a stability and autonomy of its own that increase its immunity to outside manipulation, which is not to say that it can ever be independent of the great powers and other conflicts

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[47]A model of transition that accounts for international factors could also be applied better to the transition of ex-colonies or

on the international scene. In some cases, as with the Federal Republic, the levels may also be sorted out only gradually over time, as the occupation powers would permit: first the local and Länder levels, then the bizonal and federal levels, and in 1954/1955 at last, the level of external sovereignty, after commitments had been made tying the Federal Republic to European integration and the Western alliance. This gradual approach calls to mind the British method of permitting a former colony to become a self-governing commonwealth in the British Commonwealth, and eventually to have the option of going its own way altogether. In this case, however, the presence of a Soviet threat and the pivotal geographic locations of both West and East Germany played a major role of limiting the options of all the players, both occupying powers and the occupied. If there had not been a rising Soviet threat, or if had not been so perceived, the transition might have taken a rather different path.

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or of Third World dictatorships to liberal democracy. Colonial or neo-colonialist interest, economic or political dependency, and East-West rivalries or regional hegemonic influences could all be considered and weighed appropriately.