

The Federal Republic of Germany and the first Indochina War
(1946-1954)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the first Indochina War

The August Revolution (Vietnamese: *Cách mạng Tháng Tám*) is regarded as the greatest revolution in contemporary Vietnamese history. The proclamation of the independence of Vietnam by Ho Chi Minh on 2 September 1945 marked the beginning of the end of colonial rule, under which the French had simultaneously supported the survival of the ruling classes of the old Vietnamese monarchy. However, France did not recognize the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the Vietnamese sovereignty that President Ho Chi Minh and his Vietminh supporters had declared.¹ As a result, fighting soon broke out between the Vietminh and the French troops. For France, of course, the position in Indochina² was essential to regain and occupy the status of a great power as France's prestige was seriously tested during World War II (WW II) and lost by the collaboration of the Vichy government with Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1944. In the first part of WW II, Germany and Japan achieved successes. Consequently, France lost control over its colonial territories; in some cases, opposing French military forces, i.e., Vichy France³ and Free France,⁴ even fought over the control of them. After the liberation of Paris and France as a whole in 1944, the socio-economic condition was relatively unstable and weak. This explains why France decided to return to Indochina after 1945. Regaining former

¹ One of the post-war aims of the French government was to re-establish a measure of colonial rule in Vietnam and Indochina. Britain's military had also been ordered not to allow France to reclaim sovereignty in Vietnam.

² The term Indochina originally referred to French Indochina, which included the current states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In current use, it applies largely to a geographic region, rather than a political area.

³ Vichy France was established after France had surrendered to Germany on 22 June 1940 and took its name from the government's administrative centre in Vichy, central France.

⁴ French partisans in WW II who decided to continue fighting against the forces of the Axis powers after the surrender of France and subsequent German occupation and, in the case of Vichy France, collaboration with the Germans.

colonial possessions was considered one of the best strategies to rescue the country's traditional prestige.



Picture 1: Ho Chi Minh declares the birth of the DRV
on 2 September 1945.

After the Japanese were defeated in WW II in August 1945, France had many reasons for seeking to re-establish its former colonial rule in Indochina. However, it ultimately failed in the nine-year conflict of the first Indochina War.⁵ French enterprises were eager to recover their interests in these colonial countries. Prior to 1940, the Michelin Tire and Rubber Co., for instance, had owned huge rubber plantations in Vietnam. Some other French companies had profited from deposits of manganese, bauxite and other natural minerals. Substantial off-shore petroleum and natural gas reserves had scarcely been tapped. The hope of regaining the lost national prestige was probably even more important than the prospect of economic gain. France had been left humiliated by its quick defeat in WW II. Therefore, restoring the empire was seen as an essential contribution to

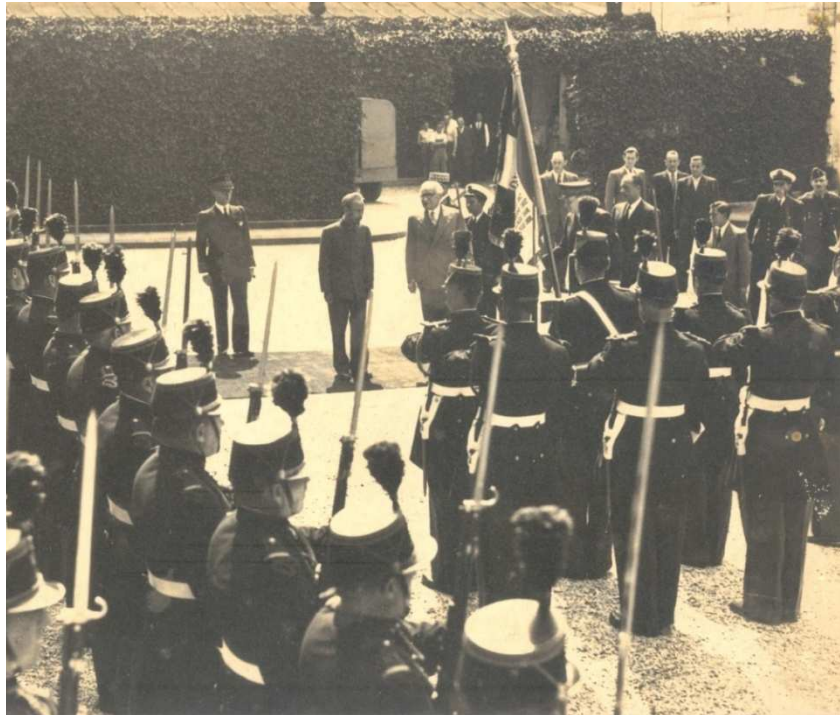
⁵ The conflict between France and Vietnam can be traced back to 1885, when France colonized Vietnam and divided it into three separate administrative areas: Cochinchina, Annam and Tonkin. Vietnamese resistance to French colonial rule was immediate and constant.

France as a great European power.⁶ As a result, returning to former colonial possession of Indochina could be seen as one of France's major political goals. However, the attempts of France (as well as Britain) were undermined by the emerging decolonization trends after WW II. Colonized nations all over the world considered the outcome of WW II as a significant chance for them to strive for independence from their foreign rulers. After a series of negotiation efforts between Vietnam and France in spring and autumn 1946,⁷ the first Indochina War was finally declared on 19 December by the Vietminh that year. However, as the war escalated year after year, French public opinion continued moving against the war.⁸

⁶ Robin W. Winks and John E. Talbott, *Europe 1945 to the present*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 29.

⁷ The French and the Vietminh attempted to negotiate a political settlement in Dalat, Vietnam in April and May 1946, but negotiations failed. The two parties were unable to agree to a definition of Vietnamese independence. Further negotiations failed also at the Fontainebleau Conference of July and August 1946. As in Dalat, an obstacle at Fontainebleau was the question of Vietnamese integrity, of reuniting Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina into one nation.

⁸ There were four main reasons for this: (1) by 1952, 90,000 French troops had been killed, wounded or captured; (2) France was attempting to build up her economy after the devastation of WW II, and the cost of war in Indochina had so far been twice what they had received from the United States (U.S.) under the Marshall Plan; (3) the war had lasted seven years and there was still no sign of an outright French victory; (4) a growing number of people in France had reached the conclusion that their country did not have any moral justification for being in Vietnam.



1833-a374

Picture 2: Ho Chi Minh attends a party at the palace of France's Foreign Minister of the provisional government Georges Bidault in July 1946.

Within the context of the emerging Cold War in Europe in the second half of the 1940s and also the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the Indochina War was gradually internationalized, with the indirect involvement of the leading powers viz. the Western bloc, the U.S., the Soviet Union (SU) and Red China. From this point on, the nature of the war shifted from a colonial war to one aimed at preventing communist expansion in Asia. There continued to be a state of political conflict, military tension, proxy wars, and economic competition between the communist countries (the SU and its satellite states and allies) and the powers of the Western world (the U.S. and its allies). For the Americans, they were convinced by the "Domino theory" that if Indochina was lost, the remaining non-communist countries in Asia would fall as well. More importantly, if there were no effective counter-measurements, both Suez and Africa would soon become communist.

Simultaneously, France as a medium-sized power in Europe was being seriously criticized by its Western allies for its weakness of political and defense

determination on the continent. Also, France had to honor its pledges sealed in the transatlantic community. Additionally, the American ideas on the future West German rearmament troubled France very much as a result of its weak position in Europe. The demands of the Indochina War meant that France could not have a military presence both in its home continent and Indochina. Thus, it had to reluctantly accept the German rearmament idea. In a conference on 28 May 1952 between Britain, the U.S. and France, the French President, Antoine Pinay, emphasized to his counterparts the very close connection between Indochina and the European Defense Community (EDC).⁹ He insisted that France was fighting in Asia to protect the interests of the free world. It was therefore unfair that France was being criticized for its light contribution to the European common effort to prevent any threat from the SU. France calculated that in the framework of the transatlantic community, not only the U.S. and Britain, but also other state members must realize the international nature of the Indochina War. Their role and actions in that war must be clearly shown. In other words, Indochina was used more or less as a playing card for France to bargain with other superpowers for pursuing its own colonial interests.

This clearly indicated the decline of France's political position in post-war Europe in the context of remarkable changes in the continent as well as the world. A series of world events occurred between late 1949 and early 1950 which fundamentally changed the international system. The Cold War escalated and reached its peak marked by the Korean War in June 1950 – “a Hot War inside a Cold War” - adding to the event in China with the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) one year earlier. After 1950, the SU, the PRC and dozens of countries in the communist bloc diplomatically recognized the government of Vietnam and started assisting Vietnam in its fight against the French

⁹ In order to respond to the American demand for West German rearmament, in 1950 René Pleven, French Minister of Defense proposed a defense project under which together with existing members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), West Germany could be rearmed but under the control of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's institution (NATO).

imperialists.¹⁰ In the context of the Cold War, France considered the war against the Vietminh a part of a long-term campaign against communism which was seen as one of the most important policies of the U.S. in its bid to prevent the spread of communism in South-east Asia.

Based on those arguments, France requested political, military and financial support from the U.S. As early as 1950, when France had granted the Associated States of Indochina a largely fictitious independence, the U.S. quickly recognized those states and began sending military aid to Indochina, or, to be more specific, to the French in Indochina. All U.S. aid, from beginning to end, went only to the French, who used it as they saw fit. This was made possible by the Mutual Defense Assistance Act passed toward the end of 1949, which permitted the president to spend up to \$75 million in military aid in “the general area of China”. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. announced that it was going to increase its military aid and in September, a MAAG¹¹ for Indochina was set up. The outbreak of the Korean War had led Truman to accelerate the delivery of aid, with the result that large quantities of weapons and equipment began flowing into French hands. Also, with the recognition of the Bao Dai government, the U.S. raised its financial support to a maximum in 1954 with 2.2 billion US dollars,

¹⁰ In spite of Ho Chi Minh’s appeal for help, the SU urged that the PRC should directly back the DRV’s resistance against the French colonialists as China was closer to Indochina in geographical terms; thus, the PRC sent its military advisers to Indochina and helped the Vietminh to organize military forces.

¹¹ Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) is a designation for American military advisers sent to assist in the training of conventional armed forces in Third World countries. In September 1950, U.S. President Harry Truman sent the MAAG to Vietnam to assist the French in the first Indochina War. The President claimed they were not sent as combat troops, but to supervise the use of \$10 million worth of U.S. military equipment to support the French in their effort to fight the Vietminh forces. By 1953, aid increased dramatically to \$350 million to replace old military equipment owned by the French.

which amounted to approximately 80% of the total financial costs of the war efforts in between 1950-1954.¹²

1.2. Germany and France under post-war reconstruction

It is undisputed that post-war Europe had many difficulties to deal with in reconstructing its economic and political structures. Under these circumstances, Germany and France also sought to achieve their individual goals by defining and implementing their own strategies in different ways. Turning to our main discussion on Germany's political and economic situation within the above context, the main battlefield of the recently ended war in Europe was now under reconstruction. After the unconditional surrender of the army of Nazi Germany and in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement, Germany was divided into four occupational zones. Large territories in East Germany were ceded to Poland and the SU. Germany was severely damaged by the war; millions had died or become homeless. Millions of German soldiers were in captivity, and the prestige of the nation was severely broken by the atrocities and war crimes of Nazi regime. In the Potsdam Agreement, the allies agreed on the political and economic principles that were to govern the treatment of Germany in the initial control period.¹³

Regarding the crucial task of economic recovery, West Germany was far more successful. Thanks to the Marshall Plan, West Germany gradually recovered its economy and, as Robin W. Winks and John E. Talbott point out, "the West German post-war recovery was the most remarkable of all. The wartime destruction of much of Germany's industrial plant had paradoxically proved beneficial; the new plant was built with the latest technological equipment. The

¹² Alfred Grosser, *The Western Alliance, European – American Relations since 1945*, New York, Continuum, 1980, pp. 131-132. See also: Irwin Wall, *The United States and the Making of Post-War France*, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

¹³ The political principles were to democratize and treat Germany as a single unit. The principles aimed at disarmament, demilitarization and the elimination of all Nazi influence. The economic principles were to reduce or destroy all civilian heavy-industry with war-potential, such as shipbuilding, machine production and chemical factories and to restructure the German economy towards agriculture and light-industry.

Allied High Commission gradually abolished control over German industry, save for atomic energy and certain military restrictions. It provided economic aid and scaled down pre-war German debts. By the early 1950s, West Germany had a favourable balance of trade and a rate of industrial growth as high as 10 percent a year. The West German gross national product rose from 23 billion USD in 1950 to 103 billion USD in 1964, with no serious inflation.”¹⁴ Germany’s historical past, such as the previous world wars, the Holocaust, etc. still burdened the nation. Germany had no other choice than learning from the past. This helped West Germany rapidly regain its prestige and successfully transform into a democratic and prosperous country. This would be done only by anchoring the federal state in the Western community.

France was not able to achieve its objectives on the Indochina battlefield as easily as it could prior to 1945 because the global and regional situation after 1945 contrasted sharply to that prior to 1940.¹⁵ Liberation movements emerged all over South and South-east Asia. If France was to control Indochina again it would have to adapt its strategy to the emerging new world order after the war. Nevertheless, France failed in this perspective as it mainly focused its attempt to regain control on a military solution. If we compare the goals of France and West Germany after WW II, we can see that both countries had the same goals. They were trying to regain their position within Europe as well as outside Europe but they acted differently. France tried to re-control its colonial possessions, West Germany instead concentrated on economic re-construction and a close alliance with the U.S. But the question is whether or not both countries need reconciliation after 1945. Of course, they did. This is because both of them knew the deep importance of their roles in Europe. Without the conciliation between the two countries, there was no strong Western Europe to develop economically and to protect itself against the threat of a possible Soviet attack. Consequently, they

¹⁴ Robin W. Winks and John E. Talbott, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁵ Roosevelt initially opposed any plan of France returning to Indochina after 1945 and once stated clearly that “France has had the country – thirty million inhabitants for nearly one hundred years, and the people are worse off than they were at the beginning.”

required common agreements and equal contributions to the organization of NATO.¹⁶

One could easily see that the more deeply France became involved in Indochina, the weaker its role in Europe might become. In response to the Indochina conflict, NATO also released a resolution agreed in the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in which it affirmed its support for French involvement.¹⁷ In a meeting of the Atlantic Council on 16 December 1952, the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, had to accept the difficulties that France was facing. Again, he stressed that its heavy burden in the Indochina War did not allow it to fully commit to the European defense community. Therefore, French policy towards West Germany must also be re-defined. However, France was already deeply involved in the war against the Vietminh in Indochina. The resolution on the conflict in Indochina, which was requested by France, was NATO's first official statement on an out-of-area conflict involving one of the allies. However, rather than leading to the financial or military support that French had sought the resolution was essentially a form of moral support. Additional requests from French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault¹⁸ for further military support did not result in any further response from NATO. Without assistance from NATO allies, French's struggle in Indochina eventually ended in May 1954 when a 16,200 strong French garrison was surrounded by the armed forces of the Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu.¹⁹

Previously, Paris had pledged 24 divisions to NATO, but it could muster only three divisions in West Germany and six in France. Meanwhile, they had to operate ten divisions which were pinned in Indochina. West German rearmament thus seemed to promise substantial savings for France and, above all, to strengthen a future NATO strategy in which not France but West Germany would

¹⁶ A military alliance established in 1949 by the U.S. and some Western European countries.

¹⁷ Jennifer Medcalf, *Going global or going nowhere? NATO's role in contemporary international Security*, Peter Lang, Germany, 2008, p. 38.

¹⁸ Georges Bidault (1899-1983) - French Foreign Minister during the Dien Bien Phu campaign.

¹⁹ Jennifer Medcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

stand on the first line of defense.²⁰ This issue put France in an unexpected situation. It weakened the French position in comparison with West Germany within the Western alliance. This made it even more difficult for France to play its role as a mediator and balancer; it stood in the way of political and economic recovery, straining economic and fiscal resources to the limit and causing domestic turmoil; furthermore, it damaged France's international image because of the organized brutality that accompanied French attempts to retain control over the colonial territories.²¹

Although French troops in Indochina were in certain ways much stronger than the Vietminh, they lost at the battlefield of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954. This marked the end of the French military adventure after a nine-year resistance from the General Giap and his Vietminh soldiers against the French colonial rulers mostly backed by the Americans. The final outcome of the first Indochina War was decided at the Geneva Conference started in late April 1954.²² Although there have been many discussions on the outcome of that conference which was held in the very complicated context of the world's politics at the time, one of the final conclusions was that it put a bitter end to the French colonizers in Indochina, where they had seen themselves as "civilizers" or the "mother country".

1.3. Purposes of study

The French then had to withdraw its military troops in Indochina and return to Europe where the process of European integration required much more efforts from Western countries, of course, including France. As long as we have known it, this continent has been a source of international conflicts, from the 18th until the mid 20th century, when it was the main hotbed of WW II. European integration²³ is a long and enduring process aiming to ensure security, peace and

²⁰ Wolfram F. Hanrieder and Gräme P. Auton, *The Foreign policies of West Germany, France and Britain*, Prentice Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980, p. 101.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²² Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars: 1945-1990*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1991, p. 41.

²³ At the end of WW II, the continental political climate favored unity in Western Europe, seen by many as an escape from the extreme forms of nationalism which had devastated the continent. In a

stability for the continent, even for the whole world. The process of European integration and unification is mainly discussed from the internal European perspective, as a way to overcome the traditional conflicts, animosities and atrocities of the several European civil wars of the last centuries. As a matter of fact, this required both France and West Germany's efforts if they wanted to create a balance of power in the context of the new world order after the disintegration of the European empires.

In line with the above-mentioned arguments, the following text will be a humble attempt to bring forward different approaches. The process of European integration during the Cold War will be linked with the process of decolonization systematically. Regrettably, most previous research has only focused on this issue from a European perspective. In fact, it is the inextricably tangled connection between these two issues that interests me as I am researching the problem from a Vietnamese point of view. In this study, it is not my intention to change the perspectives entirely, but I will systematically elaborate the crucial changes in Europe as well as the post-war world system. To clarify, the decolonization process will be used as a means to explore the new interactions and the modifications of the "world entangled". Within those developments, the inter-relations and inter-connection between decolonization and European integration must be seen as one the most important issues. Therefore, the first Indochina War will serve as an example of outstanding importance, as the battle of Dien Bien Phu not only signified the downfall of the French colonial empire in Asia by the emergence of nationalism on the one hand, but with the Vietnamese victory a new interpretation of the contemporary changes emerged on the other. It cannot be denied that the victory of Vietnam became a national symbol to those colonial countries which gained their independence from France. Moreover, the outcomes of the first Indochina War did not only influence the regional system of states, but

speech delivered on 19 September 1946 at the University of Zürich, Switzerland, Winston Churchill postulated a "United States of Europe". The same speech however contains remarks, less often quoted, which make it clear that Churchill did not see Britain as being part of this "United States of Europe". See also: Winston Churchill, *Speech to the Academic Youth*, Zürich, Switzerland, 1946.

the balance of power in South-east Asia as well. French decolonization in Indochina played an important role in the process of European integration, in which Franco - German cooperation was seen as a major catalyst to speed up the process, along with other steps towards decolonization such as the Suez crisis²⁴ and the war in Algeria, etc.

With the military defeat in Indochina, once again, France lost prestige on the international stage. Dien Bien Phu in Indochina was soon followed by a series of revolutionary uprisings in Algeria in November 1954 which led to the collapse of the French Fourth Republic later. Dien Bien Phu did not end the fighting in Indochina, but it destroyed the last vestiges of French determination to continue the war.²⁵ As a result, France was forced to give the right of “self-determination” to other countries such as Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, Guinea in 1958, etc. France was again proved to be no longer a great power in Europe as well as in the world. The country’s defeat in Indochina and Algeria should not be considered only the failure of France’s colonial ambitions but also the great victory of those nations who had been fighting for the right of “self-determination” in the modern world. In the late 1950s, we witnessed the weakness and the chain collapse of the French colonial empire all over the world. Thus, there was no better option for France than to return to the European stage in which France might be able to settle its own domestic affairs. To develop its economy and play a leading role in the European integration process, France could not ignore the conciliation with West Germany in many fields. As a result, European integration was believed to be the best way for France to recover its international prestige.

During and after the first Indochina War, France lost a lot of opportunities in Europe to recover both in economics and politics. France could by no means prevent West Germany from its strong developments in economics and politics, more importantly - from its rearmament with the prolific support of the U.S. The

²⁴ Two years later, the Suez crisis provided a further example of conflict caused by and out-of area issue. See also: Jennifer Medcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

²⁵ Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its impact: a comparative approach to the end of the colonial empires*, Oxford, 2008, p. 111.

ECSC project aimed to replace allied control over the Ruhr coal and steel industries with the ECSC, in which West Germany had been able to participate and act as an equal and active member since 1950. The ECSC in reality was considered the first step towards European integration because it laid the foundation stone for the further process of European unification resulting in future economic and political organizations like the European Economic Community (EEC) – later known as the European Community and the current European Union.

By joining NATO in 1955, West Germany became more equal with other Western allies. On encountering the possible threat of the SU from the East during the Cold War, West Germany sought its national security without hesitation in re-integration into Western Europe. In the meantime, France sought its re-establishment as a great nation. After the war, Franco-German cooperation was fundamentally based on the Élysée Treaty signed by Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer on 22 January 1963. The treaty contained a number of agreements such as joint cooperation in foreign policy, economic, military integration and educational exchange. This officially marked the turning point of the bilateral relations between the two former enemies on the one hand, and achieved a great deal in initial European integration as well as a stronger Franco-German co-position in transatlantic relations on the other.

From the above arguments, the main aim of my research entitled “*The Federal Republic of Germany and the first Indochina War (1946 – 1954)*” is to seek and analyze the interactions between the French colonial war in Indochina and Germany. For Vietnam, this war was the decisive step towards independence; for Germany it marked together with other events of the Cold War the beginning of specific characteristics of politics and political interpretations in the very important historical period of the 1950s. In this thesis, I will try to interpret some postcolonial theories in order to explain the inter-connections between colonialism and decolonization process.

In Europe, especially in France in the 1950s onwards, intellectuals started studying what would be later better known as “postcolonial theory”. One of the

main issues on which postcolonial theory focuses is the situation of the former European colonies after being decolonized since the second half of the 20th century. Accordingly, how they readdress and overcome the political and cultural legacies of the colonial period has been largely debated. Postcolonial theory formulated in the second half of the 20th century thus engages scholars' consciousness about the relationship between politics and culture.²⁶ Historically, "postcolonial" was first used as an adjective by Western historians after WW II. It simply indicated the period when colonized countries were liberated. However, researchers influenced by Marxism employed this word as a term signifying the colonial legacies with which decolonized countries had to deal. Under that framework, postcolonial relations among Vietnam and its former "mother country" France and West Germany could be considered a new approach in postcolonial studies.²⁷

In line with postcolonial theory studies, since the 1990s the so-called "entangled history" also emerged as an indispensable discipline. Theoretically, studying the "entangled history" will bring to light the interesting interdependence amongst countries in one region, e.g., Germany and France because of their long and complicated history. Or it could make visible interregional relations between France and Indochina as France had long considered itself the "mother country" of the latter. It could also illuminate the interrelation between far distant regions such as West Germany and Indochina (Vietnam) and many other cases. We may say that the "entangled history" concentrates not only on the influences of the decolonization process on colonized peoples but also on the impacts of that development on the related countries. Scholars chose to shift their central researches on colonial history from a European perspective to a periphery

²⁶ Douglas Robinson, *Translation and empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained*, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing, 2007, pp. 13-14.

²⁷ Some theorists with their most read works can be named: Frantz Fanon with *Black Skin and White Masks* (1952), Aimé Fernand David Césaire with *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre with *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) and Albert Memmi with *Der Kolonisator und der Kolonisierte: zwei Portraits* (1980). See also: Ato Quayson, *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice, or Process*, Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

approach linked with related areas like Asia, and my research can be seen as an example of this. Consequently, the entanglement of the history of the above-mentioned countries through the last part of the 20th century has recently attracted scholars in diverse continents and from different disciplines. Any outcome of that research will contribute to a better and deeper understanding of colonial history.²⁸

I take the French Indochina War and its results as a case study to understand the entanglement or the interrelations between a colonial war, which became internationalized, and the relation between France and Germany after WWII. That helps me understand how in globalized world Asian matters became European ones, and how the “colonial periphery” deeply influenced the colonial metropolises. That also explains why I am looking for a better understanding of the process of decolonization and European integration at the same time, and my thesis is that the breakdown of the colonial empires deeply influenced the relations between the European powers.

In my thesis, I will try to explain the complicated postcolonial theory from which the world is understood as entangled. There is only One World, and from Ushaia to Tokio everything is interrelated and interconnected, and only this approach may help us to better understand what occurred after WW II in particular. And the issue of the post-war era was not only decolonization of the colonies, but also of the colonizers. The latter were not only stripped from their colonial possessions but also from their external assets to control their own societies. Therefore, colonialism does not only create injustice in the colonies but also in the colonizing countries.

A large number of publications dealing with the Franco-Vietnam War before 1960 are published in French. Some of them can be named such as: *Les rescapés de l'enfer. Les héros de Dien Bien Phu*, by Lucien Bornert, Paris, Nouv. Presses Mondiales, 1954; *Mission de la France en Asie*, by Edouard Frederic-Dupont, Paris, France-Empire, 1956; *Deux actes du drame indochinois, Hanoi*,

²⁸ See more: Alec G. Hargreaves (Hrsg.), *Memory, empire, and postcolonialism: legacies of French colonialism*, Lexington Books, 2005.

juin 1940. *DBP 1954*, Paris, Plon, 1959, by General Georges Catroux; *La fin d'une guerre*, by Philippe Devillers and Jean Lacouture, 1954, Paris, Seuil, 1960.²⁹ West Germany's research discussed the impacts of the second Vietnam War on the formation of a leftist movement in the Old Federal Republic. Their studies after 1975 mainly focused on Vietnamese refugees (boat-people) who emigrated to West Germany after the Vietnam War.³⁰ Although there have been thousands of historical works on the Indochina wars, many of them addressed mainly the second Indochina War (or the American war in Vietnam). The others do not coincide with the matter and time period proposed in my study. More importantly, many researchers have recently argued that the role of colonialism together with the decolonization process "has long been neglected by traditional scholarship on Cold War diplomatic history."³¹ It is also the case that we have not found any similar studies in Vietnam so far.

1.4. Sources

In my study, some typical methods of historical science, e.g., the interpretation of printed documents and memoirs, etc., will be used to trace primary sources and other evidence to research and then to write histories in the form of accounts of the past. The study aims to rely on several primary as well as secondary sources of information, which implies a theoretical basis to be

²⁹ For more sources on the Franco-Vietminh War in French language, see also: Thùy Trường, *Một số tư liệu về cuộc chiến tranh Pháp-Việt 1946-1954 qua cuốn sách "Cuộc chiến tranh Pháp Đông Dương" của Alain Ruscio* (Some sources on the the Franco-Vietminh War 1946-1954 through the book "La guerre française d'Indochine" by Alain Ruscio), *Journal of Historical Research*, vol 3, 2004, pp. 62-67.

³⁰ Also, after 1975 thousands of Northern Vietnamese were sent to East Germany according to agreements of the two communist states. They worked there as "guest workers" until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 when many of them moved to the Western part of Germany seeking for a better life.

³¹ *Western Integration, German Unification, and the Cold War: The Adenauer Era in Perspective*, see: <http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/039/136.pdf> (online accessed on 17 December 2011).

complemented with the help of evidential grounding and historical study methods. Primary sources may be used to settle discrepancies found in secondary sources or to conduct original research on a topic of interest. Archival work in both German and Vietnamese archives and libraries brought me a sea of information, i.e., printed documents, memoirs and newspapers, etc. Unmistakably, those primary sources must be carefully examined before use in order to determine the reliability of the evidence they contain.

Also, I used secondary sources as a significant addition to the primary ones. These sources are comprised of books and papers published in English, German and Vietnamese. These two main types of source material were studied using systematic, comparative methods. A systematic method was applied during my research when I had to collect all kind of materials and arrange them in appropriate categories. When we have more than one source related to the topic then the comparative method was applied. This method aims to determine the most reliable sources which are most appropriate for use in the dissertation. In some cases, an interview method was used in my thesis to bring more insights into the issues involved. Last but not least, the application of deductive methods was also brought into my study. Deductive method implies moving from the more general to the more specific. One begins by thinking up a finding accompanied by a narrowing down into more specific hypotheses that one can test. Further observations and interpretations are collected to address the hypotheses.

1.5. Structure of the research

During my research process, using the available historical sources such as historical documents, books, newspapers, mass and media programs, etc. collected from German and Vietnamese archives and libraries, I have structured my writing in seven chapters as follows:

The first chapter is devoted mainly to drawing a historical overview of Vietnam, West Germany, and France after WW II within the background of the emergence of the Cold War, the establishment of the two German states, the birth of the PRC and the Korean War. Also, the reason why France sought to return to

its former colony of Indochina was briefly discussed. It is also in this chapter that the main purposes of the thesis, the research methodology, the structure and the scientific sources are discussed.

In Chapter 2, an overview of Vietnamese history in the period from 1945 to 1954 will be given. In this part, the position and role of Vietnam and Indochina in Asian and global politics will be critically investigated. Also, the attitudes and aims of the great powers (the U.S., the SU and Britain) and Red China (since 1949) towards the first Indochina War will be also briefly analyzed. The event of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 shall be fully examined, along with its impact on the world outside Asia and South-east Asia, especially on France and Europe as a factor leading to the end of French colonization in Indochina.

Chapter 3 will be focused on the historical, political and social context of Germany and France after WW II. This is essential for the following chapters as it will elucidate the picture of those countries. Both countries shared a common sense that they were totally destroyed by the severe war just ended. They targeted to rescue their positions in Europe. The western zones of Germany that were a consequence of the allies' occupational policy were merged into the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. While the ruling *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (CDU) party chose to integrate the country into the West to develop its economy and gradually regain its sovereignty, others remained ambivalent or in opposition to this policy like the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) which favored unification first.³² Headed by the Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, West Germany anchored itself very closely to the West and gained much profit by being a key member of the ECSC in 1952 and a nearly full member of NATO in 1955, which caused a highly controversial political process. The controversy came from diverse reasons rooted both inside and outside West Germany. On the one hand, Germany's vivid history under the Hitler regime did

³² Integration into the West was a process which took many years. For more details on West Germany's integration process into the West, see more: Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen*, Bd. 2: *Deutsche Geschichte vom "Dritten Reich" bis zur Wiedervereinigung*, C.H. Beck Verlag, 2010.

not allow it to be involved in any future aggressions which could be used as a means for remilitarization; the emerging protest movements on West German soil were as expression of the public reaction to a rearmed West Germany which in their eyes could harm the possibility of a reunited Germany in the near future; and the requirement for a Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) amendment. On the other hand, occurrences outside West Germany such as the decreasing tension between the SU and the Western countries after the death of Stalin in 1953, created space for this hotly debated issue. However, being a member of NATO brought West Germany its final final step in being integrated into the Western defense system and almost full sovereignty.

At the same time, France opted to regain its former colony in Indochina in order to rescue its traditional prestige. This resulted in its fragile commitment in both European economy and security. Its deep involvement abroad made France a less significant player in the European economic and military arena. In addition, the fall of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 marked a turning point in French military history as well as political life as it no longer retained a “la Grande Nation” in Europe. The two rivals were now in two different stages of development but shared mutual and multiple common interests in Europe.

In Chapter 4 we will discover the attitudes of the Federal Republic towards the first Indochina War. In the first phase of the first Indochina War, there is little evidence of the attitudes or engagement of West Germany towards it, because from 1946 to 1949, the Western part of Germany had to cope with so many social and political issues of its own post-war condition. The problems of Germany were hunger, destruction, moral decline and an extreme international isolation due to the war crimes of the Hitler regime. The escalation of the first Indochina War in which some superpowers were involved, concerned West Germany in certain ways. This is because the republic saw its interests could be more or less influenced by the war. Together with the outbreak of the Korean War, West Germany also feared the possibility of a World War III. Therefore, at the very beginning, West Germany took a position of standing not completely outside the

war.³³ In reality, the Federal Republic could not imagine a way in which a war in the Far East could influence its political and social life. In this chapter, the positions of other political parties and social organizations in West Germany towards the conflict in Indochina will be also explored. Taken in conjunction with the official gestures of the Adenauer government, these views reflect a multifaceted politics of post-war Germany, at least in the Western part.

The views of the West German public on the first Indochina War will be mentioned in Chapter 5. In the first half of the 1950s, the on-going progress of the Indochina battlefield caused a stir on the West German political stage and in the public view due to the country's direct and indirect involvement in the war. As a result, with a focus on national security, West German leaders and the public would react differently towards the conflict. The problem that most troubled the West German public was the issue of German minors siding and fighting for French colonial interests in Indochina. The official attitude of West Germany towards the war was mainly observed by the two opposing political parties: the CDU and the SPD. It should be added that the fate of German minors fighting in the French Foreign Legion (FFL) in Indochina received huge media attention during this time. Daily and weekly newspapers, radio programs, memoirs, etc. discussed the matter widely and openly. More specifically, the West German press became more heated when the escalation of the conflict coincided with the political parties' campaigns for the second term of the federal parliament (Bundestag). In this way, the engagement of Germans in a war sped up the German debate on rearmament and the neutralist versus integration into the West options.

Chapter 6 will deal with the impact of French decolonization in Indochina and European decolonization in Asia from a broader perspective because the decolonization movement forced European colonial powers to re-define their positions in the post-colonial era. The process of decolonization did not directly affect West Germany as the historical colonies of Germany ended directly after

³³ Volker Berresheim, *35 Jahre Indochinapolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Verbund Stiftung Deutsches Übersee Institut, 1985, S. 14.

WW I. The decolonization process in Asia in the late 1940s and in Africa in the 1950s and early 1960s required former colonial powers and West Germany to formulate their strategic policy towards the African and Asian newly independent countries, or the Third World. Consequently, the first Indochina War and the French decolonization that came of it provided the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) with some crucial experiences and lessons, primarily in formulating their foreign policy in the new context of a new world order. The Franco-German rapprochement was marked by the Élysée Treaty in 1963. Naturally, the first Indochina War did not alone influence European integration, but together with other aspects that came at the same time, such as the European unification movement, American influence, the Soviet threat, the idea of controlling key industries internationally, etc., it did have a great impact on the movement. Thus, the first Indochina War was seen as one of the most important catalysts in speeding up that process. Last but not least, the echoes of the first Indochina War, alongside other events inside and outside Europe, such as West German rearmament in the 1950s and 1960s, were also fundamental reasons for the emergence of the peace movements which would go on to play a crucial role in West German political history in the latter half of the 1960s and the decades that followed.

Chapter 7 summarizes the outcome of the research by pointing out that most previous research in this area focused mainly on the connection between the first Indochina War and France and some others, but not West Germany. Therefore, this study will make an attempt to fill this gap in the overall body of research. One can say that the history of decolonization in the 20th century should be linked with other important occurrences like the European integration movement, in which the triangle relations of the first Indochina War, France and West Germany might serve as an interesting case study. This relationship will be discussed again in detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

VIETNAM FROM 1945 TO 1954 AND THE IMPACTS OF THE DECOLONIZATION IN INDOCHINA ON FRANCE

2.1. Vietnam from 1945 to 1954

The August Revolution succeeded with the Declaration of Independence of Vietnam on 2 September 1945. This was the outcome of the previous long preparations led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). The most remarkable note was that Vietnam had gained independence from having been a colony ruled by the French and then the Japanese. However, Vietnam remained important to the French in spite of the fact that worldwide decolonization trends became more evident after 1945. In other words, the French found themselves still interested in Indochina. The question is whether France could have kept a position in Indochina, or the situation was such that any path to reform was blocked? If so, why there was no way back to a (reformed) path? In this chapter, I will attempt to study these issues.

2.1.1. *Historical background*

The most problematic issue after the independence declaration was that, while trying to build a post-colonial state and economy based on almost nothing, the new government had to face post-war occupation by the Guomintang in the North and British military forces in the South. According to the Potsdam Agreement, these forces were engaged in missions to obtain the Japanese surrender. In the meantime, Vietnam faced many enemies who aimed to pursue different objectives. In order to limit protests from its enemies as well as misunderstandings from the world outside, in November 1945, the Indochinese Communist Party was officially disbanded.³⁴ In fact, the party continued to

³⁴ This move, in fact, was an action taken by the party leaders to deceive outsiders into believing that the communists would have no connections with the newly-formed government. “Hội nghiên cứu chủ nghĩa Mác ở Đông Dương” (*Association for Marxism Study in Indochina*) was another name of the party. In 1951, the party came to act publicly again under the new label of the

operate in clandestine fashion. By doing this, the newly-born republic succeeded in avoiding many enemies at once so that the Vietnamese people had enough time to build the country and military forces to resist the French backed by the British in the South since the fall of 1945. The new regime had to confront an underdeveloped, war-ravaged economy and the results of a severe famine in the winter of 1944-1945.³⁵ Additionally, the Indochinese Bank was still controlled by the French. Chiang Kai-shek military occupation force introduced its own currency that made the situation more serious. That is because “Quan kim” and “Quốc tệ” - two old-fashioned type of currency were introduced by Chinese occupiers. This aimed to destroy the financial market of the new regime. In fact, they used that sort of money to purchase goods in the market through the imposition of an extremely unreasonable price system.

One more consequence of the French and Japanese occupation was that 95% of the population of Vietnam was illiterate, social problems and diseases were fairly common. To solve these problems the communist-ruled government chose to implement some short-term solutions to the economic and social issues.³⁶ Nevertheless, none of the Great Powers recognized the DRV as a legitimate state. In a report dated 28 October 1945 to High Commissioner D’Argenlieu, Pignon

Vietnamese Labor Party. For more, see also: Douglas Pike, *History of Vietnamese Communism 1925-1976*, Hoover Institution Press, 1978.

³⁵ In fact, after a *coup d’état* in Indochina on 9 March 1945, the Japanese declared the handover of “independence” to the Vietnamese. History professor Tran Trong Kim was appointed as Prime Minister of the “puppet regime” of the *Empire of Vietnam* (Đế quốc Việt Nam) from 17 April to 23 August 1945. After the surrender of the Japanese from mid August to early September 1945, there was no political force controlling Indochina, more specifically, it was a “power vacuum” period. See more: Phạm Hồng Tung, *Nội các Trần Trọng Kim – bản chất, vai trò và vị trí lịch sử (Tran Trong Kim’s cabinet – nature, historic role and position)*, National Political Publishing House, 2009.

³⁶ For instance, launching the social movements carried by Vietnamese people to help one another, encouraging cultivation and production with a “golden week” to collect 370 kgs of gold and 20 million VN dongs to found a fund named “Quỹ độc lập” (*Independent Foundation*), etc. In 1946, the Vietnamese bank was established and issued new Vietnamese banknotes. In addition, the CPV spearheaded drives to teach illiterate people “chữ quốc ngữ” (*the Romanized Vietnamese script*). Schools from primary to higher education level were also re-opened.

wrote, “the government of Vietnam was born in the context of no allies, no money and almost no weapons.”³⁷ Tracing this back to the point when Japan surrendered to the allies in August 1945, Ho Chi Minh and his Vietminh fellows realized that an appropriate chance for them arrived at the same time. They used the power vacuum to launch the August Revolution and proclaim independence. Immediately, Ho and his comrades formed a provisional government in which multiple political parties were engaged to legalize their active gesture in order to welcome the allies who came to take the Japanese surrender. A government prepared and established in such a short period indicated that it was only a wise tactic of Ho. Many say that Vietnam was totally isolated. It still existed as a *de facto* state, however. The most dangerous problem for the new-born state was the French objective to return to Vietnam.³⁸

2.1.2. Diplomatic strategy and efforts of Ho Chi Minh

The diplomatic program of the new government was first stated in Ho Chi Minh’s Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness...” On 3 October 1945, the newly established government of the DRV proclaimed its diplomatic policies, in which main goals of the state were clearly out-spoken. Alongside other tasks, diplomatic strategies were “to lead Vietnam to an entire and long-lasting independence”. In the announcement it also pledged to cooperate with the allies “to rebuild peace for the whole world”. The basic policies as applied to the main four subjects in international relations can be briefly summarized as follows:

³⁷ Nguyễn Đình Bin (Chief editor), *Ngoại giao Việt Nam 1945-2000 (Vietnam’s Diplomacy 1945-2000)*, National Political Publishing House, tr. 47.

³⁸ Prior to 1945, the term “Indochina” referred to five parts of the Indochinese peninsula including Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina, Cambodia and Laos. After the August Revolution, the CPV could actually only control Northern and Central parts of Vietnam. Meanwhile, the CPV in the South was not strong enough to master the new developments in the region. Thus, Cochinchina was still claimed as a French territory. This also explained why France chose to return to Cochinchina in September 1945 first when they attempted to regain control over the whole of Vietnam.

- To the world powers and allies which had been fighting against fascism: Vietnam would be very friendly and truthfully co-ordinate based on equal and helpful attitudes;
- To France: if French people living in Vietnam would respect Vietnam's independence then their lives and properties would be legally guaranteed; for de Gaulle's government, if they intended to re-occupy Vietnam, the Vietnamese people would fight against this at any price;
- To neighbors like China, Laos and Cambodia: the announcement stressed equal cooperation and friendship. The three Indochinese countries would develop side by side because they had economic relations;
- To other countries, the Vietnamese government was willing to be friendly, closely cooperating on an equal footing in order to support one another in the course of building and maintaining their independence.³⁹

With regards to the U.S., the new government tried to make contact with American representatives in Vietnam such as American Missions in Indochina, or some officers at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Ho Chi Minh took advantages of what Franklin D. Roosevelt had proclaimed on the issue of self-determination for colonial nations after WW II. This provides an explanation for why Ho Chi Minh sent many letters to the leaders of the Truman administration. However, as some newly declassified documents show, the Americans were not very much interested in Indochina as they had to concentrate on what was happening in Europe during the Cold War. Moreover, the U.S. refused contact with Ho Chi Minh because they were convinced that Ho Chi Minh was a communist rather than a nationalist. However, it was then clearer that the world was dominated by the U.S. and the SU after WW II. Initially, the U.S. had little interest in Vietnam and South-east Asia. Later on, the question of how to isolate communist movements in this region took on an increased importance. Their

³⁹ Nguyễn Phúc Luân, *Ngoại giao Việt Nam từ Việt Bắc đến Hiệp định Geneva (Vietnam's Diplomacy from Viet Bac to Geneva Agreement)*, People's Police Publishing House, tr. 39-40.

concerns were ultimately formed into the doctrine of containment which had been first stated in 1947 and domino theory thereafter.

On the other hand, Ho Chi Minh conducted many negotiations with French representatives in Hanoi on the unification of the entire country under the control of the DRV. However, the French attempted to maintain control of the South, which contained most of their economic interests. After many efforts, on 6 March 1946 the two sides signed a *Preliminary Accord*, in which the French recognized the DRV as a free state of the Indochinese Federation and an association of the French Union.⁴⁰ The Vietnamese pledged to maintain the French economic and cultural presence in the North, including 15,000 troops in this area to replace Japanese troops and protect French interests. A national referendum would be held to decide whether Cochinchina would rejoin the North and the centre in a reunited state or remain a separate French territory. Nonetheless, France did not seriously implement what it had agreed with Ho Chi Minh and postponed action in order to keep on negotiating with him. To illustrate Vietnamese good will, a parliament delegation led by Pham Van Dong⁴¹ paid an official visit to France from 25 April to 16 May 1946. In addition, another Vietnamese delegation headed by Nguyen Tuong Tam⁴² and a French delegation led by Max André joined a common preparatory conference in Dalat to discuss the main issues which would be discussed in France later on. But almost nothing was accomplished at the conference.

After that, Ho Chi Minh was invited to France to start the Fontainebleau Conference from 6 July to 10 September 1946 with the following agenda: the position of Vietnam in the French Union and its diplomatic relations with other

⁴⁰ One may know that the French Union was an association modelled by the British Commonwealth. This entity targeted to replace France's old colonial system and promote France's culture and interests within the member states.

⁴¹ Pham Van Dong (1906-2000), a close comrade of Ho Chi Minh, served as Prime Minister of the DRV (1955-1976) and Socialist Republic of Vietnam until his retirement in 1987.

⁴² Nguyen Tuong Tam (1905-1963), served in the government of the DRV as Minister of Foreign Affairs since March 1946. He was one of the leaders of the "Việt Nam Cách mạng Đồng minh hội - Việt Cách" (*League for the Revolution of Vietnam*), an opposing political party of the CPV.

countries; the organization of the Indochinese Union; the unification of the three *Kỳs* (Parts) of Vietnam; a referendum in Cochinchina Vietnam; some other economic and cultural issues; and a draft of a *Modus Vivendi*. Ultimately, the Fontainebleau Conference failed, as the French firmly maintained its imperial standpoint. Once again Vietnamese good will was shown as, shortly before leaving France for Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh and Moutet, a French representative, signed a *Modus Vivendi* on 14 September 1946. This *Modus Vivendi* stated some fundamental points on economic and cultural relations between the two nations and agreed a ceasefire in the South which was seen as a gesture of good will on the part of the new government. Both sides also promised to return to the negotiating table in early 1947.

This *Modus Vivendi*, however, did not satisfy several members in the cabinet, even some communists. To conciliate them, Ho Chi Minh explained that “we need peace to construct our country so we were forced to make concessions to keep that peace... If France really wants a war and we cannot bear any more, we will fight.”⁴³ In a word, the diplomatic policies of the new state were reasonably flexible, especially in harmonizing the two enemies at the same time. Many researchers agree that it was a sensible move for Ho Chi Minh to negotiate with France, and signing the two agreements was a great success. Ho Chi Minh chose to face France rather than China as his nation had experienced almost one thousand years living under the Chinese rule in the past. Once the Chinese were stationed in Vietnam it would not be easy for them to withdraw. But France was another case as it came from the West and Ho Chi Minh believed his government and army would be able to struggle against the French and win one day.⁴⁴

⁴³ Lê Mậu Hãn (Chief editor), *Đại cương lịch sử Việt Nam, tập 3 (General Introduction to Vietnamese History, vol. 3)*, Education Publishing House, tr. 43.

⁴⁴ Actually, in February 1946, according to the Sino-French Accord, the Chinese under Chiang Kai-shek had agreed to withdraw from North Vietnam and allow the French to return to Hanoi in exchange for French concessions in Shanghai and some other Chinese ports as well as the colony of Kwangchowan.

2.1.3. France's return to Indochina and the outbreak of the first Indochina War

Supported by the British military force, on 23 September 1945, “French soldiers and civilians ran amok, beating and detaining almost any Vietnamese they encountered in the streets. This provoked a severe backlash the following evening.”⁴⁵ Many discussions were carried out by related parties. However, after shelling the city of Haiphong in December 1946, the French re-enter Hanoi. It is important to note that even when WW II was still underway, General Charles de Gaulle had clearly shown his will to restore the French empire in Indochina. To the French people, de Gaulle represented a national hero and on colonial issues, de Gaulle still retained his imperial mind. De Gaulle aimed to regain control of French colonial territories in an effort to restore French Greatness in “achieving political and economic recovery and security, two other important post-war objectives.”⁴⁶ For many years, historians have conducted studies to investigate the reasons why France sought to regain control over Indochina after WW II. Different explanations have been given but most of them share the evaluations that France sought to regain Indochina to rescue its prestige and its empire.⁴⁷ One of the most decisive tools to achieve its goals was economic restoration. Prior to WW I, France had had many interests and profited from many of their investments.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Mark Philip Bradley, *Vietnam at war*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 44-45.

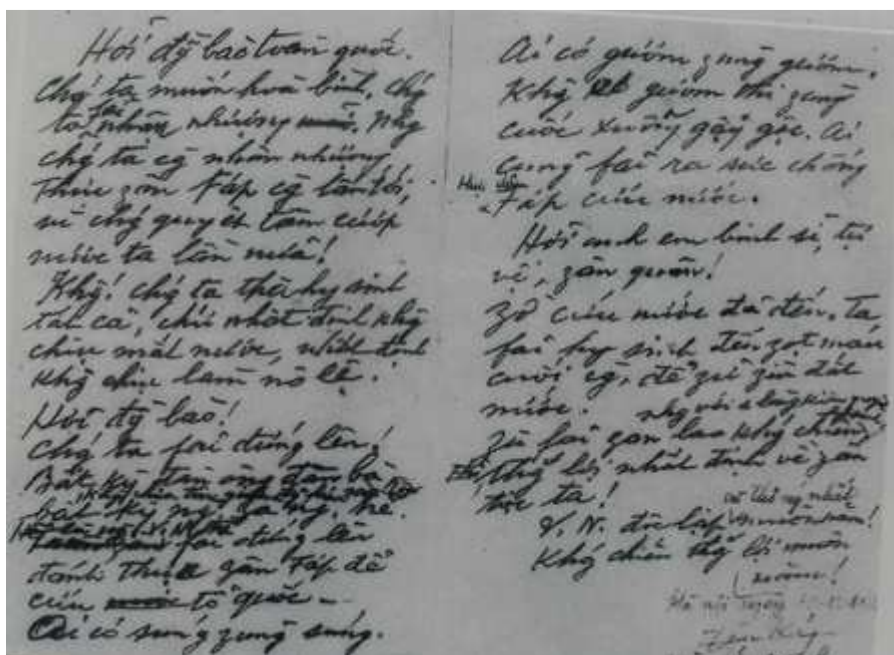
⁴⁶ Wolfram F. Hanrieder and Graeme P. Auton, *op.cit.*, p. 137.

⁴⁷ In this case, probably, de Gaulle was to follow what French traditional colonial expansion had been pursuing accordingly to Jules Ferry proclaimed decades before. See more at: www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1884ferry.asp, (online accessed on 29 June 2012).

⁴⁸ Robin W. Winks and John E. Talbott, *Europe 1945 to the present*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 29. The original reasons for the French invasion in Indochina were that French explorers and colonialists strongly believed that Vietnam was the “backdoor” to China; that the Mekong River and the Red River could lead them to Yunnan province in South China to expand France’s trade with China. In the end, they found that this approach was too dangerous and cut across treacherous terrain and therefore was definitely not a “backdoor” into China. Additionally, the victor of the Chinese communists led by Mao Tse-tung over Guomintang in 1949 seriously challenged French attempts to reach this region of South China.

Returning to the outbreak of the Franco-Vietminh conflict in the South, after 23 September 1945, Vietnamese people living in Saigon-Cholon as well as everywhere in the South stood up to fight against the French. Southern forces were soon supported by the North with hundreds of thousands of Northern youths registering to side with the Southern Vietnamese. Additionally, food and medicine were sent to the South for the emerging anti-French resistance. The entire year of 1946 witnessed the impotent efforts of Ho Chi Minh and his French partners on diplomatic issues. Finally, on 20 November 1946, armed clashes between Vietnamese and French military forces took place in the harbor city of Hai Phong and the Vietnamese-Chinese border province of Lang Son.

Although there were still negotiations between Vietnamese and French officials in early December 1946, no more positive results were reached. On 15 December 1946 Ho Chi Minh sent a telegraph to French Prime Minister Leon Blum restating what the two states had confirmed and asking for further relations with France. No response was received. More seriously, on 18 December 1946, French officials in Hanoi sent an ultimatum requesting the DRV to disarm and hand over the right of control over the city to the French within forty hours. On 19 December 1946 the Vietnamese made the decision to fight. At 20.30 the lights in Hanoi went out and the first Indochina War began. The war of resistance was not limited to the South but spread across the country. The newly born DRV was confronted with a decisive challenge. It was a war against a heavily armed imperialist power with far superior techniques and economics. In the evening of 19 December 1946, President Ho Chi Minh made an appeal to the nation.



Picture 3: President Ho’s Call for nationwide resistance against the French colonialists on 19 December 1946.

Alongside the on-going resistance against France, the new regime continued consolidating its political system, especially in the South. In order to widen the front for all Vietnamese people and to combat the French tactic of using Vietnamese forces to fight against other Vietnamese forces, the CPV established a new front called Mặt trận Liên Việt (*Lienviet Front*) - a new front uniting all Vietnamese regardless of who they were. Then, in 1951, the two fronts of Vietminh and Lienviet were merged into a single front called Lienviet.

The so-called “people’s war” as viewed by the communist leaders might be long-lasting and the Vietnamese resistance against France could mainly rely on their own and the support of the other mass organizations who were united under the Vietminh. This is because other peoples in the world had suffered a very severe war so they did not want to engage to any other wars. Triumph in Northern Vietnam in the fall and winter 1947 played an important role in the first phase of the resistance. French forces were almost defeated in the cities but French military forces still occupied some life-line transportation roads. However, they failed to destroy Vietnamese leading headquarters in Thai Nguyen. Then the French carried out a massive offensive in the fall of 1947 in order to destroy the

resistance's headquarters, block the Vietnamese-Chinese border line and even capture Ho Chi Minh and his high military command.⁴⁹ All moves aimed to gain a stronger power in military forces, then to form a new government led by Bao Dai, and finally to end the war. But in the end, France failed to manage this and it was forced to adjust its strategies away from a quick victory strategy. From 1948 to 1949 Vietnamese military forces promoted its guerrilla war at the back of the enemy. The main Vietnamese force was divided into smaller units to reach occupied zones to assist local guerrillas. Main forces and local guerrilla forces were getting stronger and stronger and ready for future offensives.

After the failure of the two arrangements with the French the government of Ho Chi Minh could find no way to negotiate with them and decided to fight. However, Ho Chi Minh always remained open to communication with French leaders in Paris or Hanoi over peace for Vietnam. From December 1946 to March 1947, he sent eight telegraphs and letters to the French government, parliament, and even to President Vincent Auriol to ask for an immediate peaceful settlement to avoid both nations from losing human life and money. He also requested to rebuild friendly and cooperative relations between the two nations.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, all these efforts did not bear fruit and the war continued to escalate.

From 1946 to the end of 1949, it was commonly accepted that Vietnam was partly isolated from world politics. Few other nations recognized Vietnam as an independent nation. During this time, Vietnamese diplomatic policy focused on Asian countries, most of which were resisting and gaining independence from European colonial control. With the aims of expanding international relations, a Vietnamese delegation was sent to the Inter-Asian Conference in New Delhi in March 1947 searching for support. A series of diplomatic activities were carried out thereafter. However, those efforts were not as fruitful as the DRV had

⁴⁹ After the triumph of the border campaign in 1950, the Chinese communists started supporting Vietnamese uprisings.

⁵⁰ For more discussions on Vietnam's diplomatic policies with France in this period, please see also: Nguyễn Đình Bin (Chief author), *op.cit*; Nguyễn Phúc Luân, *op.cit*; Günter Giesenfeld, *Wie Vietnam um seine Siege gebracht wurde*, in: *Vietnam Kurier*, Nr. 3-4.2009, S. 6-55.

expected. At the international conferences and youth forums, the DRV only received basic support for the Vietnamese resistance, like in the establishment of representative offices or information centers, for instance.⁵¹

Regarding the U.S., in the first phase of the Franco-Vietminh War the Truman administration remained neutral in the years of 1945 and 1946. They repeatedly ignored Ho's appeal for recognition. But after this point, the U.S. was aware of increasing nationalist movements in Asia in general and in Indochina in particular. They believed that the military conflicts in Indochina might lead to instability in the Far East. This was a result of the outbreak of the civil war in China with all its consequences from Korea to Malaya. Also, there was the context of the Cold War as France appealed to its Western allies to recognize French efforts in Indochina as a part of "containment policy" and urged for military and financial aid. In my opinion, France's demands for U.S. aid might be regarded as new elements and strategies in French policy. Domino theory and containment policy were exploited as excuses to regain control over Indochina. Nevertheless, these calculations failed as other Western allies refused to take part in the planned "united action". The Britons did so simply because they realized that the decolonization tendency was inevitable. The U.S. accepted these arguments and constantly backed France in Indochina but by urging France to accept the so-called "Bao Dai solution". In line with this, the French and Bao Dai's national armed forces were offered assistance to be organized.

2.1.4. From a colonial war to an internationalized war

The emergence of the PRC in October 1949 after the Chinese communists' victory over Chiang Kai-shek's Guomintang led to new attitudes of the world powers towards Indochina. On 27 January 1950, American Ambassador-at-large Philip C. Jessup sent a note to Bao Dai declaring, "The Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, has instructed me to express to Your Majesty the gratification of the

⁵¹ Representative offices were set up in some countries such as Thailand and Myanmar. From 1947 to 1949, ten information centers were also established in Paris, London, New York, New Delhi, Rangoon, Bangkok, Singapore, Zurich, New Caledonia and Hong Kong.

U.S. Government at the assumption by Your Majesty of the powers transferred by the French Republic at the beginning of this year.”⁵² This note could be seen as the first sign of American engagement in the first Indochina War and afterwards. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the involvement of the SU as well as Red China proved that the communist bloc was gaining influence. These reasons forced the U.S. to follow up the first Indochina War to its end.

The American engagement in Indochina was gradually and clearly shown. Several weeks after the start of the Dien Bien Phu battle which steadily became unfavorable for the French troops, President Eisenhower at a press conference on 7 April 1954 did not hide his policy while stating the importance of Indochina for the U.S. He explained that Indochina was a resource-rich area from which all the world had needs like rubber, tungsten and tin. Moreover, the “domino theory” could be real if Indochina fell into the communist bloc. If the first fell, the surrounding countries would quickly fall down too, such as: Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, etc. Then it would threaten Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. Thus, hundreds of million people would be detached from the “free world”. In terms of economics, if Indochina fell, Japan would lose its trade area, which might lead it to collaborate with the communists to survive and retain its profits in the area. The arguments did not only imply a different ideology within the context of East-West tensions, but also a military purpose and an inherently pragmatic manner in terms of natural resources.

American assistance to France in Indochina can be understood as an exchange in the framework of a broader “responsibility division”. Since mid-1950, France was considered not only the American frontier in Indochina, but in Europe as well while the American troops were in quagmire in Korea. Hence, the U.S. demanded that West Germany and France reinforce their defense contributions to European security, which was being threatened by the SU from the East. Unfortunately, France was in a great dilemma as it was short of military hardware sources due to Germany’s occupation or destruction in WW II. In

⁵² See more at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/inch007.asp, (online accessed on 29 June 2012).

addition, by getting stuck in military activity in Indochina, France had been limited from contributing to security affairs in Europe.⁵³ As the conflict escalated, France's prestige rapidly declined after the heavy losses on the Indochinese battlefield. Moreover, the French political stage was complicated and suffered from a lack of stability. From 1950 to the end of the first Indochina War, nine governments were established in France. The shortest government lived only ten days (the government of Henri Queuille, from 2 to 12 July 1950) and the longest one served almost one year (the government of Joseph Laniel, from 27 June 1953 to 18 June 1954).

Despite this, France still did not change its policy of invasion and depended more on American assistance. The U.S. also did not let the opportunity slip of intervening in the Indochina battle for the purpose of preventing the communist movement from expanding to South-east Asia. In 1950, in a bid to combat the spread of communism, the U.S. began supporting France in Vietnam with advisors, and funding its efforts against the "red" Vietminh. These efforts continued in 1956, when advisors were provided to train the army of the new government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).⁵⁴ This involvement gradually led to the American War or the second Indochina War which has been seen as a part of the ideological struggle between the West and the East.

The victories in the military field achieved by the Vietminh had great influence on Vietnam's position and diplomatic relations with other countries in the world. In the early 1950s, most socialist countries recognized and established diplomatic ties with the DRV. On 14 January 1950, Ho Chi Minh declared that "Vietnam is the only legal government of the whole Vietnamese communities...the Communist democracy government of the working class is

⁵³ For more detailed discussion on the world's context in the 1950s and the attitudes of great powers towards Indochina, see also: Nguyễn Phúc Luân, *op.cit.*, tr. 189-205.

⁵⁴ According to statistic of 1950-1951, the U.S. provided 170 billion francs for weapons which made up 12% of military expenditure. Up to 1954, this expenditure reached 420 billions including 145 billions for weapons and 175 billion in cash which accounted for 70% of total expenditure for the war cost. See also: *Việt Nam - Điện Biên Phủ, bản anh hùng ca của thời đại (Vietnam – Dien Bien Phu, a heroic song of all time)*, National Political Publishing House, 1984, tr. 130-131.

willing to establish relations with others who respect equality, territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Vietnam so as to preserve the world peace, establish and consolidate the world democracy together.”⁵⁵ Following this declaration, on 18 January 1950, the PRC recognized the independence of the DRV and the SU did the same on 30 January 1950. Then, Vietnam was recognized as an independent country by a series of countries with socialist systems, such as North Korea (on 31 January), the GDR (on 2 February), the People’s Republic of Poland (on 4 February) and the People’s Republic of Albania (on 13 March) and so on.

It is essential to note here that as early as 1947, French representatives in Indochina and the ex-emperor Bao Dai had discussed the possibility of the establishment of a non-communist government which would merge all religious forces, nationalists and non-communist parties into a unilateral front. The Élysée Treaty signed by French President Vincent Auriol and Bao Dai in January 1949 set the basis for the formation of the State of Vietnam. This state was an entity of the French Union and governed by Bao Dai. Actually, the State of Vietnam was used as a “backdoor” for France to counter the Vietminh-led government and request American aid. In this way, this would help France retain control over Indochina. However, from 1950 to 1953, the Bao Dai government was recognized by the U.S. and more than 30 countries of its Western allies.⁵⁶

As the nature of the first Indochina War changed, the scale of it was modified and upgraded. The hidden ruling Communist Party Central Committee in June 1950 decided to set up the 1950 “*Autumn – Winter Border Campaign*” which aimed to destroy partly of the enemy’s force. Also, this campaign aimed to open the Chinese-Vietnamese border which would pave the way for international communication with socialist countries. After more than one month of fighting (from 16 September to 23 October 1950), the Vietnamese army and local people wiped out half of the strategic roving forces of the enemy in Northern Indochina (3,500 troops were captured), confiscated many weapons, liberated five

⁵⁵ *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, tập 6 (Ho Chi Minh’s Complete Works, vol. 6)*, National Political Publishing House, 2009, tr. 7-8.

⁵⁶ National Archives Center III, Hanoi, *Fond of Prime Minister Secretariat*, dossier 1773.

townships, thirteen towns, many important areas and a line of demarcation which was 750 km in length and included 350 thousand citizens. The northernmost Vietnamese revolutionary base was consolidated to break through the “East-West corridor”.

After four years of struggling, the Vietnamese government had strengthened its socio-economic condition and politics, especially in the military. In contrast, France was more impaired and depended heavily on American aid. The French internal government was unstable. In July 1953, France received more assistance from America and launched the Navarre plan which was to be implemented within eighteen months, with the main contents including concentrating strong troops in Indochina especially in the Red River Delta. This was also for the purpose of carrying out a strategic attack to annihilate the main Vietnamese forces and end the war in the most favorable condition for France. It can be said that the Navarre plan was ambitious and constituted the final effort of the American-French allies in Indochina.

To cope with the new strategy of the Winter-Spring Offensive in 1953-1954, the Vietnamese army made an attack on important strategic directions to force the enemy to scatter their forces in five directions: Dien Bien Phu, Se-No, Plei-Ku, Luong Phra Bang and North Delta which caused the Navarre plan initially to fail. Attempting to deal with this situation, France concentrated their military forces in Dien Bien Phu where they consolidated the group of strongest military bases in Indochina in order to smash up the main Vietnamese forces. Dien Bien Phu became the centre point of the plan. However, it was the biggest error of France in the last effort to save the situation of the war.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ In Washington, there were heated debates about whether the U.S should directly intervene in the Dien Bien Phu battle. Finally, President Eisenhower decided to reject such a move partly because Britain would not support any military intervention. However, the U.S. reluctantly accepted to send airplanes (without pilots) and some other military ammunition. The Department of State even warned of not direct intervention but preparation for future replacement and involvement in Indochina. See also: Pentagon Papers, Gravel Edition, *U.S. Involvement in the Franco-Viet Minh*

In order to bring about the complete failure of the Navarre plan, the Vietnamese army had to win victories in Dien Bien Phu. In December 1953, Vietnam chose Dien Bien Phu to be the strategic stronghold in which the decisive battles would take place. The campaign leaders reinforced their preparations with the slogan “All for frontline, all for victory”. For fifty-six days and nights with three spells of drastic attacks from 13 March to 7 May 1954, Vietnamese troops killed and captured 16,200 French soldiers, destroyed sixty two aeroplanes of war and confiscated all weapons and fighting devices of the enemy.



Picture 4: General Vo Nguyen Giap observes the battle of Dien Bien Phu 1954.

2.1.5. Influence of Dien Bien Phu as a signal of French decolonization in Indochina

The victory of the Vietminh over France at Dien Bien Phu had a great influence on modern Vietnamese history. Firstly, this was the biggest victory in the course of a nine-year war of resistance against the French. One historian compared it to “French shameful defeats in the past like Sedan, Waterloo... or Nazi Germany’s defeat at Stalingrad.”⁵⁸ The total collapse of the Navarre plan

War, vol. 1, chapter 4: *The U.S. and France in Indochina 1950-1954*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, pp. 179-214.

⁵⁸ Bùi Đình Thanh, *Đấu tranh ngoại giao tại Hội nghị Geneva năm 1954 (Diplomatic Struggle at the Geneva Conference in 1954)*, in: *Điện Biên Phủ từ góc nhìn của các nhà khoa học Việt – Pháp*

contributed to the decision of forcing France to sign the Geneva Agreement which restored peace in Indochina. Subsequently, the North was completely liberated. Secondly, it was the first time within almost one hundred years of struggling for independence that Vietnam has swept away the foreign invaders. The new people's democratic regime was consolidated. With this victory, the Vietnamese people proved that: a small nation could win a war against invaders. It is commonly accepted that, due to the specific situation since 1945, all attempts to establish post-colonial systems without the deep participation of the colonized would have to fail.⁵⁹



Picture 5: French troops surrender at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954.

For France, the outcome of the Dien Bien Phu battle also affected France's military and national images or identity. As Martin Shipway states, "Dien Bien Phu did not end the fighting in Indochina, but it destroyed the last vestiges of French determination to continue the war."⁶⁰ Evidently, the collapse of French

(Dien Bien Phu in the perception of Vietnamese – French researchers), National Political Publishing House, 2005, tr. 26.

⁵⁹ The collapse of British rule in India (1947) and the defeat of the Dutch in Indonesia (1949) were also evidences for this. In relation to India and Indonesia, Dien Bien Phu occurred some years later. It was considered a media event, however. In 1954, the first steps for reconstruction in Western Europe were already completed. Together with events in Korea, Vietnam attracted the attention of an international media industry of growing importance. Dien Bien Phu and the Suez disaster (1956) were employed as a political argument for change in Europe thereafter. This issue will be discussed again in the following chapters.

⁶⁰ Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its impact: a comparative approach to the end of the colonial empires*, Oxford, 2008, p. 111.

prestige in Indochina did not affect only its identity but also its economy. In a broader sense, the war in Indochina pinned France down financially and paralyzed its domestic and European development. The first Indochina War represented the failure of France's colonial ambitions on the one hand, and on the other caused a large financial crisis since as long as the war went on, it remained burden on France's budget. For instance, upto 1953 the first Indochina War cost 1,800 billion francs, constituting 60% of its domestic budget.⁶¹

During the nine-year war in Indochina, French political life under the Fourth Republic was constantly unstable. More than twenty governments were established and collapsed. Thus, it seemed to be impossible to rebuild a symbol of French grandeur under the instability of political life. Broadly speaking, the Vietnamese victory at Dien Bien Phu and the end of the Indochinese war changed French colonial policies as well. If France had previously established the French Union to create a framework for dominating over its colonies, then, four years after the failure of Dien Bien Phu battle, in 1958, France set up the French Community, the rules of which showed respect for each nation's right to self-determination and higher autonomy. France was forced to offer independence to many countries in Africa, especially in North Africa. Finally, it is widely accepted that France's withdrawal from Vietnam was the first step towards the moral collapse of the colonial system. France had to end its colonial presence in Asia and return to Europe to deal with European internal issues and its own domestic affairs. If the fall of Indochina was perceived as the beginning of the French decolonization process then it could be argued that "the process of decolonizing the French empire became a painful, frustrating and demoralizing experience, which greatly weakened France on the international scene and contributed significantly to the collapse of the Fourth Republic."⁶²

As for other colonized nations, the event of Dien Bien Phu for France and for the rest of the colonized world was understood as a remarkable point forcing

⁶¹ Hagues Tertrais, *Ảnh hưởng của cuộc chiến tranh Đông Dương (The influence of the Indochina War)*, in: *Past and Present Magazine*, 2004, vol. 226, tr. 6.

⁶² Wolfram F. Hanrieder and Graeme P. Auton, *op.cit.*, p. 137.

France to withdraw from Indochina and Asia. It was a tremendous encouragement for the struggling forces in the world which had been fighting against imperialism in the colonial countries and semi-colonized countries. It also marked a new stage to liberate Asian and African colonized nations. The Dien Bien Phu victory dealt a blow to France on the one hand and international imperialism on the other. This also led to the disintegration of the large colonial bloc of French imperialism. Consequently, France had to reconsider its position and tactics applied in Europe and throughout the world. The next consequence was Algeria's uprising against oppression commonly understood as a chain of reaction. As a result, Dien Bien Phu itself and the end of the French colonial presence in Indochina very much inspired the newly formed Algerian National Liberation Front to wage another violent resistance to gain full independence. This victory had an obvious effect on other French colonies and encouraged self-liberating movements in countries such as Madagascar, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and so on. These movements would initiate the collapse of old colonialism in the world. Therefore, from the above-mentioned issues, we find that Vietnam was a pioneer country in awakening other colonized nations. This was also regarded as a landmark of French colonial history.

In Europe, the collapse of French colonial rule and withdrawal from Indochina and Asia contributed to the balance of power. As we have seen, the EDC project proposed several years before aiming to limit German military power under a supranational structure had ultimately failed. In the French leaders' eyes, "the defeat in Indochina was unequivocally accepted and the harsh consequences in terms of loss of blood and treasure were recognized. In that respect France seemed to handle the decolonization and France's changing role in the world well, once it actually happened. The projected triangular balance in the European Defense Community, between German rearmament, British engagement in Europe and French military commitments in Indochina comes to nought."⁶³

⁶³ Thomas Hoerber, *The Foundations of Europe – European Integration ideas in France, Germany and Britain in the 1950s*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006, p. 332.

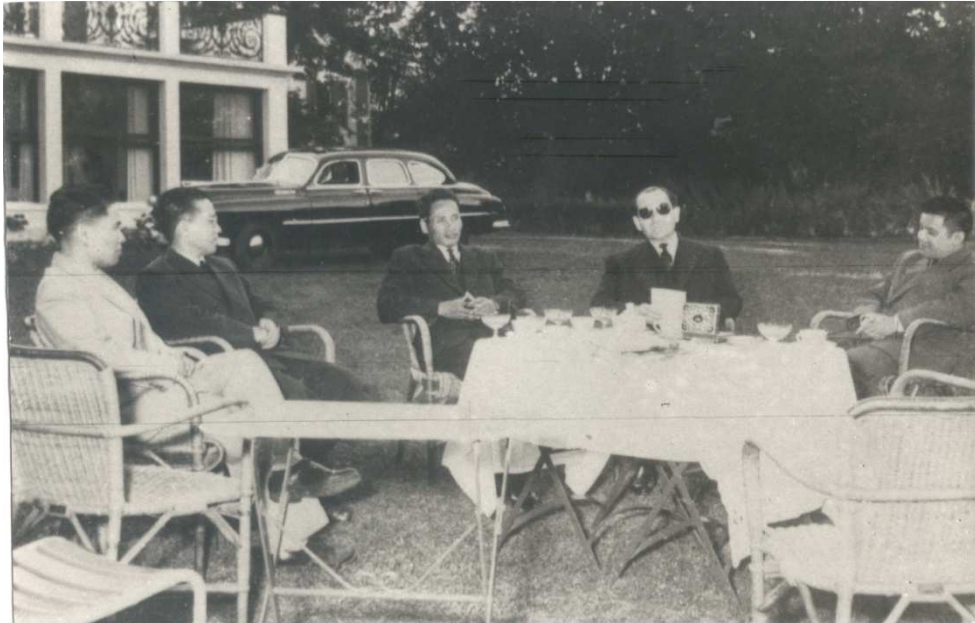
The year of 1954 was a crucial turning point not only for Asia but for Europe in terms of the world's changing face for years, even decades afterwards. Once Asia was important for the SU and the Western world, Europe was also crucial for the whole world. The most challenging issue in Europe in 1954 was the problem of German rearmament. German rearmament could be carried out through the EDC but, as discussed above, the outcome of Dien Bien Phu and the first Indochina War, as one of the main reasons, caused the failure of the project.⁶⁴ Thus, within its sphere of influence in colonial territories, it was considered a remarkable year in the history of conflict between the West and the East and international relations history in general. Because of these diverse elements, the world's force balance also changed after 1954. This change was evident not only in diplomacy but also in the understanding of new concepts and strategic doctrines.⁶⁵

2.1.6. The Geneva Conference and its echoes

The 1953-1954 offensives with their peak in the Dien Bien Phu campaign has caused the Navarre plan to fail completely and forced France to sit down at the negotiating table at the Geneva Conference (from 26 April to 21 July 1954). Initially, the Geneva Conference aimed to discuss peaceful resolutions for Indochina and Korea. However, the Korea issue was not settled satisfactorily. Consequently, from 8 May 1954, the conference shifted its focus of debate to the Indochina problem. Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Agreement officially ended France's colonial war with American assistance. According to this agreement, France had to withdraw its troops, the North was liberated entirely and proceeded to re-consolidate a socialist – oriented state which then became a firm support for the South in the battle for national reunification later on.

⁶⁴ Jean Christophe Romer, *1954 – Một năm thay đổi cục diện (1954 – A Year of change)*, in: *Điện Biên Phủ từ góc nhìn của các nhà khoa học Việt – Pháp (Dien Bien Phu in the perception of Vietnamese – French researchers)*, National Political Publishing House, 2005, tr. 25-26.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.



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Picture 6: Foreign Minister of the DRV Pham Van Dong and France's Prime Minister, Pierre Mendès France in Geneva 1954.

The outcome of the conference as well as successes on the battlefield created big waves on the international scene.⁶⁶ It had deep effects on the national liberation movements. As one French military leader commented, “A gamble in Geneva appeared like a symbol of white people’s degradation and our civilization. Fewer than six months later, a rebellion broke out in Algeria, De Lattre’s prediction came true: withdrawing from Indochina would make North African

⁶⁶ Newly declassified records in Chinese archives show that, during the Geneva Conference, the PRC and the SU were more interested in stabilizing the international situation, giving up the essential goal for Ho’s will: rapid unification. Chinese Prime Minister Zhou En-lai even urged Ho to accept further compromise with France on the issue of the Southern line of demarcation. See more: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars – Cold War International History Project, Bulletin, *Inside China’s Cold War*, issue 16, Fall 2007/Winter 2008, pp. 14-84. See also: Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2000, pp. 58-60; Chen Jian, *China and the Indochina Settlement at the Geneva Conference of 1954*, in: (ed.) Mark Lawrence and Frederik Logvall, *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 257.

revolt in the shortest time... The termination of the war in Indochina would open a new era: right! But that was an era of failure, despair and national crisis.”⁶⁷

Regarding the impacts of the Geneva Conference on Europe and Germany, *Nhan Dan* newspaper stated: “Ceasefire and peace restoration accords in Indochina gained at Geneva contributed to calm down international issues and created favorable conditions to solve other international affairs which had not been solved not only in Asia but also in Europe such as arms race and nuclear weapons prohibition, European security and German problems.”⁶⁸

The Geneva Conference was meaningful not only for Vietnam and Indochina, but also for the political atmosphere in the Asian region and the world outside in the climate of the Cold War. One of the significances of the Geneva Conference was exactly what scholar Evelyn Colbert states: “the Indochina conference had reflected the urge on both sides for some degree of détente and its outcome encouraged hope in East-West negotiations... at least, there were encouraging signs of thaw – the lowering of voices on both sides, the return to politesse symbolized by the Geneva Summit of July 1955, the renewal of relations between the Communist bloc and an unrepentant Tito, the establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and the SU, and the opening of peace talks between the latter and Japan.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Việt Nam - Điện Biên Phủ - Bản anh hùng ca của mọi thời đại (Vietnam – Dien Bien Phu, a heroic song of all time)*, National Political Publishing House, 1984, tr. 103.

⁶⁸ *Nhân dân (The People)*, vol. 247, 27 October 1954.

⁶⁹ Evelyn Colbert, *South-east Asia in International Politics 1941 – 1956*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1977, p. 311.



Picture 7: On behalf of the DRV's delegation, Colonel Ta Quang Buu signs the Geneva Agreement on 21 July 1954.

2.2. Impacts of the first Indochina War and decolonization in Indochina on France

We cannot deny the importance of Vietnam or Indochina for France. However, it is necessary to investigate why Vietnam and the issue of colonization remained important to France even as decolonization trends became clear after WW II. French decolonization in Indochina in 1954 to some extent proved that European colonial power was over. During WW II, traditional European domination in many parts of Asia and South-east Asia was indeed replaced by the Japanese.

As previously discussed, the process of decolonization took place intensively after WW II and in the decades afterwards. The charter of the UN also guarantees the right of self-determination of colonized nations. French decolonization in Indochina and European decolonization in Asia forced the European colonial powers to re-assess and adjust their current and future

strategies. For instance, in terms of economics, it is commonly agreed that European colonies had been the main suppliers of raw materials for industry. They were also customers for European producers. Clearly, the process of decolonization had a negative impact on European economics as France was no longer able to depend on colonial suppliers. Therefore, European countries had to attempt to restructure their strategic economic markets outside Europe. To deal with this question, they had to decide whether to retain interests in the newly independent nations, or return to the old continent of Europe. Any of the options would be hard, even confusing for France at the time.

2.2.1. Impact on French domestic politics

The French defeat marked by the downfall of Dien Bien Phu was the turning point of the French presence in Indochina and the European decolonization process. More importantly, the ending of the battle of Dien Bien Phu also caused increasing protests within France against continuing further military campaigns in Indochina. The government of Laniel had to resign as a result of the military and political crisis. This paved the way to the premiership for Mendès France, who had promised to find a reasonable and honorable settlement for Indochina within a month.

One day after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, on 8 May 1954, the French National Assembly gathered to listen to Laniel's notification of the failure of the Dien Bien Phu stronghold. At Geneva, in the atmosphere of sadness, all French delegates wore black uniform to attend the conference. The French Foreign Minister declared the bad news at Dien Bien Phu and suggested that France's diplomats should fundamentally accept a ceasefire in Indochina. On 21 July 1954, the Geneva Agreement was finally signed after seventy-five days of negotiation. However the success of the conference has been examined by scholars, one of the outcomes was that the East and West made several arrangements at Geneva leading to a phase of détente. Geneva was a compromise, rather than a victory for one side.

In fact, French decolonization in Indochina outed an end to France's colonial ambitions. Its end has been viewed as the starting point for the entire period of French decolonization in Asia and North Africa. Despite its vain attempt to reform its colonial system after 1914, the old style of French imperialism in Indochina totally collapsed. Furthermore, this encouraged the fall of old-fashioned colonialism in the whole world and the rise of the political left in the decolonizing world.⁷⁰

The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and its decolonization in Indochina was also perceived as the starting point for the following series of France's crises in the second half of the 1950s, until the emergence of the Fifth Republic in 1958. The Dien Bien Phu defeat led to the failure of the EDC project, the outbreak of the Algerian war, growing financial deficit and the failure of the Suez adventure. All of these were considered the main factors shaking the stability of the Fourth Republic, finally, bringing it to an end.⁷¹

Within thirteen years of the Fourth Republic, twenty-six cabinets were set up and fell apart. It has been argued that 13 May 1958 was a consequence of Dien Bien Phu.⁷² After WW II, France was completely exhausted, as it had exerted itself to the utmost in the war. Again after nine years of conflict with the Vietminh in Indochina (and later with the FLN in Algeria) its manpower and financial resources were overspent. Consequently, "Indochina and Algeria cost not only the lives of hundreds of thousands of Asians and Africans but eventually brought the collapse of the Fourth Republic as well."⁷³ Thus, French decolonization forced

⁷⁰ See also: Võ Kim Cương, *Điện Biên Phủ với sự thức tỉnh của châu Phi thuộc địa (Dien Bien Phu and the Awakening of colonized Africa)*, in: *Điện Biên Phủ từ góc nhìn của các nhà khoa học Việt – Pháp (Dien Bien Phu in the perception of Vietnamese – French researchers)*, *op.cit.*, tr. 553.

⁷¹ Thomas Moser, *Europäische Integration, Dekolonisation, Eurafrika – Eine historische Analyse über die Entstehungsbedingungen der Eurafrikanischen Gemeinschaft von der Weltwirtschaftskrise bis zum Jaunde Vertrag, 1929 – 1963*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft Baden-Baden, 2000, S. 76.

⁷² 13 May 1958 is historically recognized as the day marking the collapse of the French Fourth Republic.

⁷³ Tony Smith, *A Comparative Study of French and British Decolonization*, in: (ed.) Martin Thomas, *European Decolonization*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007, p. 4.

France to re-define its domestic strategic policy in order to stabilize its chaotic political plight.

2.2.2. Impact on military status

Dien Bien Phu, where France had concentrated its strongest forces, was totally defeated. For the French leader, Joseph Laniel, the failure of Dien Bien Phu was seen as “one of the most tragic turning points in our history.”⁷⁴ Ironically, the French army did not calculate further risks when they again wanted to rescue the country’s traditional legend by entering a new and even bitterer war in Algeria a few months later. It was reported that around 100,000 were dead in addition to 20,000 Vietnamese, 15,000 Africans, 12,000 foreign legionnaires, many of whom were Germans; and 21,000 French were also recorded dead in the lost war against the Vietminh in Indochina.⁷⁵ It was very hard to believe that the French army with its hundred years of long tradition, and then backed strongly by the Americans in the Indochina War, was entirely knocked out by a ten-year-old army of the Vietminh. It seemed unacceptable for a great power like France. The failure at Dien Bien Phu and then the loss of the Indochina War caused France to be more psychologically sensitive than ever before. Alongside some other factors, “this might call into question her Great Power status.”⁷⁶ Accordingly, these bitter defeats would lead to the death of the EDC plan when the French Assembly refused a ratification on 30 August 1954 since France, understandably, was again concerned by a new European defense project in which France would lose its national identity in comparison with the West German priority in military potential.

⁷⁴ Bùi Đình Thanh, *op.cit.*, tr. 219

⁷⁵ Peter Schunck, *Geschichte Frankreichs von Heinrich IV. bis zur Gegenwart*, Piper München Zürich, 1994, S. 509.

⁷⁶ Pierre Melandri, *France and the Atlantic Alliance 1950 – 1953: Between Great Power Policy and European Integration*, in: (ed.), Olav Riste, *Western Security: The Formative Years*, Norwegian University Press, Universitetsforlaget, 1985, p. 279.



Picture 8: De Castries surrenders at Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954.

2.2.3. *Impact on economics*

The French economy after WW II was nearly impoverished.⁷⁷ Before the Marshall Plan was offered to France, in 1947, the “external investments were half of the value of those of 1914.”⁷⁸ France’s post-war period seemed to be isolated from the wider world, especially in economics. Unfortunately, French strategic resources and political objectives did not fit with each other. It might be right to state that the deeper France engaged in the Indochina War, the more it had to rely on U.S. subventions from the year of 1950 onwards. In this situation, all political parties, even including the communists in France believed that “*la France outre mer*” would help “provide a complement of force and energy to compensate France for her reduced role in Europe and the wider world.”⁷⁹

As the colonial conflict in Indochina escalated, the French national budget spent on the war in Indochina increased year after year. It is easy to see that after

⁷⁷ For details see chapter 3.

⁷⁸ Bernard Weites, *Europe and the Third World – From Colonization to Decolonization, C.1500 – 1998*, St Martin’s Press Inc, 1998, p. 262.

⁷⁹ *Loc.cit.* Also, it should be noted that after 1945, the French communist party played a crucial role in French political life. Up to 1947, five ministers in the French cabinet were communists. Nonetheless, corresponding to the disappearance of the Italian communists from the scene in 1947, the French communists were expelled from the French cabinet, too. See also: Philip Maynard Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic*, London, Longman, 3rd Edition, 1964.

1950 France was increasingly dependent on American economic assistance, as France had been constantly arguing that the French colonial war in Indochina had become a the war of the free world against the expansion of communism in South-east Asia.

Unit: Billion Francs

| Year | French contribution | General cost | French contribution (%) |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1946 | 108,00 | 108,00 | 100 |
| 1947 | 117,30 | 117,30 | 100 |
| 1948 | 130,00 | 130,00 | 100 |
| 1949 | 169,50 | 169,50 | 100 |
| 1950 | 241,20 | 285,20 | 85 |
| 1951 | 292,60 | 379,30 | 77 |
| 1952 | 334,00 | 568,00 | 59 |
| 1953 | 285,00 | 589,00 | 48 |
| 1954 | 142,00 | 687,00 | 21 |
| Total | 1819,60 | 3033,30 | 60 |

Table 1: The French total cost for war in Indochina.⁸⁰

The outcome of the first Indochina War (and later the Algerian war) caused France not only a great burden on its economy but serious inflation as well. The French economy was rather weak and expected to get worse as France

⁸⁰ Marc Frey, *Dekolonisierung in Südostasien – Die Vereinigten Staaten und die Auflösung der europäischen Kolonialreiche*, R. Oldenbourg Verlag München, 2006, S. 77.

had to give up its traditional raw material supplier region of Indochina. Many researchers were suspicious of what France would be without colonies, as its economy mostly depended on colonial economic development. During the conflict and after the failure of its Indochina “the traditional deficit in her foreign trade could no longer be filled by the income from capital invested abroad.”⁸¹ If we turn back to the Conference of Brazzaville in January 1944 when Charles de Gaulle did not hide his ambitions to continue controlling France’s colonial territories, we will see that France would never easily abandon its will on possessing its traditional colonial countries. Theoretically and practically speaking, the process of decolonization must have affected the French economy badly since it would no longer be able to exploit its overseas colonial territories.

On the other hand, the process of decolonization did not simply have a negative effect on the French economy; it also created something positive for the French political economy in terms of Western integration, by allowing France to tie itself to the strongest and most rapidly growing industrial economy in Europe at the time, i.e., the FRG. It can be argued that there was definitely a coincidence between French decolonization and European integration. In the course of this process, France understood that they should join such a move, as the French leaders soon realized that by integrating the country into Western Europe more quickly, coordinating closely with its core partner in Europe – West Germany, French national power could be restored.

This was done under the pressure of domestic issues and other national interests such as French prestige. In a new world context of further cooperation and integration tendency, imperialism was no longer an opportunity for any economic increase of the French capitalists, if not a great burden to France as a whole. In the new scene of global economics, traditional products made from cotton and coal imported from colonized countries did not bring as much profit as it had done, in comparison with modern industries promising to benefit the France’s economic development more.

⁸¹ Bernard Weites, *Loc.cit.*

It is undeniable that French decolonization had an extremely positive impact on the French policy towards European integration. One can argue that the loss of the first Indochina War might be seen as one of the most powerful motors for France to sign the Treaty of Rome in 1957, just shortly after France's colonial territories of Morocco and Tunisia declared independence. In reality, only by integrating itself into the Western integration process did France have hopes to rescue its position and prestige in Europe. As one author states, "European integration became the instinctive French response to her need to regain her seriously reduced influence."⁸² The war cost in Indochina comprising 10% of national income in the year 1953-1954, France was forced to reduce the burden in a bid to deal with economic difficulties in the home country.⁸³ Accordingly, the problems of maintaining its empire or integrating into European community were now seriously questioned. In order to achieve these goals, the colonial question must be clearly solved.

In comparison with the West German economy, experiencing the so-called "economic miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*), the French economy was more fragile. The better option for France was to seek economic cooperation with other European partners. Therefore, West Germany would be one of the best partners for France to reach such a goal. Now a New France without colonies was more determined to concentrate on regional economic issues which were actually rooted in the 1952 foundation of the ECSC (later upgraded to the EEC in 1957). As Derek W. Urwin argues that, "by the late 1950s more people were accepting the fact that Europe was better off without colonies."⁸⁴ This is because the post-colonial period would lead to economic development. The same thing happened in Germany. Until the early 1950s, the West German economy was strongly

⁸² Pierre Melandri and Maurice Vaisse, *France: From Powerlessness to the Search for Influence*, in: (ed.) Josef Becker, Franz Knipping, *Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Postwar World 1945 – 1950*, Walter de Gruyter – Berlin – New York 1986, p. 469.

⁸³ Robert Frank, *The French Alternative: Economic Power through the Empire or through Europe?* in: (ed.) Ennio Nolfo, *Power in Europe? II, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952 – 1957*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1992, p. 161.

⁸⁴ Derek W. Urwin, *Western Europe since 1945*, Longmans, 1968, p. 213.

influenced by the dominating coal and steel industries with their close links to defense industries. Capital and consumer goods industries, until this point the foundation of the German economy, gained momentum in a process which was importantly influenced by political decisions and those of the industrial and business associations, BDI and BDA.⁸⁵ To replace an economy based on colonial structures (import of low level products from colonies, export of low level commodities to colonies) with one depended on the industries of an affluent society is a strategy to modernize an economy and to create economic growth.

Decolonization therefore became a key factor for economic growth in the most competitive countries. After 1945, Holland and Belgium faced the same problems. Another advantage was to transform formal obligations as a colonial power (occupation costs, etc.) into developmental co-operation which could be reduced or increased depending on the relations or tensions with the former colonies.

2.2.4. Impact on French colonial and foreign policy

The failure of Dien Bien Phu and the loss of Indochina have historically been seen as a great failure in which the bankruptcy of French grandness is the matter of concern. This obliged France to change its understanding as well as its policy on determining and solving the current affairs. In this case, the colonial question and international issue can be understood in a broader perspective. After 1954, French colonial policy was based on a guide-line policy that aimed to narrow its colonial territories, in sharply contrast with its colonial policy seventy

⁸⁵ BDI (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* or the *Federation of German Industry*) was formed in 1949 and stood for the interests of industrial businesses and industry-related service-providers *vis-à-vis* politics and administration. BDA (*Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände* or *Confederation of German Employers' Associations*) was established in 1950; it acted as an umbrella organization of private sector employers in the manufacturing industry, commerce, banking, insurance, etc. The two merged in February 2007 to become the German Business Representation.

years earlier.⁸⁶ In other words, the decolonization process was to some extent to open to its former colonial possessions. For many French people, the Dien Bien Phu defeat and French withdrawal from Indochina had been seen as another bitter humiliation of France since 1940. It was also considered a turning point of France's military in particular and French history in general. After 1945, although France had its own occupied zone in Germany, this did not mean that France had equal rights in comparison with the three other allied powers. Moreover, despite occupying a seat at the Security Council of the UN, France was no longer seen as a colonial power. However, France hoped to restore its prestige in the African continent by pursuing another military adventure in the northern African country of Algeria from late 1954. French nationalism more or less continued in the second half of the 1950s. Again, the French failed to succeed in preventing Algeria from gaining full independence in 1962.⁸⁷

To conclude, Vietnamese history through the end of WW II to the year of 1954 must be studied in diverse aspects. Clearly, we get a better picture if we study it from the broader perspectives of the very complicated regional and world context of the first half of the 20th century. After nine years of resistance against French colonialists, Vietminh's military victories forced France to come to the negotiating table at Geneva in May 1954. The Geneva Agreement on armistice and peace resettlement in Indochina was an interpretation of the power balance of all participants in the battlefield as well as of the great powers in their international arena. This also involved extremely complicated issues in international relations and the strategic plans of Vietnam's allies, the SU and Red China at the final stage of the Geneva negotiation as they planned to end the war in Indochina. At the

⁸⁶ In 1884, Jules Ferry (1832-1893), who was twice Prime Minister of France (1880-1881) and (1883-1885), gave a well-known speech before the French Chamber of Deputies on French Colonial Expansion. In the speech, he mentioned political and economic aspects of France's colonial expansion as well as the missions of European nations when they "acquit themselves with generosity, with grandeur, and with sincerity of this superior civilizing duty". See more details of the speech at: www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1884ferry.html, (online accessed on 11 July 2012).

⁸⁷ Algeria was a slightly different situation because the north of it was not a colony, but a part of France.

time, Red China opted for co-existence which was seen to be suitable with its long-term interests. According to the Geneva Agreement, Vietnam was provisionally divided into two halves with two different political regimes. A general election was promised to be held nationwide two years later. However, this never came to pass under the leadership of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime and its successors. After 1954, the North was entirely liberated and pursued a socialism-oriented system. Meanwhile the non-communist South was still under the dominance of the U.S. and its allies. The communists in the North then both reconsolidated half of the country and raised a new resistance against the U.S. and its followers in the South in a bid to reunite the entire country as we can see in April 1975.



Picture 9: Indochina 1954.

CHAPTER 3

GERMANY AND FRANCE AFTER WW II TO THE EARLY 1960s

The main purpose of this chapter is to give a better understanding of the situation in Germany and France after 1945, and a down grading of nationalist ideas, sentiments, and motivations, talks about countries, father- and motherlands, etc. In both countries, the idea of national grandeur was seriously put down. In Germany there was a strong opposition to another build up of military power, the “*Ohne mich-Bewegung*”⁸⁸, and Schelsky already claimed a cooling down of the “*Bewegung zum Unbedingten*”, which deeply influenced Germany between 1900 and 1945.⁸⁹ Nationalism was not the first priority on the West German agenda; nor even was it national reconstruction or re-unification, but rather a non-political feeling for peace, prosperity, justice and rational ways of behavior better than national enthusiasm. To a certain degree the situation was the same in France and in other parts of Western Europe. In France there was a strong opposition to the colonial wars, high numbers of deserters, and famous artists like Boris Vian expressing the sentiments of those who deserted.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ A pacific movement arose in Germany after WW II to protest against any plan of German remilitarization.

⁸⁹ Helmut Schelsky (1912-1984) was one of the most influential sociologists in post-war Germany. In the Third Reich, he was a member of the National Socialist German Workers Party and served in Hitler’s army as a “*Wehrmachtssoldat*” from early 1945. After the war, he became a professor at the University of Hamburg and later Münster. One of his most well-known studies: *Die skeptische Generation. Eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend*, Düsseldorf/Köln, 1957, sociologically analyzed the changes in public sentiment and the characteristics of Germany’s post-war generation in comparison with the 1920s generation. Young people of the 1950s would love to escape from the past and pursue a peaceful future for Germany. They also realized by themselves that they should be more skeptical about society. Another study: *Generation des Unbedingten. Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes*, carried out by Michael Wildt, Hamburg Edition HIS Verlag, 2002 also mentioned that the German youth unconditionally opted to support the Third Reich’s assertion of German Greatness by whatever method including the so-called “*rassische Reinhaltung des deutschen Volkskörpers*” (*racial cleanliness of the German people*).

⁹⁰ Boris Vian (1920-1959) was a French writer, critic, actor and musician. He is well-known for his novels and the anti-war song *Le Déserteur* (*The Deserter*).

Also, politics after 1945 focused significantly on practical issues such as building up infrastructures, housing, traffic systems, etc. In Germany there was a strong debate on national shame and guilt, which significantly damaged not only the image of the Germans but also the national paradigm as such. For many, the national idea as such had been proved to be wrong. The German Chancellor Adenauer never spoke about the past, only about the future, and he attacked the lack of human and civil rights in the GDR. This, together with rapidly recovering industry, especially with the third federal election, made him a prominent figure in Germany. Also in France, nationalist sentiments cooled down, the talk about national greatness was proved to be absurd for many: the result of the wars in Europe and elsewhere was blood, destroyed cities, nonsense talking generals who survived because people died for them and before them. In the following chapter, the relations between West Germany and France after WW II will be discussed. This discussion will then be linked to what happened in Indochina and Europe in the 1950s.

3.1. Europe from the end of WW II till the early 1960s

The Yalta Conference took place in February 1945 with the participations of the government heads of the U.S., Britain, and the SU, represented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and General Secretary Joseph Stalin respectively. The main theme of the conference was to discuss the issues of Central Europe's reorganization after the war. Also in August 1945, another meeting, the Potsdam Conference, was opened to debate how to control Germany after the unconditional surrender of the German army.⁹¹ In the post-war period of Europe, many important issues had to be solved including signing peace treaties among the rivals and cooperating among them.⁹² But these policies seemed not always to be successful. Let us take Germany for consideration. One of the most important factors leading to the establishment of the Bizonie and then Trizone (with the extra participation of France) was economics, as sharing the

⁹¹ In Germany, 9 May 1945, in Germany is known as the Day of Capitulation (*Tag der Kapitulation*).

⁹² Antony Beervor, *Berlin: The Downfall 1945*, Penguin, 2002, p. 402.

task would reduce the costs of occupation. Although there was no discussion and acceptance from the SU, the SU policies towards post-war Germany were not always clear. It is absolutely right to state that, for Europe, 1945 was a remarkable year in defining European and global political structure. More precisely, 1945 was the formal end of the war in Europe. From then on a process of polarization occurred, which in 1946 and 1947 continuously polarized the “West” and the “East”. During this process, theories about the situation also emerged, e.g., Containment, Domino, Two-Camp Theory (Zwei-Lager Theorie) by Zhdanov.

Given this context, one of the most crucial points of these policies was to demarcate the border lines between European states. In 1946, the world powers were preparing to sign peace treaties with Finland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Italy. At last, these treaties were signed in Paris in February 1947. The Potsdam Conference delegates agreed to regulate provisional solutions to the problem of Germany. The SU would directly control the Eastern part of Germany including the swamp areas such as Petsamo and East Karelia as well as the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Litvia and Latvia; the northern part of East Prussia; the Eastern part of Poland, etc. Czechoslovakia, Italy and Yugoslavia and other pre-war border lines were also originally restored.

In the Western part of Europe, the Saar area was established as an autonomous zone in 1947 in economic union with France.⁹³ As a result of different occupational policies between the U.S. and its allies in the Western part of Germany, and the SU in the Eastern part of Germany, the two states of Germany were founded.⁹⁴ The FRG was founded in May 1949 and the GDR was then established too in October 1949. The main driving force behind the statehood

⁹³ Saarland: present-day the smallest state of the Federal Republic returned to being a West German state since 1 January 1957 due to a plebiscite followed by an agreement between France and West Germany (The Saar Treaty) in October 1956. According to the Versailles Treaty, the Saargebiet was occupied by Britain and France.

⁹⁴ It is known as “The Inner German border” (*innerdeutsche Grenze* or *deutsch-deutsche Grenze*; initially also *Zonengrenze*). See also: Buchholz Hanns, *The Inner-German Border*, in: (ed.), Carl Grundy-Warr, *Eurasia: World Boundaries Volume 3*. World Boundaries (ed. Blake, Gerald H.), London: Routledge, 1994, p. 56.

of the FRG was the Americans. They were by far the most active force in German policies after 1945 compared with the Britons and the French. The city of Berlin was also divided into West and East Berlin. West Berlin then became a “free city” of the Federal Republic.⁹⁵

The policy of the allies in post-war period was also to create newly-ordered political structures for European countries. In most of the freshly liberated countries, new governments were formed with a combination of Communist Party, Socialist Party, Christian Democratic Party or Agrarian Party. In most of the Western European countries, including France and some other Eastern European countries like Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, these governments were formed through free elections.⁹⁶ New governments indeed successfully conducted crucial reforms such as land redistribution, industry nationalization or social welfare programs. However, these reforms were significantly distinct from country to country.

The Cold War emerged in 1946 with the appearance of an “iron curtain” between the two blocs dividing Europe into separated areas.⁹⁷ The two blocs acted differently in forming their own political structure and carrying out socio-economic programs. They aimed to achieve their own sphere of influence. Military alliance within each bloc was seen as the most crucial task to guarantee security. Consequently, NATO was established in April 1949 with its first members, i.e., the U.S., Canada, France, Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Netherlands, Italy and Portugal. Then came Turkey and Greece in 1952, and the FRG became a member in 1955. Also, in May 1955 the Warsaw Pact was signed as a counterpoise in the Eastern part of Europe with

⁹⁵ The free city of Berlin lasted from 1945 until 1961 with its border becoming increasingly difficult to cross. In fact, West Berlin was never a fully integrated part of the FRG until 1990. Up until then, central rights were still held by the Three Power Control.

⁹⁶ The first free election was held too in the Western part of Germany in August 1949.

⁹⁷ The term of “iron curtain” is used to refer to the boundary that separated the Warsaw Pact countries from the NATO countries from about 1946 until the end of the Cold War in 1991.

its first members: the SU, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and the GDR.

After WW II, the European economy was completely devastated. Besides this, Europe had recently experienced human suffering on a disastrous scale. In 1947, the U.S. launched a program called *European Recovery Program* (ERP), commonly known as the Marshall Plan. It was not difficult to see that the goals of this four-year program were to rebuild or restore Europe's economy (but mostly for Western Europe as the SU and its allies refused to join or they were forced to refuse to join this program).⁹⁸ In retrospect, the European economy had to be put under American control because the Americans were trying not to repeat the mistakes of 1919.⁹⁹ With a well - planned solution on the German problem, it would help to lessen the country's influence in the context of post-war Europe. Together with the new-born Cold War, this program aimed to protect Europe from a potential Soviet expansion into Western Europe.¹⁰⁰ Also, the emphasis of the Marshall Plan was to stabilize the European economy not only for economics itself but also for political and social-political reasons. The SU and its satellites also set up their own economic union called the *Council of Mutual Economic Assistance* (Comecon) in 1949. This union's economic programs were driven by this organization until the year of 1991.

Evidently, the systematic formation of a new European order in the mid-20th century would create new relations among nations in the continent as well as among Europe, Asia and Africa. During the 1950s and 1960s under the influence of WW II, the process of European decolonization spread out from Asia and then hit Africa. The turning point of the decolonization process was the breakdown of

⁹⁸ Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War - Very Short Introductions*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 30.

⁹⁹ The Versailles Treaty signed in 1919 caused many controversial issues such as the stipulation that Germany had to accept responsibility for causing the war and it was forced to disarm, make territorial concessions and pay very heavy reparations to the victors. This treaty was then blamed as one of the main factors leading to WW II.

¹⁰⁰ Desmond Dinan (ed.), *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 38.

British control over India, and the defeat of the French army in the first Indochina War in 1954 marked a further step in this process afterwards. Former colonized territories regained their independence from colonizers either by violence or peaceful means and joined the UN as equal members. From this point forward, Asia has been playing an important role in international political stage. Under these circumstances, the polarization between the West and the East as well as the decolonization problem created a new situation with which the Europeans had to deal with. It forced the European countries to unite and develop politically and economically. Some organizations were founded like the ECSC in 1952, the Western European Union (WEU) in 1954, and the EEC and EURATOM in 1957. However, the economic recovery of European countries, especially West Germany with the economic miracle, seemed to end after labor productivity peaked up to a higher level than ever before in the early 1960s.

It is widely accepted that though West European countries built a strong economy, they did not integrate completely. For Germany, long division and occupational status prevented it from returning to its former position. Nationalism in France pursued by Charles de Gaulle during the years from 1958 to 1969 more or less weakened the EEC. The security plan of EDC demonstrated the uneasy consensus between France and Germany. Additionally, there was the fact that during the 1960s the influence of the U.S. and the SU on this continent was getting more evident and then it was increasingly strengthened through the arms race between the two superpowers. Europe was, in essence, no longer as powerful as it had been prior to 1939. In addition, another powerful force that could not be ignored was the PRC in Asia, established in 1949. Its creation was intended to bring a balance of power between the West and the East. Soon after the birth of Red China, the country constantly sought its own sphere of influence in which Indochina played a crucial role as its geographical and ideological ally.

Subsequently, there were three complex adaptation crises amalgamated between 1949 and 1957 before they finally defined both the new European and the new transatlantic architecture: “firstly, the Cold War and Soviet expansionism – followed by the wars in Korea and Indochina as well as the Suez Crises that

made France and Britain painfully realized the limits of their global role – facilitated the American guarantee for Europe’s security; secondly, functional European integration through the ECSC turned out to be the highly successful way of matching a host of conflicting integration ideas and national interests of rebuilding Western Europe as a society of affluence and freedom, based on a law-based Single Market; thirdly, NATO as the strategic and military insurance policy for rebuilding Western Europe, the Council of Europe as a loose community of European values and the EEC as the first step to political integration in Europe mutually reinforced a new and sustainable European peace order.”¹⁰¹

3.2. Germany after WW II

25 April 1945 was known as Elbe Day and marked an important step towards the end of WW II in Europe. It began a new episode in the war when the Russian and American armies gathered in Torgau, located next to the bank of the Elbe River on German soil. Being aware of an upcoming defeat, Hitler appointed General (*Grossadmiral*) Dönitz the Premier of the “Third Reich” and killed himself on 30 April 1945. On 2 May 1945, the Red Army occupied Berlin and the German army’s defeat was inevitable. Shortly after that, on 7 May 1945, the German army was forced to surrender unconditionally. On 5 June 1945, the allies officially controlled Germany. After this, it can be said that the allied powers brought a complete end to the European battle.

¹⁰¹ Ludger Kühnhardt, *European Integration: Challenge and Response, Crises as Engines of Progress in European Integration History*, ZEI Discussion Papers C.157, 2006, p. 15. See: www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c157Kuehnhardt.pdf, (online accessed on 12 July 2011).



Picture 10: Germany 1945.

The legacy of WW II waged by Nazi Germany from 1939 to 1945 was seen as the most horrible conflict in the modern world war history. One-seventh of the 110 million soldiers who served in the war died, between 20 and 30 million civilians lost their lives, including 5.5 million Jews in Nazi Germany's concentration camps. The German army was forced to surrender on 9 May 1945. Without doubt, Germany had to take responsibility for causing the war. The country had no right to decide its own future fate but depended completely on the allies' policies. The allies' common aim was to find strict solutions on how to totally annul German aggressive potential and to protect the world from another war. It could be seen that post-war Germany faced a difficult situation such as it had never suffered before, as around six million Germans were dead and millions more were injured. Additionally, from four to six million Germans considered prisoners of war were still in prisons somewhere in the SU and elsewhere. Thousands of houses in most cities had been destroyed by the allies' bombing. Starvation and disease were threatening the inhabitants.¹⁰²

It is noted that policies towards Germany after the war had been debated and decided by the allies long before WW II ended. The SU, the U.S. and Britain

¹⁰² William David Graf, *The German Left since 1945 – Socialism and Social Democracy in the German Federal Republic*, The Oleander Press, 1976, p.20. See also: Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History* (Translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider), Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 286-287.

had gathered many times to talk over the issues of Germany's unconditional surrender as well as its future under the control of the allies. Many important meetings were held between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in Casablanca in February 1943; the Foreign Minister Conference in Moscow in October 1943; the Governor Summit in Teheran in November and December 1943 between Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill; the Yalta Conference in February 1945. The final meeting was the Potsdam Conference in July-August 1945. In these meetings all the representatives mostly talked about post-war Germany.

The Potsdam Agreement signed on 2 August 1945 aimed to prevent any new war launched by Germany as world war history had witnessed. In order to achieve this aim, the allies decided some fundamental issues as follows:

- to totally destroy German militarism and fascism so that Germany would have no opportunity to threaten its neighboring countries as well as the world's security;
- to create good conditions for Germans to restart their new lives based on democracy and peace and have a suitable and equal position with free nations;
- to entirely change German industry into a peaceful one, all sole industrial groups had to be abolished as they had been the dangerous hotbed of aggressive militarists; light-industry was encouraged to develop;
- to consider Germany a sovereign nation in economics;
- to encourage free trade unions to develop, to ensure free speech in order to help democratic forces develop;
- to regulate Germany to pay damages to the allies; to stipulate the court to judge war criminals;

- to establish an administrative system to govern Germany, free elections would be held at local level; no central government would be set up.¹⁰³

In Germany, there were no central government or any central administrative offices which had the ability to guarantee social security and run the administrative system as well as carry out the demands required by the allies. Therefore, the governments of Britain, the U.S. and the SU, along with the Provisional government of France proclaimed control over Germany from central to community level. As previously decided by the Potsdam Agreement, Germany was then divided into four occupational zones. Each zone was occupied by the individual power's army. The High Military Commander of each power individually had full rights to rule its occupied zone. The Ally Control Council was founded on 30 August 1945 with headquarters in Berlin which functioned as the single office controlling the whole of Germany. The Potsdam Agreement also stated that the German economy, especially agriculture, must be developed, and the economy in four occupational zones must be structured in a united form and thus also solely controlled by the allies.

All in all, despite different points of view, all the allies to some extent agreed on common policies towards post-war Germany. They agreed to allow for the things they did not agree on by allowing each power to control its own zone according to its plans and something like a co-ordinated effort for Germany regarding its economy and the payment of reparations. However, it can be seen that there were still differences among the allies which could not be easily solved afterwards. Followed by the Yalta Agreement, the Potsdam Agreement was a solution against aggressive empires that caused WW II. Additionally, the Potsdam Agreement put an end to WW II in Europe. This also set the basis for the new world peace on the one hand. On the other hand, the Potsdam Agreement provided the Germans a chance to start again after Hitler's regime had been

¹⁰³ Nguyễn Anh Thái, *Lịch sử thế giới hiện đại (World Modern History)*, Education Publishing House, 2007, tr. 225.

totally dismissed. As we have seen, WW II altered the power balance in Europe and the whole world.

Then two superpowers emerged, however: the SU and the U.S., whose differing policies on post-war Germany fundamentally led to the division of Germany four years after the war. At the very beginning, these two powers oscillated between coordination and confrontation. Confrontation stemmed from different standpoints connected to each one's interests. Doubtlessly, they were affected by anti-Soviet theory put forward by the Western world. It is true to note that the SU had to suffer a severe outcome of the war: the economy was almost destroyed; cities and villages were in ruin, more than 20 million soldiers and civilians died in the war. According to the Potsdam Agreement, the SU would receive compensations from the Western part of Germany. But the U.S. actually did not hold to this agreement. Because of dispute on American loans for the SU, it opposed the SU dismantling German factories in its occupied zone and prevented them from removing machines to the SU from May 1946.

More importantly, the U.S. was concerned by the possibility that if their army was no longer stationed in Europe, the continent would be immediately dominated by SU armed forces. There is no doubt that the U.S. saw this trend as a potential obstacle against its global strategies. We can recognize here that there was a paradox in the minds of the Western allies. On the one hand, they were aware of an aggressive Germany, but they were also concerned by the advantage of the emerging international communist movements on the other. Those attitudes made Western allies confused about the question of whether to allow Germany to be reorganized as a state and curb the SU influence in Europe. In conclusion, in both the Yalta and the Potsdam Conference the allies could only agree on fundamental policies towards Germany but failed in deciding detailed regulations to fulfil those policies due to each country's security interests.

3.2.1. The policies of the Allies towards Germany after 1945

3.2.1.1. The U.S. with the “open door” policy

U.S. policies towards Germany after the war seemed unclear and the Americans were sometimes confused about defining their policies for Germany. As pointed out above, each victor in WW II had its own intentions in controlling Germany. As Hermann Josef Rupieper explains, “the policy of both the Truman and Eisenhower administration toward Germany was the result of three interconnected problems: the development of the East-West conflict and thus the global U.S.-Soviet confrontation; any solution of the German problem was of crucial importance for the stabilization of Europe and the concept of Western European Integration, which had started with the Marshall Plan; and considering Western experiences with a united Germany and especially U.S. intervention in two world wars to prevent the domination of the continent by Germany, the future of Germany also affected U.S. national security interest.”¹⁰⁴

Based on arrangements agreed by the allies in the Potsdam Agreement, Germany would be *Denazified, Demilitarized, Decartelized, Democratized* (the 4Ds). Nevertheless, the Americans were also pursuing their own goals in terms of security, economy and forestalling communism.¹⁰⁵ In February 1943, in Casablanca, both America and Britain stated that the Atlantic Charter would not be applied to Germany, Japan, Italy and their followers.¹⁰⁶ Despite the Atlantic Charter, the allies still had full rights to plan their own policies towards post-war Germany. Article 4 of the Atlantic Charter mentioned that trade barriers were to be equalized in the whole world after the war. This proved the nature of the American policy and was understood as American global strategy in diplomacy or

¹⁰⁴ Hermann Joseph Rupieper, *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany 1945-1949*, German Historical Institute, Washington DC and Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ William David Graf, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ The Atlantic Charter was signed by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in August 1941. The third point of the charter stated that the right of national self-determination would be restored to those deprived of it. See more at: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp> (online accessed on 7 October 2012).

the so-called “open door” policy. The American strategies were to use this article to guarantee its broad influence in meeting its export demands and material needs with a hope that America would be a great superpower in economics directly after the war. In an effort to implement this policy, the U.S. strived to avoid reaching an agreement on each country’s sphere of influence, which both the SU and Britain wished to discuss. Also, America itself postponed many detailed plans for post-war Europe. The American attitude, in some ways, blocked many agreements which had been previously reached by the allies. By signing the Atlantic Charter the Americans were paving the way for their global domination, as we have seen in the following years.

Nevertheless, one of the most important subjects in which the allies were interested was the territorial organization of Germany after the war. In Casablanca when the war was still underway, the allies established their requirement that Nazi Germany must unconditionally surrender. Many solutions had been conceived. One of them was Morgenthau’s idea which represented the American thought. As early as 1944, he proposed that Germany’s industry must be entirely abolished, and agriculture must be restored, or “Germany’s road to peace leads to the farm.” By doing that no more war could be launched. Morgenthau’s idea was to cooperate with the SU so that the American army could be completely withdrawn from Europe.

In order to do this, the Directive JSC 1067 delivered by the U.S. clearly stated its policy towards Germany from 1945 to 1947. The main content of the document stated that the Germans could not forget their responsibility for what they had done in the past. In this case, Germany would be occupied as a “defeated enemy nation” with the hope of eliminating the Nazism. Occupation status would prevent it from waging any future war, and make it become a democracy-based state. That also meant the German economy and military would be strictly controlled. In spite of that, those countries devastated by the Nazis would receive reasonable compensation from Germany, the Directive continued.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ See: <http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga3-450426.pdf>, (online accessed on 11 July 2012).

As we have seen, not only did the American implement their military and economic policies, but they also tried to control German politics. However, indeed, the “theory of collective guilt” of all Germans was a tool to minimize the influence of the groups which most strongly resisted the Nazis, the communists in particular, as Desmond Dinan states: “If all Germans had been equally guilty for the rise of the Third Reich, this theory went, then in the post-war reconstruction no political group could be given preference, not even the antifascists, socialists and communists who had been in the forefront of the struggle against Hitler.”¹⁰⁸

3.2.1.2. The British policy

Winston Churchill’s signature on the Atlantic Charter did not completely mean that Britain could not follow its own policy towards Germany compared to the U.S. and the SU’s perspectives. Britain agreed that the border issues would be discussed after the war as top priority because this had been the main cause of the formation of aggressiveness and fascism. At first, British policy seemed similar to that of the U.S. but clear distinctions gradually appeared between the two allies. We can see that the more the SU proved their role in military and politics, the harder Britain sought some arrangements on territory. Britain and the SU were highly concerned with their sphere of influence in South-east Europe. Even when the war was still on, Britain talked frequently about border lines between Poland and Germany. After 1943 when the SU halted diplomatic relations with Poland, Britain suggested to the government-in-exile of Poland that it should accept the border line in East Poland as the SU had demanded. Germany then had to compensate the government-in-exile of Poland with a part of German territory in the Western part of Poland. This suggestion was strongly opposed by the Americans and then by Poland, however.

Once the U.S. wanted to be a dominant world power, Britain hoped to rely on its principles to re-organize the power balance in Europe. First post-war elections in Britain brought a victory for Clement Attlee’s Labour Party. Britain’s interests in Europe could be threatened from two sides: one from the SU potential

¹⁰⁸ Desmond Dinan, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

to influence the West, and another from America attempting to influence in Europe likewise. Britain consistently opposed the Oder-Neisse border lines from the moment they were demarcated at the Yalta Conference and maintained this point at the Potsdam Conference due to the worry over SU influence in the West. In this case, Britain sought a detailed arrangement with the SU before withdrawing its force.

After the war, Britain saw that Morgenthau's model could satisfy its economic interests. It supposed that Britain's capital would then be strengthened by dismantling Germany's industrial factories. British policies were not always consistent with those of the U.S., but rather had different directions in each period of time. This can be demonstrated by their contradiction on economic and political interests. Both saw that if they intended to destroy the German economy for a long period it would be in turn a burden for the allies. Britain was also severely devastated in the war so surely it would not hope to share this hardship. Moreover, both Britain and the U.S. wanted to use Germany as a dam preventing any menace from the Soviet threat. Paradoxically, if the German economy recovered it would be a danger for political security and violate the previous arrangements among the allies.

The British government preferred to construct an effectively administrative system or a "political clean" system. However, they still made use of those officers who had served in the Nazi regime. The British stopped on its own initiative the re-education of fascists by mid-1947. In fact, British politicians were always suspicious of the implementation of the Potsdam Agreement and Germany as a united entity. British policy makers even foresaw the future division of Germany before the U.S. did. In a word, British policies towards post-war Germany were consistent as after the Potsdam Conference, Churchill and the Tories were no longer in power, and Attlee and the Labour Party drove British politics at that time.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Despite this, British policies after WW II were also influenced by the U.S. as it depended on American financial aid.

3.2.1.3. *The SU's policy*

Immediately after being attacked by German troops, the SU signed the Atlantic Charter in 1941 and pledged to join the common front against Japanese fascists. At the Teheran Conference in 1943, Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill agreed upon an overall plan for post-war Germany. Basically, the SU shared the view of the Western allies in controlling Germany after the war with some fundamental matters like the abolishment of fascism, demilitarization and strict control over the German economy, etc. At the very beginning of its occupation of Eastern part of Germany, the SU worked out some sort of democratization program which seemed different from what the U.S. and Britain did in their respective occupational zones. Nevertheless, for the Russians, democratization meant something different from the Western terms. The Soviet occupiers supported German communists in building up action programs of democratic groups hoping to form a democratic force against fascism in the whole of Germany. It was hoped that the Communist Party would lead Germany; all democratic forces would be united in order to form a democratic republic state in which the German people would be guaranteed freedom and democracy. This was, in the Russians' eyes, considered an important step towards socialism. Nonetheless, the first elections in the Soviet Zone of Occupation were disastrous for the German communists. As a result, the East German SPD was forced to unite with the KPD to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* - SED).

One of the most ambitious objectives of the SU was to consolidate communist forces and to make use of democratic forces so that it could broaden Russian influence in mid and East Europe, and even South-east Europe. This could be interpreted to mean that the SU desired to expand the power of the communist bloc after WW II. It could also be argued that what the SU did was only to serve its primary goal which was to guarantee its national security, as it had fully experienced two world wars in the past. More than any other country, the SU did not want to become involved in any new war and, as the leaders of the SU repeatedly stated, it did not have any plan to invade any other countries.

However, what the Russians acted in some Eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary in late 1948 and 1956 proved the differences between their policies and real actions.

Another issue that made the SU worried after the war was the border problem. This was regarded as crucial and a point of contention between the SU and the Western powers. When signing the Atlantic Charter, Stalin demanded that Soviet's border line remain as it had been in 1941. At Yalta in February 1945, the SU strongly recommended that any arrangement must accommodate the SU-Poland border line of 1939 which was exactly the same as the former one in 1918. After the Hitler-Stalin-Pact, Hitler attacked Poland first. A couple of days later the Russian occupied the eastern part of Poland. What followed after WWII was that the entire State of Poland was shifted to the West.

The allies also agreed that all ethnic groups would be transferred to their respective new territories such as the Poles would be moved to Poland, the Ukrainians would be moved to Soviet Ukraina. The Germans were expelled to the zones of occupations, the Polish from the eastern part of Poland were forced out too and had to settle in those areas, where the Germans have been expelled from east of the Oder-Neisse-Line. Together with the different status of the *Siegermächte* (Victorious Powers) from the matters of how to control post-war Germany and Austria, the territorial and ethnic reorganization of Middle Eastern Europe after WW II became a huge disputed problem among *Siegermächte*, who were pursuing their own calculations and related countries. However, more than any country involved in the territorial reorganization process, Germany lost a large part of its territory.

3.2.1.4. The French policy

For France, “the German occupation of France created a hatred of Germans and Germany that left little room for forgiveness or reconciliation. The Germans were guilty not only of military aggrandizement and economic

exploitation, but a sadistic savagery.”¹¹⁰ At the Yalta Conference, based on Stalin’s suggestions, Britain and the U.S. agreed to invite France to join the group of post-war Germany occupiers. And France really deserved to join.¹¹¹

Very soon after becoming a member of the occupiers’ alliance France established its own designs. More than ever France did not want to see a strong and aggressive Germany again. Therefore, a divided Germany was exactly what France had hoped for, because a unified Germany would be a visible threat to France’s national security. As France had been taught through many lessons in its history of an unfriendly relationship with Germany from the German-French War of 1870 to WW II, France could draw wise and suitable diplomatic strategies towards a defeated Germany in order not to be threatened again. Accordingly, France opposed any ideas on a central control authority for the whole of Germany. Its own occupational zone was more or less strictly separated from the others.

For economic reasons, the Saar area was cut off from the French occupational zone in the hope that it would be integrated into French territory. In the French occupational zone, Germans had to endure a hard life under a very harsh control policy. Reparations were made at the highest level and German prisoners of war had to work very hard for years. Thousands of Germans were recruited into the FFL and sent to Indochina or North Africa.¹¹²

Legally, each member of the allied force had the right to veto. France took advantage of this to break up many arrangements offered by other allied members. There was no doubt that France did whatever it could to take revenge on Germany in its occupational zone by exploiting both natural and human sources. The French military authority in Germany “at the same time sought to re-educate and democratize the German people. This aims to make them worthy of a place in the

¹¹⁰ F. Roy Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe 1945 – 1967*, Stanford University Press, California, 1968, p. 32.

¹¹¹ Officially, four allied powers were the U.S., the SU, the UK and France. Stalin tried to make Poland the fifth occupier but failed.

¹¹² Many of them voluntarily joined the FFL; others were forced to do it. For more details, see following chapters.

moral and cultural community of Europe, notably by cathartic acquaintance with the best of France's own cultural heritage. The mother of arts, arms, and laws was willing to raise a foster-child."¹¹³

However, France also shared with Britain and the U.S. feelings of fear about future Soviet influence in the West. France believed that the left bank of the river Rhine should be a natural border commonly shared by Germany, Switzerland and France. If French troops were forced to withdraw from that area France would feel completely unsafe for its national security. As for Ruhr area with its high production quantity of coal per year, Germany was not allowed to exploit this for its national heavy industry exclusively because of the danger of Germany again becoming a great economic power and a danger to France.¹¹⁴

At the Potsdam Conference, France was only interested in dismantling German factories and industrial equipment and moving them to France. Regarding other plans in governing post-war Germany, France acted perfunctorily as they knew that France could not gain more profit from Germany. We know that post-war French foreign policy must be understood in the context of economic and military crisis. More importantly, French colonial policies towards Indochina and North Africa were gradually becoming an economic burden for France. During the German occupation period in France from 1940 to June 1944, most French colonial territories and interests fell into German hands or under the control of Japanese fascists. Under the Potsdam Agreement, the allies sent their troops to those territories to attempt to force surrender. Followed by British troops, France returned to South Vietnam to disarm Japanese with the intention to retake control over Indochina. We have seen that France initially intended to isolate Germany. Was France hoping to achieve a position of continental dominance? Would this be

¹¹³ F. Roy Willis, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

¹¹⁴ The year 1939 saw the highest coal production in the history of the Ruhr district with 130 million tons. In 1956, coal production reached 124 million tons. See more: Joachim Huske, *Die Steinkohlezeehen im Ruhrrevier – Daten und Fakten von den Anfängen bis 2005*. Selbsverlag des Deutschen Bergbau-Museums Bochum, 2006. See also: <http://geomorphologie.revues.org/7965> (online accessed on 7 October 2012).

possible for France? All these matters will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

To sum up, it is not simple to reconstruct and analyze the allies' policies towards post-war Germany. In fact, although the allies had fought side by side as part of the anti-fascist front, they also faced unavoidable ideological contradictions as they represented different political and ideological trends. They were only united in one goal: to defeat Germany, Japan, Italy and their allies. Once this goal was achieved, conflicts came up. On the one hand, their agreements were certified by signing many common documents related to re-organizing Central Europe and Germany after the war, but on the other hand, differences among the allies were also increasingly displayed. As we have analyzed, each member of the allied force had its own intentions in protecting its interests by planning strategic policies towards post-war Germany. Finally, after the war the allies' policy on defining the occupational zone of each ally in Germany was rather a "technical solution" than a "political solution."

3.2.2. Germany in the four occupational zones

Clearly, Germany was in utter ruin or at the so-called "Stunde Null" (*Hour Zero*) after the war.¹¹⁵ No central government was established and administrative activities were entirely governed by the victors. These administrative activities can be categorized in the fields of structuring the four occupational zones; chastising war criminals; democratization; and economic recovery.

Actually, the frontier of each zone was chosen at random and did not depend on socio-economic and cultural conditions. It even cut through particular economic structures: The German economy prior to 1945 was structured by an axis of the most important industrial areas: the Ruhr, Middle Germany, Berlin and Silesia. The socio-spatial structure of the West German economy would be significantly different: the economic center shifted to the West and South. Nevertheless, there were some differences in the occupation policies of each zone leading to distinctions in the development of economics and politics thereafter.

¹¹⁵ See also: Hans Habe, *Im Jahre Null*, Wilhem Heyne Verlag, München, 1977.

Theoretically, the most powerful force in generally controlling the whole of Germany was the Allied High Commission placed in Berlin. Each occupier's control office was set up at the levels of *Land* (state), region and city. The head office of the U.S. military control was the *Office of Military Government U.S. Zone* – OMGUS; of Britain was the *Control Commission of Germany, British Element* – CCG/BE; of France was the *Conseil de Controle de la France pour l'Allemagne*; and of the SU was the *Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland* – SMAD.

Regarding the mission of chastising war criminals: based on the agreement released after the Ministerial Conference in Moscow in 1943 an International Military Tribunal for chastising war criminals would be installed in Nürnberg from the fall of 1945. Accordingly, the trial committee was convened by the representatives of victors. The inductees were heads of the Nazi party, Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*), the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), the Nazi government and the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Supreme Command of the Armed Forces). After one year's activity, 12 out of 22 criminals were sentenced to death by the court including: Göring, the second leader of the Nazi regime after Hitler; Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister from 1938; Keitel, Chef of the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*; Kaltenbrunner, Head of the SS force.

According to the Potsdam Agreement, the victors would dismantle all NS-organizations to stop NS-propaganda; especially in the American zone of occupation, the dismantling was carried out and combined with a huge re-education effort. This process was implemented differently in each occupied zone. In the Soviet zone, the process was closely connected to economic and social reform, for example through land reform in September 1945, when the former regime's properties collection and industrial foundation were nationalized. However, the Soviets also acted at random in their attempts at denazification; ultimately, they were as totalitarian as the Nazi-Germans had been. Thousands of women were raped in the Soviet zone; thousands of Germans were brought to Russian forced labor camps, etc.

In terms of democratization: political democratization was one of the most important objectives of the allies despite dissimilar view points on democracy and democratization. This process could be done by re-establishing political parties, trade unions and people's organizations, which would serve as very significant elements for a new Germany in political and economic recovery and development after the war. After the dismantling of NS-Organizations, a new system of political parties was emerging after WW II. Some parties which had already existed in the Weimar Republic were re-organized, first of all the SPD but also the KPD, whereas in the center and right of the political spectrum, new parties were founded. They were the CDU, with centers in Berlin and North-Rhine Westphalia which gathered the Christian working class movement, together with moderate conservatives and liberals, and the FDP as a united liberal party combining the left and right wing of the liberals which had been split into several organizations since the Deutsches Kaiserreich. Also new parties in the right of the spectrum were founded, but they were rapidly marginalized.

In the Soviet occupation zone, the SMAD promulgated a decree allowing the establishment of democratic parties in Eastern part of Germany in June 1945. The two first reformed parties were working class parties: the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* - German Communist Party (KPD), first led by Walter Ulbricht, and the SPD. The KPD made an appeal which had much in common with the "German Popular Front" of the 1930s.¹¹⁶ The main content of this appeal was the KPD's criticism with regards to the Nazi regime's crimes to humanity. The party also called for the establishment of a new anti-fascist union and a democracy-based state. After that, the SPD's leader Otto Grotewohl also made an appeal, with its program heading towards democracy in the state and in society,

¹¹⁶ Unlike in France and Spain, the German Popular Front in fact never existed. It was only a communist fiction. The strategy until 1934 was Popular Front from Below to demonstrate to the workers that the Social Democratic leaders were objectively fascists, just like the Nazis. The political propaganda of the KPD claimed that all other political parties were objectively fascists. With the respective Comintern Congress in 1934 already smashed, the KPD then moved to Popular Front politics with a different approach. Especially after 1945, the KPD and SPD leaders often stressed that both had suffered persecutions from the Nazi party.

approaching socialism. Despite the refusal of the SPD leader Kurt Schumacher to merge the SPD and the KPD, both were forcibly united under the single name of *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* or the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) in the Soviet zone.¹¹⁷

Subsequently, Kurt Schumacher re-established another version of the SPD in Hanover. He rejected being put under the leadership of the central executive committee in Berlin in combination with the KPD because he thought that the KPD, rather a non-democratic party, controlled by SMAD would rule a new Germany. Moreover, he feared that the communists would take control of the SED, which is indeed what happened. Kurt Schumacher later opposed Konrad Adenauer's policy in integrating Germany into the West with the view that the process of integration would separate Germany for a long time.

Another political party that was set up at that time was the CDU which later played a decisive role in founding and leading the FRG after 1949. Under the leadership of Dr. Konrad Adenauer, its fundamental stance was widely "critical of the capitalist economic system."¹¹⁸ The CDU first put with Ahlener Program more emphasis on "Christian Socialism", and shifted the focus of its program until 1949 more to social market economy (*soziale Marktwirtschaft*).¹¹⁹ Thus, the CDU was and still is a combination of different political groups, e.g., the liberals, the conservatives and the Christian socialists. Konrad Adenauer was elected the chair of the CDU in all the Western occupation zones in the fall of 1950.

In terms of economic recovery: Germany immediately had to deal with starvation after *Stunde Null*. In addition, the situation became worse as more Germans arrived after being forcibly expelled from their homes in what are today Poland, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Hungary, etc. Food production was not

¹¹⁷ The SED was then co-chaired by Wilhelm Pieck (KPD) and Otto Grotewohl (SPD). SED became the leading party in the GDR for the forty years of its lifetime.

¹¹⁸ See: Ahlener Program of the CDU February 1947 at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3093 (online accessed on 8 October 2012).

¹¹⁹ Soziale Marktwirtschaft was first introduced by the CDU with the Düsseldorfer Leitsätze from 1949.

sufficient. It was distributed unfairly among the occupation zones due to the different resources in the respective zones and different numbers of incoming refugees. Only people with contacts, having something to sell on the “black market” and having responsible entrepreneurs or well working solidarity in companies, etc. were able to supply themselves with enough food. The unbalance and shortage of supplies led to the development of a “black market” where almost everything could be sold and purchased.¹²⁰

With significant differences in the respective zones, from 1945 and 1946, the occupying powers gave the full right of settling the affairs of supplying food, necessities, dwelling, health, school, etc. to the *Länder*. The number of people who died of starvation and illness, including children increased. The military authorities, especially the Americans, had to call on their home citizens to support and relieve the Germans. Moreover, bad weather in the winter of 1946 - 1947 caused a decline in agricultural productivity.

However, the most crucial task at this time was to find solutions for adjusting the economy in the occupational zones. This meant that the occupiers had to unite the German economic zones defined in the Potsdam Agreement in order to form a central office to proceed in this task. Also, they had to set up a complete administrative system, notably by forming commissions in the states, which were considered a basic step to reaching an inter-regional arrangement on the economy. The French military government, not the SU, objected to the forming of such a central office. On 3 May 1946, General Clay ordered the postponement of dismantling industrial bases in America’s occupational zone in the hope that France and the SU would agree on the issue of economic unification. In fact, this influenced French economic interests more than Soviet interests. Consequently, France vetoed what General Clay had intended to do.

The second barrier which General Clay had to face came from the U.S. The American State Secretary believed that, establishing a limited inter-regional economy or Bizone, composed of the U.S. and Britain, was the best option to

¹²⁰ Hagen Schulze, *op.cit.*, pp 294-295.

develop the German economy. This Bizone would be developed into a non-communist state later. But German politicians strongly opposed this proposal as they feared that the move would lead to a future division of Germany. The SU and France at first thought it would break up the Potsdam Agreement but finally France agreed to join the Bizone, thus the Trizone was formed.

In the Eastern part of Germany, the owners were expropriated. All big and important enterprises were managed by the SU. The SMAD directly controlled production processes, from which the SU deducted part of production as reparation. This practice lasted until 1953. The U.S. and Britain estimated that, by dismantling equipment from its occupational zone, the SU had taken around ten billion US dollars. It should be well understood here that the Russians had demolished German infrastructure and the Americans then had to sustain the German population. Also, the Russians did not use the reparations to pay back their American loans, but rather to reconstruct and strengthen Soviet military potential. This was the key economic issue.

On 4 July 1947, the German Economic Commission (*Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission* - DWK) was established by the SMAD under Decree 138. The commission functioned as the central office of the government in the Eastern part of Germany and a consulting organ for the SMAD. In March 1948, the DWK was renewed to act as a planning organization in the economy for the whole of East Germany.

In late September 1946, plans for establishing a combined economic region of the U.S. and Britain were carried out. The two most important administrative organs of the whole economy and the agricultural sector were set up. However, due to the inconvenient and devastated infrastructure, goods transportation was restricted. Additionally, the distribution of industrial and agricultural products was carried out unfairly between cities and rural regions. This situation evidently forced the U.S. to consider promoting German industrial productivity without consulting France or the SU. To finalize this plan, the U.S. and Britain discussed and agreed on the formation of an inter-region Economic Commission containing 52 members selected from the parliament of each state.

3.2.3. *The establishment of the two German states in 1949*

All the calculations of the allies finally led to the formation of the two German states.¹²¹ All three Western allies knew that they simply could do nothing to influence or to gain the upper hands over the SU even when they had formed an inter-regional economic zone in Western Germany. They determined to found a state in the Western part of Germany. Thereafter, this state would integrate into the Western club. This might also become a strong force against the SU and other socialist states in East Europe. As a realistic and anti-communist politician, Konrad Adenauer strongly supported these ideas.

On 1 July 1948, the Military Commanders of the U.S., France and Britain handed over three important documents commonly called the “Frankfurt Documents” to eleven state heads in their occupation zones. These were the legal foundation for the promulgation of the later Basic Law. The most important document was the third one which mainly outlined the most fundamental principles of how the allies would control the new-born state in West Germany. Those were:

- to keep control over the new-born state’s foreign policy;
- to control, if necessary, foreign trade activities and other domestic trade which might limit German foreign trade activities;
- to restraint those arrangements related to the Ruhr region, reparations, industry, disarmament, demilitarization, and some scientific activities;
- to secure occupying forces by all means;
- to respect the approved Basic Law.

¹²¹ See more: H. Graml, *Die Alliierten und die Teilung Deutschland, Konflikt und Entscheidungen 1941-1948*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1985; *Westdeutschlands Weg zur Bundesrepublik 1945-1949*, Beiträge von Mitarbeitern des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, München, 1976.

Historians and researchers have seen that the occupying powers still controlled the most important sectors in terms of domestic and foreign affairs. According to the content of the third document, the most important domestic and foreign affair of new Germany (West Germany) would still be controlled by the occupying forces. It also meant that the new West Germany was not only an occupied country but also an independent state with limited sovereignty. This formed the substance of conflicts around domestic policy and the foreign orientation of the FRG in the years to come. No sooner than 1955, when West Germany signed and joined military pact of NATO did the allies hand over almost full governing rights to the federal state.

Therefore, it could be argued that Germany was supervised by the High Commission, and that Western Germany had to prove its compliance with international law and human rights. Step by step, then, in the West the supervision was replaced by international cooperation. But indeed, many strategies, which were imposed on Germany, were similar to those in the colonized world, for example the denial of legal rule and government in Germany. We should keep in mind that the allies by legal theory had not fought a nation or a state but a criminal gang in illegal possession of a territory with no legal government. All occupying powers had experience in colonial rule.

During the formation process of the two German states, the Ministers of the allies gathered to hold a final session in Paris from 23 May to 20 June 1949. In the meeting, all the allies confirmed the end of the Berlin blockade and invited the Soviet occupied zone to join the new West Germany state legislated under the regulation of article 23 of the Basic Law. The SU unsurprisingly rejected this invitation. The West German state announced that anyone living in the Eastern part of Germany who wished to move to West Germany would be accepted and would have the same rights as others living in the Federal Republic. Following this, the GDR was formed relatively in October 1949. Both states considered themselves the sole legal representative (*Alleinvertretungsanspruch*) for the whole of Germany because they both served all of Germany's interests. This debate lasted until 1973 when both states became equal members of the UN.

All in all, the birth of the two German states depended a great deal on the allies' calculations and interests and was being influenced by some major political and economic factors like the emergence of the Cold War, the Marshall Plan, the creation of the Bizone, then the Trizone, the Berlin blockade, currency reform and so on. The federal state was structured differently from the Third Reich and the Weimar Republic formed after the November Revolution in 1918. The Weimar Republic had a liberal constitution. Meanwhile, the FRG has a democratic one. From experiences inferred from the Weimar Republic and the "legal" installation of the Nazi dictatorship the new federal state renewed some basic elements in its political structure such as the relationship between government and parliament, the federal president's capability and, most significantly, the position of the federal Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler*), the strong position of the states (*Länder*), the welfare state (*Sozialstaat*), defensive democracy (*wehrhafte Demokratie*) and the State of Law (*Rechtsstaat*), etc. These changes contributed to a very crucial sense that the FRG was constructed with the aim of building up a welfare state. This proved true, as for a long time West Germany was deeply influenced by social market economics, corporatism, the strong influence of trade unions, and a vertical and horizontal integration of interest groups.

After the establishment of the two German states, all the leaders of both the FRG and the GDR tried to implement each state's political and economic policies to develop the country. In the GDR in the summer of 1952, the SED announced its intention to lead the country to socialism. With Konrad Adenauer, a typical West German Catholic, things went differently. He believed that if freedom, social justice, human and civil rights were not to be achieved in a united Germany, he himself clearly favored them over nationalism. Therefore, he and his government chose to anchor the state in the West as their first priority.¹²²

3.2.4. West Germany in the 1950s

Economics was then considered the most influential factor on the development of each state. However, in West Germany the economic recovery

¹²² *Facts about Germany*, Societäts Verlag, 1992, p. 95.

process had much more success than that of the Eastern part of Germany because from 1946 it received American foreign aid under the GARIOA Program.¹²³ This was then reinforced by another program offered by the Americans, too – the Marshall Plan – to combat “hunger, poverty, despair and chaos”, which provided the crucial boost for the country’s economic recovery (1.4 billion dollars between 1948 and 1952).¹²⁴ However, the Marshall Plan was not the “silver bullet” to boost West Germany’s economy. The country’s economic growth resulted from varied reasons such as modernization, the social market economy, social reforms, compromises between entrepreneurs and trade unions, strong trade unions, the destruction of monopolies and oligopolies, migration of the elite of East Germany to the West, population boom, immigration, innovation, freedom, initiative and determination.

As a result, the German “economic miracle” in the 1950s reached heights that no one could have thought before. After the war, as “the wartime destruction of much of Germany’s industrial plant had paradoxically proved beneficial; the new plant was built with the latest technological equipment. The Allied High Commission gradually abolished control over German industry, saved for atomic energy and certain military restrictions. It provided economic aid and scaled down pre-war German debts. By the early 1950s West Germany had a favorable balance of trade and a rate of industrial growth has obtained as high as 10 percent a year. The GNP of West German increased from 23 billion USD in 1950 to 103 billion USD in 1964, with no serious inflation.”¹²⁵

It is also believed that one of the reasons leading to the German high rate in development was that for a long time Germany did not have to spend its budget on arms, so much of its capital was used to construct big plants with modern equipment. In West Germany a postponed development also took place, the

¹²³ GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) was a program formed after 1945 by the U.S. which aimed to deliver emergency aid, notably food, to the occupied regions in order to lessen the starvation situation.

¹²⁴ *Facts about Germany, op.cit.*, p. 93.

¹²⁵ Robin W. Winks and John E. Talbott, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

introduction of already existing but not yet realized innovations, cars, electro- and electronic commodities like the fridge and the TV, overall a boost in the industries of the third wave. From 1945 to 1963 when the Berlin wall was constructed, millions of eastern Germans immigrated to the West hoping to find jobs and enjoy a better life. Adenauer's *Westpolitik* led West Germany to integrate gradually into the Western club and was marked by German membership of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT in 1948, the ECSC in 1952, and WEU in 1954, EEC and EURATOM in 1957 and so on.

In the early 1950s, economic development in West Germany changed remarkably its position in the continent. However, in foreign policy-making, it was still restricted because it was still led by the allies as regulated in the "Frankfurt Documents." For West Germany, this was not always easy to accept. However, being a defeated country and an occupied state, it had to follow any conditions offered by the allies to get as much support as possible. In other words, West Germany had to be humble and struggle gradually for its independence in diplomacy. Karl Kaiser in his book states that, "the context of Germany's foreign policy of the 1950s was characterised by the three essential features: the environmental origins of this foreign policy; West Germany's place in the structure of the international system and the ensuing patterns of interaction between German and international politics; and finally, the balance between gains and sacrifices, stability and instability...the Federal Republic was not a regime that created a foreign policy but a foreign policy that created a regime... and ... Bonn's foreign policy became an integrated part of the 'policy of strength' whose objectives were identical with regards to East Germany and Eastern Europe: the collapse of Communist rule."¹²⁶ In exchange for its division West Germany was accepted to be full a member of Western club "through the multilateral integration

¹²⁶ Karl Kaiser, *German Foreign Policy in transition: Bonn between East and West*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 129.

of their country in the transatlantic alliance with the U.S., Canada, and other West European powers.”¹²⁷

It is significant to add that after 1955 West Germany unofficially announced its theory in diplomatic policy, driven by the Hallstein Doctrine with its confirmation that the Federal Republic would not establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognized the GDR. It is commonly accepted that the most effective diplomatic success of West Germany in this period was that it established diplomatic relations with Moscow in 1955 even though this more or less violated the Hallstein Doctrine. All the same, Konrad Adenauer achieved much more than success in diplomacy itself by securing the release of the last 10,000 German prisoners of war and about 20,000 civilians.¹²⁸

Although the borders to West Germany were closed by the GDR in 1952, this could not prevent people from fleeing to West Germany. This was also the reason for the construction of the Berlin Wall, built by East Germany on 13 August 1963 to impede the flood of refugees. The relations between the two states that this indicates changed gradually only after they signed the Basic Treaty in 1972. This was the time when West Germany under Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was determined to abide by the concept of “two German States in one German Nation” while still remaining firmly anchored in the Atlantic alliance. East German leaders also changed their outlook on their internal and international political view. As a result of the mutual recognition, both Germanies joined the UN equally in September 1973.

Thus, the first decade or so after WW II was an important period for the German nation to cast off its dark past and overcome its faults. A new epoch in German history was started. It rooted itself by reintegrating into the future Europe. This period was seen as a self-division of the German nation due to the paradoxes

¹²⁷ Timothy D. Showers, *France, Germany and the Development of a European Security and Defense Identity*, MA thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2009, p. 8. See also: http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2000/Jun/00Jun_Showers.pdf, (online accessed on 12 July 2012).

¹²⁸ *Facts about Germany, op.cit.*, p. 95.

and contradiction in political and economic interests among the political traditions and divisions, which existed since WW I. So, Germany was not only passively divided by superpowers, it was actively split by a conflict which existed already since WW I. German division was not just a product of the Cold War, which was in fact no more than a catalysis which contributed to it, but also another division between Germans and Germans in the post-war time. One political faction, the former KPD, later the SED, sided with the SU, whereas the others (Social Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives and political Christians) chose other options. Ideas about the fundamental goals of societal organization became more important than the nation state. This was a fundamental difference to the Nazi period, when the nation and its expansion was the main goal of governmental politics. So, Germans demonstrated that there are more important political goals than the nation state. All changes in socio-economics and politics during this period would be crucial elements that caused different directions in each German state in terms of defining and promoting each state's future in the following years.

3.3. France after WW II

3.3.1. Internal issues

During WW II, Free France sided with the other allies including Britain, Northern European countries, the SU, the U.S. and China to resist the fascist axis, i.e., Germany, Italy, Japan and their allies.¹²⁹ In the first phase of the war (1939-1942) the fascist bloc successfully attacked and occupied most of the European territories. Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany on 3 September 1939. Then France set up a defense line called Maginot line. However, until May 1940 there was no real battle in that region. Historians have called it a “phoney war”. When France was attacked by Nazi military forces, it was quickly defeated within a couple of weeks. As a result, the French government had to move

¹²⁹ It is important to note here that the UK and France before the formal outbreak of the war were the leading powers to create an international alliance to stabilize the situation in Europe. But they were outmaneuvered by the Germans who in 1939 sided with the SU (the Hitler-Stalin-Pact) and attacked Poland, which was until 1939 allied with Germany rather than with France and Britain.

southwards. On 14 June 1940 the French capital, Paris was occupied by Nazi Germany. Marshal Pétain signed a ceasefire agreement with Nazi Germany and accepted the fact that France would be divided into parts.¹³⁰ The very North came under control of the Military Commander for northern France and Belgium. The rest of the North came under direct military control. Italy occupied some smaller parts in the South East and the State of Vichy, Alsace-Lorraine, was occupied and annexed by Germany.

On 10 July 1940, parliament deputies assembled in Vichy where Pétain was appointed chief of state and given all rights of leading the country. This government closely collaborated with Nazi Germany and launched many policies which were strongly opposed by many French people. These policies included forcing youths to be laborers in Germany, collaborating in deporting Jews to death camps, firing communists and fighting the French working class movement. They also changed some principles of the republic such as “Liberty – Equality – Fraternity” into “Labor – Family – Fatherland.” Vichy France was also a result of the deep political conflicts in France before 1940 between the Front Populaire and the political right.

Actually, Nazi Germany had all rights in controlling the whole of France by occupying the remaining southern part of France from November 1942. During this period, many patriotic resistance forces were formed. Even so, at the beginning, resistance in France was rather weak. It only became stronger when the likelihood of German defeat became more obvious. One of the key figures of those resistant movements, General de Gaulle escaped to London in June 1940. There he called for gathering all internal and external forces to resist against Nazi Germany. In order to build a common front, he decided to form a “Free France” force and supported the allies in the struggle against fascism. In France, many resistance movements were raised under the influence of various political ideologies, such as communist, socialist, nationalism-oriented right wing, etc. In

¹³⁰ Marshal Pétain (1856-1951), full name: Henri Philippe Benoni Omer Joseph Pétain, commonly known as Philippe Pétain or simply Marshal Pétain was a great military leader of France in WW I. He became Chief of State of Vichy France from 1940 to 1944.

1942, all the forces combined to form the National Resistance Committee led by Jean Moulin.¹³¹ The committee had contacts with overseas forces led by de Gaulle. From the fall of 1942 to September 1945, the allied forces turned to counter attack and rapidly won on many battlefields. Italian fascist leader Mussolini was brought down in September 1943. On 2 June 1944, French resistance forces formed a provisional government governed by General Charles de Gaulle with its capital in Algeria. The government was assembled by representatives of all resistance forces including communists. On 6 June 1944, the allied troops landed in Normandy and on 25 August 1944, Paris was liberated.

Despite being a victor in WW I, France had had to deal with huge losses in both property and human resources that made it weaker in the years following. Although a lot of reforms were conducted by the government of the People's Popular Front in the 1930s, it failed to rebuild an image of the great French empire. This was proved by their quick and shameful defeat by Nazi Germany in June 1940. The Vichy government's policy in collaborating with the enemy irritated many French people and forced them to form Free France forces outside French territory and resistance groups on French soil. France was finally liberated by the allies almost at the end of WW II in 1944. Ironically, France was not seen as a power which had stood in the anti-Hitler front because France had let Indochina, the French colonial pride fall into the Japanese defense system in 1940. France's shameful concessions in giving up French Indochina to the Japanese fascists seriously challenged the prestige of France. This was definitely considered a contrary act to the common cause of the allies.¹³²

¹³¹ Jean Moulin (1899-1943), a great hero in French military history as he was one of the key leaders of France's resistance movements during WW II.

¹³² Actually, the Vichy regime sided with the Germans even more actively, as "Operation Torch", launched in November 1942, demonstrates. Most of the colonial administrations sided with Free France. After 1940, shortly after the French defeat, the Free Forces started their attempts to gain control over the colonies under Vichy control. The process started with the occupation of Gabon as early as November 1940. Only Indochina and a few possessions in the Caribbean remained loyal to Vichy. See more: Pierre Goubert, *The Course of French History*, (translated by Maarten Ultee), Psychology Press, 1991.

There were serious problems that France had to deal with right after WW II. The most severe issue was that the whole country was badly ruined and “the economic situation of France was disastrous. The country had suffered enormously during the war. And that France’s material losses from physical destruction and spoliation were 4,895 billion francs (1945).”¹³³ Moreover, French infrastructure was also totally in ruin, having suffered from heavy bombing during the war, in which “several cities were badly damaged... the extent of damage the French War Damage Commission estimated the bill as costing France 45% of its total wealth.”¹³⁴ Industrial productivity was three times lower and agricultural productivity was two times lower compared to the period of time before the war. From 1945 to 1950, the French economy recovered very slowly mainly because of expenses for the war in Indochina. Under the umbrella of the Marshall Plan, from 1948 to 1952, France received 3.1 billion US dollars.¹³⁵ Therefore, French economic recovery became faster after 1950, as shown by its increased GNP in the period of 1950 – 1955 it was 4.3%; during the period of 1955 – 1960 it was 4.6%.¹³⁶

After WW II, the provisional government carried out a series of policies aiming to stabilize the country. These included punishing the collaborators and war criminals. Also, the provisional government introduced many reforms, including women’s suffrage, a social security system, reform of the constitution, nationalization of key industries and of the property of collaborators, and as early as 1945 it held elections to the national assembly. A new parliament was formed with the inclusion of all political groups. As a result, a new cabinet was established in November 1945 governed by General de Gaulle. Representatives of the socialists, communists and other political groups joined this government. Not only did the newly liberated France under the leadership of the various

¹³³ F. Roy Willis, *The French in Germany, 1945 – 1949*, Stanford University Press, California, 1962, p. 126.

¹³⁴ Dereck W. Urwin, *Western Europe since 1945: A Short Political History*, Longmans, 1968, p. 28.

¹³⁵ *Unsere Geschichte*, Band 4, Verlag Moritz, Frankfurt am Main, 1988, S. 175.

¹³⁶ Nguyễn Anh Thái, *op.cit.*, tr. 301.

governments of the Fourth Republic have to contend with difficulties in the economy and psychology, but it also had to deal with much social instability.¹³⁷ These issues obviously influenced many French policies towards its colonial territories in Indochina and Algeria which soon had a backlash effect, threatened, and even brought down the Fourth Republic.

Socialist and communist forces had a great influence on the French political stage after WW II. In the parliamentary election held in October 1945, the communists came out as the winners with more than five million votes. After the elections of October 1945, de Gaulle reformed his government. This period was known as the “government of national unity” in the history of France. The cabinet contained five Communists, five Socialists, five members of the Popular Republican Movement (MRP), three of the Democratic and Social Union of the Resistance (UDSR) and one Radical-Socialist.¹³⁸

The new government provided a space for the two working class parties, i.e., the communists and socialists to form a democratic government. The right-wing leaders inside the socialist party rejected a coalition with the communists to form a united government. But the communist influence did not last long when the French prime minister blamed the communists for destroying solidarity and the communist ministers were expelled from the cabinet in May 1947. However, the main factor leading to the absence of the communists in the French cabinet was another matter. It can be argued that the participation of the five communist ministers in the cabinet actually prevented the capitalists from carrying out their plans in managing the economy. After this, the communist force lost many chances to regain their power and influence in France’s political and economic movements.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Instability also came from the French Communist Party with more than 25% of the popular vote. After 1947, communists were expelled from the cabinet due to their bad performance on the economy.

¹³⁸ F. Roy Willis, *The French in Germany, 1945 – 1949, op.cit.*, p. 36.

¹³⁹ After WW II, many European states had all-party coalition in the first months or years. However, the communists then became unreliable partners for longer coalitions. The case of

The referendum in October 1946 on the new constitution paved the way for the formation of the Fourth Republic, which lasted from 1947 to 1958. The constitution of the new republic prescribed a more progressive form of rule which would limit presidential power compared to that of position before the war. It also confirmed the right to work of every citizen, the right to establish trade unions and freedom of demonstration. Last but not least, workers' rights in controlling enterprises were also mentioned. These moves might have created many possibilities to carry out economic and social reforms in the regime of the new republic. However, in January 1946 de Gaulle resigned due to different arguments among his party and others on France's political and economic issues.

From 1947 France started to rebuild with the financial support from the Marshall Plan. The main aims were to nationalize important enterprises, set up some committees protecting workers' rights and ensure social insurance. In the meantime, the Cold War emerged and influenced the ideologies of all political parties. It is important to mention here that France between 1945 and 1947 had two national assemblies and two proposals for a new constitution. It is also a common hypothesis that the constitution of the Fourth Republic was a misconception, especially because of the overextension of the balance of power in favor of the legislative. The Fourth Republic had a weak executive branch. Thus, the structure of parliament was difficult to operate. General de Gaulle stepped down because he understood that the constitution was a misconception. Moreover, rapidly changing cabinets led to an unstable situation in the economy and society. At the same time, France had to cope with the resistance movements waged in colonial territories, of which Indochina served as one the most interesting cases.

The Dien Bien Phu battle and its downfall in May 1954 did not prevent France from beginning a further military adventure in Algeria where the colonized

Italian communists in 1978 also marked the dissolution of such future compromise, as the Marxist-Leninist organization based in Italy was blamed for numerous violent incidents, assassinations and robberies. See more: Rober C Meade, *The Red Bridges: The story of Italian terrorism*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990.

people were strongly provoked by the victory of the Vietminh. Finally, in 1962, after another eight years of violence and negotiations, France had to grant independence to the colonized Algerian people led by the National Liberation Front (FLN). However, compared to Indochina, French extraction from Algeria was more difficult. The collapse of the French empire in the 1950s and 1960s – the decolonization – had a huge impact on French politics and the entire society was profoundly influenced. France’s experiences in the colonial rule over African and Asian countries for more than hundred years taught it numerous lessons. These have been drawn mainly by French intellectuals who have made France the center of European philosophy again.

Traditionally, the French political leaders, who had long been convinced by the legitimacy of their empire, believed that the West had to undertake the task of educating the “backward natives”. In the 1960s, with “the wind of change” spreading over former European colonies and regardless of how actively French intellectuals played their role in French political life, most of them started to believe that France needed to redefine its national identity and international role. This could be done only by reassessing the country’s traditional ideologies. By accepting the ironic fact that French decolonization was considered a defeat, French intellectuals tried to help minimize this unpleasant result.¹⁴⁰

Two decades of post-war France witnessed many interesting developments. The economic boom in the 1950s and early 1960s made France one of the most developed capitalist countries in the world. De Gaulle’s economic policy was to allow capitalism to speed up the reform of the existing production apparatus. This resulted in the rapid increase of the number of workers working in the industrial sectors. However, workers had to work very intensively with an average of forty-six hours per week, while their wages did not reflect this level of commitment. Workers started feeling that they were being cheated. In line with the increasing number of workers, French youth from lower backgrounds to upper

¹⁴⁰ See more: Paul Clay Sorum, *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1977 and Todd Shepard, *The invention of decolonization: the Algerian war and the remaking of France*, Cornell University Press, 2006.

classes had the opportunity to enter university. This new generation rejected the moral order of Gaullist society. At that time, various far left groups appeared. Nevertheless, the hesitation of the French Communist Party in backing the Algerian people split them from the politicized students.¹⁴¹

Similar to what was happening in West Germany at the same time, French society and political life changed remarkably in the year 1967/68 notable by the large number of strikes and demonstrations. Triggered by workers and students, those movements then spread out the entire country. Many factories and universities such as Rhodia in Besançon and some others in Caen, Lyon and Paris were occupied. In the course of the two years, demonstrators confronted the police and were suppressed. Student strikes broke out from early May 1968. This was because of their feelings of dissatisfaction with the existing bureaucracy system which controlled the university's funding, added to by the situation of class discrimination in French society. Interestingly, similar to the situation in West Germany, demonstrations were also provoked by a spirit of solidarity with the National Front for the Liberation of the South of Vietnam (the Vietcong) against the American intervention, especially after the Tet Offensive.¹⁴² Although the student movements were reluctantly supported by the French communists, they received more backing from outside – for example from American artists.

Student demonstrations were later joined by millions of workers who were pursuing their own political agenda: to demand de Gaulle's resignation, to dismiss the current government and even to run the factories by themselves. Negotiations between the administrators of universities and government and demonstrators failed because they could not find common interests. Therefore, demonstrations and strikes escalated in the following days. This context produced a chaotic situation between different political groups like the Socialists, Communists and the Gaullists. A new government, if formed by Pierre Mendès France, might

¹⁴¹ See also: Serge Bernstein, *The Republic of de Gaulle, 1958-1969*, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

¹⁴² See more: Hữu Ngọc, *Phác thảo chân dung văn hóa Pháp (Esquisses pour un portrait de la culture Française)*, Vietnam's Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1991, pp. 233-239.

include the presence of the communists. This meant that more than twenty years after being kicked out of the government, the communists would have a chance to re-emerge within the new would-be government.

During the crisis, de Gaulle, founder and president of the Fifth Republic chose to solve unexpectedly the problem. On 29 May 1968, he disappeared from his office without notification and fled to a French military base in Germany seeking consultation with General Jacques Massu who successfully convinced him to return to France to deal with the situation. The situation was then surprisingly settled. Workers returned to the factories, students went back to the universities when they were reopened. The Union of Democrats for the Republic (the Gaullists) finally won the legislative elections in June 1968.¹⁴³

To conclude, French decolonization in Indochina strongly shook the empire. The Algerian war broke out immediately after that and its outcome officially put an end to the French imperial course. The decolonization process affected not only the political elites, but also had a profound impact on French intellectuals. A series of debates on the inter-relations of the colonial influences on the colonized in general took place both in speech and writing by French intellectuals forming what historians call “postcolonial theory”. This explanation has helped to answer questions on developments in France, West Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. The events of May 1968 in France with the participation of different political groups including the non-orthodox left or non-Marxists and non-communists have been considered a catalyst for the appearance of a new political generation in French society. Those developments in France in the 1960s forced French philosophers and elites to rethink the French international position or French universalism in the new context of postcolonial supranational cooperation.

¹⁴³ For more details on the May 1968 story and the French political movements in 1968, see: Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968*, Cambridge, Mass, South End Press, 2002; Arthur P. Mendel, *Why the French Communists stopped the revolution*, *The View of Politics*, vol. 31, No. 1, 1969 and Mattei Dogan, *How Civil War Was Avoided in France*, *International Political Science Review*, vol. 5, No. 3, 1984.

3.3.2. *France's foreign policy*

France's foreign policy in the post-war period aimed to rescue by any means possible its imperial prestige. This seemed difficult for France because it had at once to solve post-war French political and economic problems both inside the country and in its colonial territories. Additionally, the cost of maintaining the army at the level of her ambitions was somewhat beyond French capacity. One of the key French foreign policies in the decade after WW II was to request controlover the area of Saar in order to master, or at least to balance German economic development.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, it was France who proposed to establish the ECSC by which it could control and exploit Germany's natural coal mines.

With regards to its traditional enemy Germany, France had to find effective ways to subdue it. This was made clear by what French representatives said at the Moscow Conference on 17 January 1947, "that the Rhineland be separated from Germany and internationalized; that the industrial potential of the Ruhr be put under international control, as later appeared at the conference, that the Ruhr itself be detached from Germany; that the Saar mines be made the property of France and that the territory be included in the French customs and financial system; that Germany be organized on a federal basis, as a union of existing *Länder*; and especially that full economic advantage be derived from the German economy, both by exacting reparations and by providing the guarantee of a steady supply of German coal."¹⁴⁵ Obviously, this proposal was strongly supported by the French communists as by doing this France aimed to achieve two objectives, the first of which was to achieve its own secure, and the second to restrict and exploit mines in this area. However, France finally failed to do this successfully.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ The Saar was a coal producing area, in the vicinity of the iron producing areas of Lorraine. The Saar was therefore crucial for France as France needed coal to produce steel. In the meantime, coal and steel were seen as key industries in Western Europe after WW II.

¹⁴⁵ F. Roy Willis, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁴⁶ International control of German industrial potential, especially arms production, was a common goal in most of the neighboring countries, not only in France.

Post-war France also witnessed the foundation of the French Fifth Republic in 1958 which was born in a different context from previous republics. This is because it was founded not by a revolution or foreign aggressors or civil war, but by the impacts of decolonization.¹⁴⁷ In the French Fifth Republic, central authorities were handed over to the President.¹⁴⁸ Charles de Gaulle was invited to head the government and establish a new republic. He was also the statesman who formulated the direction of France's foreign policy thereafter. During the first period of his presidency, Charles de Gaulle decided to maintain the French colonies and he himself as a French president was one of the two architects of the Franco-German reconciliation and partnership in the early 1960s. Under his leadership many regional and international problems were successfully solved, notably Franco-German reconciliation emerged as a priority of de Gaulle government. The Paris-Bonn axis became a motor for continental integration thereafter.

It is also necessary to add that during this period de Gaulle's policy tended to be separate from the U.S., as Franco-American relations had been damaged by their cooperation in solving international problems, of which the Indochina War serves as a striking example. Moreover, in the 1950s and 1960s France advocated building an independent Europe, through which American influence would be gradually lessened. However, the EDC was not a successful model for the European military integration effort. Having failed to build a common defense

¹⁴⁷ In this case, decolonization was an important factor, but another one was French political unrest in which the road to presidency of Rene Coty was a malfunction. Not sooner than the 13th ballot was he elected President in December 1953.

¹⁴⁸ There are some differences between the Fourth and the Fifth Republic, especially their constitutions. For example, to give the President greater power, de Gaulle and his followers proposed a system of stronger executive presidents elected for seven-year term. Legalized by the new constitution, the president would have executive power to govern the country in consultation with the prime minister who would be appointed by the president. Another difference between the two constitutions was that the constitution of the Fifth Republic would replace the already existing parliamentary government system with a semi-presidential one in which both president and prime minister would be performing actively in administering the state. See more: Nicolas Atkin, *The Fifth French Republic (European History in Perspective)*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

with European partners, France sought stronger economic cooperation and the ECSC was actually a good example of that.

After WW II, the hotly-debated topic in French politics was the country's position on the world stage. It is commonly agreed that France was indeed not as great as a victor compared to the U.S. or the SU. In general, after the war, France had to deal with two main problems that made it no more an image of Frenchness. These were: France's collaboration with Nazi Germany; and the decolonization process with the mass loss of its colonial territories in Indochina in 1954, Morocco in 1955, Tunisia in 1956 and Algeria in 1962. Post-war France was forced to psychologically re-consider who and what it was and should be. For a long time after the war France attempted to regain its prestige as a great empire as it had been. To answer these questions France had to settle its unstable political atmosphere and adjust its diplomatic strategies. It cannot be said that France was always successful in this, however. They also drove the de Gaulle government to re-define its relations with the U.S. and its neighboring country Germany as we have seen.

French decolonization and other influential events on the continent as well as outside it, such as the Suez crisis urged leaders of the Fourth Republic to rescue its images as a great country. They also realized that the Americans at that time were concentrating more on the European stage in the context of the Cold War, notably on Germany, as it held their core interests. France had to seek solutions to “the way of political and economic recovery, straining economic and fiscal resources to the limit and causing domestic turmoil; and it damaged France's international image because of the organized brutality that accompanied French attempts to retain control over the colonial territories.”¹⁴⁹

3.3.3. French dilemma in Europe and in Indochina

One of the French security concerns after the wartime was how to control Germany, alongside the problem of what to do to regain prestige in colonial

¹⁴⁹ Wolfram F. Hanrieder and Graeme P. Auton, *op.cit.*, p. 137.

territories. Indochina was considered a symbol to rescue its traditional empire. This explains why soon after WW II, France decided to return to this former colonial possession. Nonetheless, in a new condition, the Indochinese people hampered French ambition by declaring its resistance against France on 19 December 1946. In the first half of the Franco-Viet Minh war, France had to manage alone in the battle, as the U.S. did not clearly show its interest in the region. After 1950 and the outbreak of the Korean War, the Americans intervened directly in the Indochina War with financial assistance to France.¹⁵⁰

As a result of the emerging Cold War and hot war in the Korean Peninsula, West Germany was urged to rearm. The idea of German rearmament caused huge debates among European countries in which France found it the most disturbed. This explains why France proposed a common defense plan among West European allies with the hope of mastering a potential German army. The U.S. strongly advocated this plan as they believed that such a European defense structure managed by Europe could lower the defense burden of the U.S. in the continent. French-American relations in the meantime were influenced significantly by the EDC project and the Franco-Vietminh conflict in Indochina. For the U.S., there was a close connection between Indochina and the EDC project and that connection was directly linked with each other. In fact, that relationship was a logical outcome of the internationalized Asian conflicts.

However, the Eisenhower administration was faced with a paradox in implementing foreign policies because the U.S. simultaneously wanted Paris to continue the war in Indochina and to be an active member of the EDC project. This is explained by Evelyn Colbert in the author's work: "the U.S., its own strength engaged in Korea, was increasingly apprehensive about Asian

¹⁵⁰ Russian communists' intervention in Eastern European regimes and Chinese communists' involvement in the Korean War had threatened American security policy. Thus, the conflict in Indochina became a part of the American containment policy focusing on China. See more: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1950, vol. II, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1976, p. 273; FRUS, *op.cit.*, vol. I, 1977, p.389 and pp. 372-382; FRUS, *op.cit.*, vol. VI, 1976, p. 92 and pp. 956-963; FRUS, *op.cit.*, vol. XII, part 1, 1984, pp. 701-703.

vulnerabilities and more anxious than ever that the French stay the course in Indochina. But because Europe also seemed vulnerable, its defense too required increased resources, and a German military contribution now seemed inevitable.”¹⁵¹ This placed France in a great dilemma. Many deputies in the French parliament suggested that only a victory in Indochina could help France have a high position within the EDC, meaning, France could control Germany as it desired. They even believed that their victory in Indochina would be symmetrical to German remilitarization. Therefore, France needed to gain a victory in Indochina in order to impose its points of view on the EDC profile. Yet the question was how France could do this, if it did not reduce its troops in France? As a matter of fact, by doing this France’s Western allies would suppose that France had violated its pledges to maintain a strong military force in Europe. The problem now for France was whether it should focus on Europe or the world? In other words, between the Elbe River and the Red River which was more important in French strategies in the post-war period?

Being aware of the country’s lower military ranking after WW II, French leaders were driven at an early point to entreat help from the allies for the purpose of coping with the battles in Indochina. Yet at the beginning of the Cold War when Western Europe carried out its defense plan within the framework of the Brussels treaty (signed in 1948) and Atlantic ally (NATO in 1949), France seemed separated by undertaking strategic missions in South-east Asia and Western Europe. Western Europe’s challenging problem was how to persuade America, the most powerful ally, to offer help and only one method could solve this problem, which was “to sell Indochina down the river”. To achieve that goal, from 1948 to early 1950, France made every effort in diplomacy. After this, the Indochina battle was regarded as a crucial element in the free world’s strategy to protect the rest of the world from the communist expansion. In other words, a traditional colonial conflict was declared to be a part of the defense of the free world.

¹⁵¹ Evelyn Colbert, *op.cit.*, p. 206.

However, if America's support reached a certain level, the global community, most notably China would have a drastic reaction. De Latre de Tassigny¹⁵² once shared his ideas with his counterparts at the Pentagon on the Indochina issue. These were if Indochina fell into the communists' hands the rest of Asia and then Suez would be lost. René Pleven also speculated that if more troops were sent to Indochina the European internal defense would be greatly influenced. He would prefer to use American aid to pursue the European defense mission.¹⁵³ Yet his arguments were strongly opposed by Georges Bidault, who constantly saw Indochina as "an active European member." He even went further when describing the battle in Tonkin as a part of the French defense contribution on the Rhine River as well as the Atlantic community.

The U.S. and the other countries in NATO demanded that France increase both its military and economic contribution to NATO for the purpose of protecting Europe from communist expansion (officially alarmed by the outbreak of the Korean War). However, France could not fulfill the task due to its post-war economic crisis and the fact that most of France's military forces were stationed in North Africa and Indochina. Therefore, "in 1953, the government finally accepted that it could no longer afford the Indochina War in light of its commitments in Europe and, increasingly, in North Africa."¹⁵⁴ France also demanded that the U.S. recognize the conflict in Indochina as a resistance against the communist threat in South-east Asia. They also suggested that their contribution had to be seen as the French share in the free world's efforts to prevent communist expansion all over the world. Based on such arguments France had reasons to restrict military contribution to NATO and requested American

¹⁵² Jean Joseph Marie Gabriel de Latre de Tassigny (1889-1952) was a hero of the French military in WW II. In the first Indochina War, he commanded the French troops until 1951. Previously, he was also the first chief of staff of NATO infantry in Europe.

¹⁵³ René Pleven (1901 - 1993), a very famous French politician served as French Prime Minister for several times in the early 1950s. He was also the founder of the short-lived plan EDC.

¹⁵⁴ Christopher E. Goscha, *The Indochina War: A Connected History*, in: *Dictionary of the Indochina War: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2011, p. 19.

financial support. In fact, “the Americans, French and British had decided that in 1952-1954 the German contribution would have to be increased to 12 or 13 billion marks – that is, after deductions for occupation expenses, about 7 billion marks for the EDC. At that time the French budget amounted to 950 billion francs. If deductions are made for the funds required for the Indochina War and for overseas and domestic forces, only 290 billion francs at most remained for EDC, accounting to 3.5 billion marks.”¹⁵⁵ It was finally estimated that the “French expenditure between 1947 and 1954... was roughly equivalent to the amount of Marshall Plan and military aid the French received from Washington.”¹⁵⁶

Furthermore, in 1950, a law restricting the use of draftees to French homeland territories was passed by the French parliament. This meant that the law itself limited the number of French troops within the country and obviously in Indochina and North Africa as well as its occupational zones in Germany and Austria. There were no options for France rather than to recruit troops who had other nationalities of Germany, Morocco, Poland, etc. This consequently strengthened the French military on the one hand, but caused a burden in terms of finance on the other. This is because France had to use the national budget to pay for the recruitment, training and maintenance of the foreign legion abroad. As a matter of fact, “France would not or could not go ahead in Europe while its expenses in manpower and money were so heavy in Indochina... if France fulfilled her part of the unwritten bargain and approved the EDC, would its concern for the new German military presence on the continent, despite safeguards, instil such fears that neither the European nor the Asian efforts would be maintained?”¹⁵⁷

Now the answer was clear that France had to make a clear-cut settlement on the Indochina battle. Evidently, the French commitment in Indochina made it

¹⁵⁵ Lawrence S. Kaplan, Denise Artaud, Mark R. Rubin, *Dien Bien Phu and the Crisis of Franco – American Relations 1954 – 1955*, Sr Books, 1990, p. 253.

¹⁵⁶ Irwin Wall, *France in the Cold War*, in: *Journal of European Studies*, 2008, pp. 125 – 126. See details at: <http://jes.sagepub.com/content/38/2.toc>, (online accessed on 12 July 2012).

¹⁵⁷ Lawrence S. Kaplan, Denise Artaud, Mark R. Rubin, *op.cit.*, p. 235.

confused about how to deal with the problem of German rearmament because “the thinner the French forces in Europe, the less likely that France would accept a German force under any auspices.”¹⁵⁸ Even French Minister of Defense René Pleven, a strong supporter of both the EDC project and the Indochina effort, did not believe a victory in the Indochina battle could prevent the approaching German rearmament. This was shown when he told Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that the dissipation of French forces in Vietnam “is causing the greatest concern about the EDC ..., even if we succeed in the end, all it means is that we will get out.”¹⁵⁹

But what France did not realize was that the U.S. was playing a two-sided game with France. On the one hand, the U.S. promised to side with France in the course of the on-going EDC plan and NATO as a security protection against West Germany as well as the SU. On the other hand, the Eisenhower administration threatened to cease its aid program if France opposed a common Western defense system in which West Germany would be an equal partner. In contrast, France also considered the EDC project a card to play with the U.S. because the U.S. kept on urging French parliament to ratify that project and Paris made a clear condition of no aid, no ratification.¹⁶⁰

Even if the EDC plan was resolved, in French military leaders’ minds, the German contribution to the defense of Europe could not be allowed to outweigh that of the French. However, France could no longer dominate on the issue of German rearmament within the framework of European security. This is illustrated by the fact that the French military had a presence at once in Indochina, Algeria and Europe. The French military dilemma is precisely what Evelyn Colbert delineates: “General de Lattre’s demand for reinforcements pointed up the French dilemma: to send conscripts to Indochina was not politically feasible; to take troops from Europe would reduce the French contribution to NATO; to take

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹⁵⁹ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁶⁰ Lawrence S. Kaplan, Denise Artaud, Mark R. Rubin, *op.cit.*, p. 252.

them from Africa – as it was decided to do – would weaken the French hold there.”¹⁶¹

From 1952, France received NATO’s assurance that it would support France in the war against communist expansion in Asia. Despite this, France shifted its attitudes towards Indochina as it foresaw that France would not be able to win on the Indochinese battlefield. It would be more reasonable and pragmatic for France to return to Europe where German military prominence might be restored. If France wanted to maintain its military superiority over a rearmed Germany it had to do so. Otherwise, a new *Bundeswehr* would replace the French contribution to the European defense framework.

Although the EDC plan was not ratified by the French parliament in August 1954, this did not mean that France succeeded in preventing West Germany from rearmament. Additionally, from 1950 the world context had changed rapidly, benefiting West Germany and France could not control this. Paris had pledged to provide 24 divisions to NATO but finally could muster only three divisions in West Germany and six in France. The problem for France at this time was “the flower of the French army was dying in Indochina.”¹⁶² As a result, “German rearmament thus seemed to promise substantial savings for France and, above all, to strengthen a forward NATO strategy in which not France but Germany would stand on the first line of defense.”¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Evelyn Colbert, *op.cit.*, p. 214. It is notable that from 1945 to 1947, the French communists advocated the government engaging in the colonial war in Indochina. Then, they separated themselves when the communist representatives in the National Assembly voted against communists-participating in government. Moreover, Maurice Thorez (1900-1964) leader of the French communist party from 1930 to 1964 was also the deputy Prime Minister of the French government between 1946 and 1947. During his lifetime, he spent part of his life in Russia where he was influenced by and an ally of Joseph Stalin. Because the French communist party still remained a strong political party in the 1950s, Staline and the SU tried to influence it regarding the problem of the EDC plan. See more: George Moss, *An American Ordeal*, 3rd Edition, Printice Hall, 1998.

¹⁶² John Harper, *American Visions of Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 312.

¹⁶³ Wolfram F. Hanrieder and Graeme P. Auton, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

As analyzed, France had to face dilemmas both in economic and military fields in the two different continents. Historians have asked whether or not French predicaments produced any chance for West Germany to rise up in Europe after WW II. The EDC card could not help France control West German rearmament. Actually, the fate of the EDC plan was not the failure of the West German rearmament project. Under the umbrella of the U.S., West Germany was rearmed and joined the Atlantic Alliance club in 1955. West German membership of NATO and its economic development created a new regional order which was not at all pleasant for France.

After being defeated at Dien Bien Phu, France bitterly realized that the Americans were hesitating to assist France on the battlefield because they wanted to replace France in Indochina.¹⁶⁴ In the new climate of international politics, the U.S. had to re-evaluate its global containment. Together with the maintenance of security strategies in Europe, U.S. policy-makers also realized the increasing importance of Indochina. From what they had experienced in Korea, they feared that if they engaged more intensively to assist the French at Dien Bien Phu, the Chinese communists would also directly intervene. More importantly, the U.S. foresaw that the failure of Dien Bien Phu was inevitable.

The hope of rescuing French prestige by regaining Indochina was no longer realistic. The best option for France was to come back to Europe to concentrate on its internal issues resulting from the “dirty war” in Indochina, such as tens of thousands of French’ deaths in the war, domestic problems including social changes, the new social movement of women and other social groups. French public opinion became more impatient with the “dirty war” in Indochina. At the same time, some French newspapers, intellectuals, individuals and trade

¹⁶⁴ To know more about the American engagement in Indochina from the First Indochina war to the second Indochina War, see also: Kathryn C. Statler, *The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam*, Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007.

unions increasingly expressed their attitudes asking the French government to end the colonial war.¹⁶⁵

Moreover, the need to reconstruct Western Europe demanded France's highest effort as a leading country. European reconstruction and integration would improve the French image and relations with other European nations.¹⁶⁶ If not, France would be a stranger in its own land of Europe compared, next to Germany when it had marvellously recovered and would really be a new potential power after the war. France's former policies towards its colonial possessions and Germany were outmoded. Only European integration would profit the continent in general and France in particular. To achieve this aim France had to collaborate with its neighboring country of Germany which now gradually became stronger under the premiership of Dr. Konrad Adenauer. Therefore, a Franco-German rapprochement would be the most suitable move for both in solving their contradictions in the past as well as calming down the tensions of the Cold War in the continent. Finally, European integration was a great and equal playground for all members to achieve common objectives.

3.3.4. Relations between Germany and France after WW II

It is commonly accepted that Germany and France have a long common history, both being heirs of the Frankish Empire. But while France became a territorial state already in early modern times, it was not until 1871 that a so-called German Empire emerged which then assembled only a part of the German-speaking population of Europe. The further development of the two nations was deeply influenced by the way in which the German Empire of 1871 was established –as result of a humiliating defeat of the until then leading power on

¹⁶⁵ Most well-known names can be listed such as: Raymonde Dien, Henri Martin, Paul Monet, etc. See also: Alain Ruscio, *Điện Biên Phủ - kết thúc một ảo tưởng (Điện Biên Phủ – la fin d'une illusion)*, Labor Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011.

¹⁶⁶ The ECSC was considered the first step towards the Federation of Europe. The European idea in France on a single market in terms of coal and steel came from Jean Monnet (1888-1979) – a French political economist. However, this idea was first announced by Robert Schumann (1886-1963) on 9 May 1950 at the time when he was French foreign minister.

the European continent, France. The burden for the future became even heavier, as after the war of 1870-1871, a large square of French territory was annexed by the German Empire, Alsace-Lorraine. Simultaneously, France had to pay the sum of five billion marks for reparations.

First World War was first and foremost a war between Germany and France and their allies. In the war, France was the winner but it had to pay a very high price: huge loss of human life, main provinces severely destroyed, war expenses reaching up to more than two hundred billion francs. France asked for huge compensations and enforced significant ones. It can be concluded that France suffered more from the casualties than of the lack of prestige. Regarding the latter it was rather overestimated.¹⁶⁷

After having been easily defeated by the Germans in 1940 in WW II, half of French territory was occupied by Nazi Germany. As a result, the Third Republic collapsed, and French nation and identity were divided when the Pétain government speedily surrendered and collaborated with Nazi Germany. Charles de Gaulle then had to form a resistance government in Britain. The French image and prestige were damaged again after this. As a result, French colonial territories were threatened and narrowed. France was definitely not a powerful ally in the course of the war against fascists. In a word, within seventy years France had been invaded three times by Germany. Therefore, many in France and Germany were used to seeing each other as eternal enemies. The relations between the two nations were discordant due to the nature of their past conflicts in Europe.

For France, learning from the past, Germany was still seen as one of the first security threats. Were there any tendencies towards revenge for what the *Third Reich* had carried out? In spite of differences in relations between France and Germany, the two countries had similarities in the post-war period. They had the same feeling of shame. Some Germans felt guilty for what happened in the two world wars in Europe especially in WW II, fired and driven by Hitler's crazy

¹⁶⁷ Alsace-Lorraine was a part of the Deutsches Kaiserreich since 1871. The region became French territory after 1919 and after 1945 again.

ambitions. Others saw themselves as victims; many were paralyzed, however. France was easily defeated by Germany and surrendered shamefully in summer 1940. As stated above, the Vichy government even publicly collaborated with Nazi Germany until France was liberated when Charles de Gaulle followed by the allies approached Paris in 1944.

Another similarity was the ambition to rescue each country's power and image within the continent and on the world stage as well. Pursuing that goal required both states accept the grants offered by the U.S. under the umbrella of the Marshall Plan from which West Germany received 1.4 billion and France received 3.1 billion US dollars from 1948 to 1952 to aid the recovery of each country.¹⁶⁸ Germany gradually recovered and confirmed its close relationship with the Western allies led by the U.S. In addition, the governments of the nations after the war individually tried to pursue their own objectives and achieve them in different ways.

Besides, there actually existed a French hostility to the Germans, as the French had experienced in their historical relations with their neighboring country. Consequently, France particularly after 1871 wanted never to see a strong Germany because it had been a visible threat to French and European security. So, a divided Germany after the war was absolutely agreeable with the French purpose. This also explains why France strongly advocated the establishment of the two Germanies in 1949. France realized that the possible threat of communization could harm the whole of Germany. Furthermore, the establishment of a West German state could thus serve as a barrier protecting France from such a security threat.

France thus attempted to pursue its aim in preventing fascism in general and a resurgent Germany in particular. To achieve these aims, French politicians believed that the Rhineland region must be separated from Germany. Another French requirement was to put an international trusteeship on the Ruhr region with the hope of exploiting its coal to meet French economic demands. Excessive

¹⁶⁸ *Facts about Germany, op.cit.*, p. 93.

French claims on Germany can be claimed as France saw that “Germany should be exploited economically for the benefit of its neighbors, by exacting reparations, controlling the distribution of its coal and steel, and maintaining a low ceiling on its industrial production; that by a thorough process of demilitarisation and denazification, Germany should be made incapable of menacing its neighbours; and that Germany should be re-educated and re-organized as a democratic, federal state.”¹⁶⁹ It is clear that initial French policies towards post-war Germany were so strict as to prevent any potential revenge on their part of Germany. On the contrary, it is also understandable that a new Germany could not exert over the country with aggressive governments as it had done before.

Although France made every effort to implement its foreign policy, not everything was successfully achieved. In this case, rapid changes in the European continent and in the world after WW II restricted France’s ability to contain West Germany. Particularly in the context of the Cold War, West Germany became the centre of the conflict between the two blocs, one led by the SU and the other led by the U.S. Considered a dam or a frontier in Europe to limit, or at least to curb the communist expansion on the continent, West Germany was strongly backed by the U.S. and other Western allies in economic recovery and then rearmament. It would be wiser for France to incorporate with Germany to deal with the problem of West German rearmament. The EDC project proved a simple example of this, as on 24 October 1950, the French prime minister proposed the plan, firstly aiming to satisfy Americans, “and to much lesser degree German, pressure for German rearmament, and the call from members of the Council of Europe for the extension of European integration to the sphere of European defense.”¹⁷⁰ If this project went forwards its operation would likely be the same as the model of the ECSC proposed by France itself one year before. This meant that the EDC project would be a way to rearm West Germany but the process would be controlled by a supra-national structure under which France could still master

¹⁶⁹ F. Roy Willis, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁰ F. Roy Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe 1945 – 1967, op.cit.*, p. 131.

West German military forces. As a result, the French government was reluctant to allow West Germany to rearm.

One of the most significant successes in Franco-German relations in post-war Europe was in economic cooperation. From the early 1950s, economic relations between France and West Germany improved remarkably. This move pushed the two countries closer together and helped the European integration process proceed faster and more effectively. Many researchers in European studies agreed that the ECSC proposed by Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, was the first crucial step towards European integration. His famous declaration in May 1950 marked the historical reconciliation of France and Germany. In the end, the understanding and reconciliation between France and Germany during this time actually ended the Franco-German hostility once and for all and would lead to “a Europe organized in democracy, liberty and peace.”¹⁷¹

To summarize, both France and Germany shared a common sense after WW II, e.g., having been severely ruined and experienced moral shame during wartime. They both followed their own objectives in restoring their own images in a new world order. While France searched again for the position of a great colonial empire, the West German political elites seemed more pragmatic in tying the Federal Republic to the Western world where most state members refused to continue the old-fashion model of colonization. However, orientation to the West was also a process of political debate and France learnt the lesson that colonialism had no future. The German elites learnt that the only chance for West Germany was to follow the Western, democratic model of societal development. Adenauer and his allies brought the idea forwards. Both processes of modernization in France and West Germany occurred at the same time and were interrelated.

Although France proposed and in fact implemented many strict policies towards Germany after WW II, it finally had to recognize Germany's special geopolitical position in Europe in the context of the emerging Cold War. Another reason which might lead to the reconciliation of the two nations was the weakness

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

of France's economy due to the financial burden being spent on the war in Indochina. France considered the Franco-German rapprochement simply in its political perspective. However, the economic aim could be also seen as one of France's motives in reconciliation with Germany.

The policies of the allies implemented in the four German occupational zones were the reasons to form the two states of Germany and to shape their policies in the following years. A series of emerging events inside and outside Europe related to the Cold War conflict, such as the Berlin blockade, the Korean War, the Indochina War, the Soviet expansion, etc., forced France to reform its foreign relations with other countries. In the early 1950s, the relations between these two nations renewed firstly by the ECSC project and then the EDC plan became much warmer as they each sought to find mutual benefits. French dilemmas in Europe and Indochina could be seen as a chance for West Germany to regain German power both in the economy and military. These developments were proved by West German memberships in the ECSC in 1951 and NATO in 1955. Finally, the Élysée Treaty signed on 22 January 1963 officially ended the status of enmity and opened a new era in relations between the two European nations.

CHAPTER 4

THE ATTITUDES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

TOWARDS THE FIRST INDOCHINA WAR

4.1. The diplomatic relations between the FRG and Indochina¹⁷²

During the first Indochina War, West Germany was undecided as to whether to be an “observer” or “actor”. After the fall of the Third Reich, Germany was an occupied land controlled by victorious powers. In such a situation, Indochina apparently did not hold any vital interest for West Germany during its formative period (1945-1949). After its establishment in 1949, West Germany had to focus on its own domestic affairs. The only problem of the Germans in the FFL in Indochina would then be a huge public topic in the early 1950s. In Adenauer’s eyes¹⁷³ Indochina was seen as a hotbed fired by the SU, and in certain ways, the outcomes of the first Indochina War might have decided the fate of the EDC plan as it was determined in August 1954 following the event of Dien Bien Phu. Geopolitically, West Germany did not have any direct political interest in Indochina other than economic and cultural interests. If there were any, they would appear in the following years. Furthermore, the problem of colonies was not an important issue for West Germany after the end of WW I.¹⁷⁴ One of the

¹⁷² What we call Vietnam today was the main battlefield of the first Indochina War. Thus, the diplomatic relations between the FRG and Indochina here should be understood as the FRG’s diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

¹⁷³ Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967), a Chancellor with great political interest in Europe. His political interest was not only a consequence of his engagement with the effects of WW II on Germany, but also of a sincere desire for a united Europe. See also: EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament Research-Documentation-Publications Service (editor), *Konrad Adenauer’s policy on Europe and the challenges of European unification today*, Hans-Gert Poettering, MEP, Chairman of the Group of the European People’s Party and European Democrats (EPP-ED) in the European Parliament. See more at: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/Activities/docs/cd-rom/adenauers-en.pdf>, (online accessed on 18 July 2012).

¹⁷⁴ Article 22 of the Versailles Treaty signed on 28 June 1919 stated that Germany’s overseas empire would be dismantled. See also: William Roger Louis, *Das Ende des deutschen*

factors that caused West Germany to observe the situation in Indochina was its neighboring and former enemy country of France, with its military and economic engagement in its colonial possession in Indochina.

However, West Germany's concern with Indochina rose steadily and reached at its peak with the Geneva Conference in 1954. This might be explained by the fact that the world's new political atmosphere had an influence on West Germany. In this context, the future of Indochina or Vietnam might also be decided by superpowers. West German analysts speculated on whether Vietnam would be another image of Germany. This speculation proved correct, as both Vietnam and Germany were divided into two halves. Accordingly, the attitudes of decisive participants at the Geneva Conference towards Indochina and the outcomes of that conference were to be seriously observed and analyzed. This is because they might help West Germany to re-define its own position in the new world's political scenario.

According to the Potsdam Agreement, Germany was occupied and controlled by four great powers. From the *Stunde Null* until 1949, the two Germanies experienced many historical upheavals leading to the establishment of two German states. Until 1955 the Federal Republic was not be able to enjoy the full right to establish diplomatic ties with any foreign countries. Instead, this was completely supervised by the Allied High Commission. This meant West Germany could not have any direct diplomatic ties with Indochina, while still belonged to the French Association. Therefore, upto 1954, if West Germany wished to set up diplomatic relations with any of the Indochinese states, it had to consult France as their "mother country". This kind of principal would be abolished when France had to withdraw its military troops according to the Geneva Agreement.

Kolonialreiches: britischer Imperialismus und die deutschen Kolonien 1914-1919, Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1971. However, one of the main reasons for WW II was Hitler's ambitions on regaining Germany's lost colonies in South-west Africa, Tanzania, Cameroon and Togo. See also: Nguyen Anh Thai, *op.cit.*, tr. 177.

On 13 March 1951, West Germany recognized Bao Dai's non-communist government backed by the French and the Americans.¹⁷⁵ This move could be seen to prove West Germany's ambition to moderately pursue independent foreign policy with an eye to a further strategy: that West Germany would be soon recognized internationally. In 1953, the State of Vietnam requested a discussion about trade agreement and exchange in Bonn and Paris with official representatives. Nevertheless, the federal government reacted to this with hesitation.¹⁷⁶ This gesture implies that in 1953, the fate of France in Indochina was not completely finalized. West Germany needed more time to observe what would happen next in Indochina and to watch out the American actions.

From May 1950, although the Americans supported Bao Dai both financially and militarily on the one hand, they still remained skeptical about the credit and stability of Bao Dai's French-backed regime on the other hand.¹⁷⁷ Even though in the "List of German diplomatic representatives in foreign countries" announced in 1954 and 1955 by the West German Foreign Office, Indochina or Sai Gon was named, there was no further information about the establishment of any Embassy or High commissioner in that land. The West German embassy in Bangkok, Thailand (from December 1952) and other West German diplomatic offices in some other cities such as Tokyo and New Delhi (from April 1952), Jakarta (from June 1952), Paris (from July 1950), Hong Kong (from July 1953), Washington (from July 1951) acted to cover some trade relations with Sai Gon. This is because it was the center of the colony of Cochin-China, whereas Tonkin and Annam were formally protectorates. They also collected much information

¹⁷⁵ In October 1946, the French announced their intention of reclaiming the North which meant that the Vietminh would have to fight for it. The French tried to win over the people of the North by offering them independence. However, the people would not be allowed to do anything without French permission. A new leader of the country was appointed called Bao Dai. The Russians and Eastern Europe refused to recognize his rule. They claimed that Ho Chi Minh was the real ruler of Vietnam. America's official military involvement in the Vietnam War lasted from 1965 to 1975.

¹⁷⁶ Volker Berresheim, *35 Jahre Indochinapolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Verbund Stiftung Deutsches Übersee Institut, 1985, S. 31.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

about development in Indochina as a whole.¹⁷⁸ Other archival sources also proved that West Germany's attitude towards the first Indochina War was gradually shaped from the beginning of the 1950s and then it was changed or adjusted in relation to the realities happening in Indochina. In terms of the defense issue, the West German political elites saw visible connection between that conflict and the outcome of the EDC plan.

Not until December 1955 was a trade office opened and run in Sai Gon under the leadership of a diplomat, Albert Tobias Tafel. One and half years later, South Vietnam firmly anchored itself to the West, as demonstrated by its rejection of holding a general election in the whole country in 1956 as the Geneva Agreement had stipulated. From 12 June 1957, this office was upgraded to become the West German Embassy in South Vietnam.¹⁷⁹

4.2. The attitudes of the FRG towards the first Indochina War

4.2.1. West German policy on the first Indochina War

4.2.1.1. Background for West Germany's "Indochinapolitik"

Since its foundation in 1949, the FRG was always concerned by the security threat from the East, mostly called "the SU aggression". Clearly, the newly born Federal Republic government was very limited because of its occupation status, ruled by great powers both in domestic and international policy. Despite this fact, West Germany proclaimed its own foreign policy as it "always pursues those programs to preserve peace in the past and future." (*Die deutsche Außenpolitik ist immer in der Kontinuität dieses konkreten Programms der Erhaltung des Friedens geblieben, sie bleibt es auch künftig*).¹⁸⁰ Undoubtedly, the most important interest for the newly established state of West Germany was to

¹⁷⁸ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31. See also: Gerhard Will, *Zum Verhältnis zwischen Bonn und Saigon zwischen 1950 und 1975*, in: *Tagungsband zum 35jährigen Jubiläum der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Sozialistischen Republik Vietnam*, 2010, S. 7.

¹⁸⁰ Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 14.

quickly recover what the past war had left. Economic development was considered West Germany's top priority. The Marshall Plan was a significant aid offered by the U.S. and thus, West German foreign policy was mostly driven by the U.S. In addition, West Germany needed to regain its prestige in the eyes of the allies. Other international relations outside Europe, to some extent, were therefore narrowed. It was believed by West German leaders that only strong power in the economy (and then in the military) would guarantee the country sovereignty and make it possible to integrate into the West. Finally, there still remained the German question when the two German states announced themselves as the unique legal representatives (*Alleinvertretungsanspruch*) for the whole of Germany. All of these matters restricted West German actions both in Europe and the world outside. Consequently, this would define, and in turn dominate West Germany's *Indochinapolitik*.

The escalation of the Indochina War with the engagement of some powers like the U.S. and Red China concerned West Germany in some certain ways.¹⁸¹ The reason for this was that the young republic saw its interests could be more or less influenced by that war. Therefore, at the very beginning, West Germany took a position of standing not completely outside the war.¹⁸² However, it was not easy for the Federal Republic to foresee how and in which way a war in the Far East could influence its political and social life as matters behind the war gradually affected the society in the years to come. Even directly or indirectly involved in the first Indochina War in the first half of the 1950s, the West German political stage and public opinion were roused by the on-going progress on the Indochina battlefield and its following impacts. As a result, with a standing point of national security, West German leaders and the public reacted differently towards the conflict.

Together with the intensification of the conflict which attracted more concern from the free world, West German interests were gradually touched as

¹⁸¹ Marek Thee, *The Indochina Wars: Great Power Involvement - Escalation and Disengagement*, Journal of Peace Research, vol. 13, No. 2, Sage Publications, Ltd., 1976, pp. 117-129.

¹⁸² Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 14.

well. From the 1950s onwards the conflict in Indochina shifted and became internationalized when the two blocs entered the proxy-war. Consequently, West Germany watched very closely the attitudes and actions of those powers such as the U.S., the PRC, the SU and even Great Britain, and of course the fate of the key player on the battlefield – France.

From 1949, France recognized that it could not cope with the expenses of Indochina war on its own. Furthermore, under intense pressure from the domestic opinion on the war and some other political and economic problems France started seeking American assistance.¹⁸³ From 1950 to 1953, financial aid was given to the French colonialists as they struggled to re-establish control of Indochina in the face of opposition from Vietnamese communists and nationalists. It could be argued that, up to 1953, the U.S. commitment was no more than a financial assistance to its ally.¹⁸⁴ Being convinced that the war in Indochina was not only a colonial war but a part of the free world's campaign against the expansion of communism in Asia, this was viewed as a confrontation between the communist and non-communist bloc with the engagement of the two opposition bloc leaders. Such a severe conflict would concern related countries, including West Germany, one of the potential allies of the U.S. in Europe.

Looking at the West German political and public view, we can see that West Germany from 1950 onwards was much more concerned by the war than ever before due to the problem of Germans in the FFL¹⁸⁵ in Indochina. More surprisingly, West German concerns about the war at first did not come from politicians but mainly from public opinion. The flow of young Germans

¹⁸³ David L. Anderson (ed.), *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War*, Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 217.

¹⁸⁴ In November 1950, a U.S. Defense Department official warned: we are gradually increasing our stake in the outcome of the struggle ... we are dangerously close to the point of being so deeply committed that we may find ourselves completely committed even to direct intervention. These situations, unfortunately, have a way of snowballing. See also: FRUS, *op.cit.*, vol. VI, pp. 959-963.

¹⁸⁵ A military service wing of the French Army established in 1831, it was exclusively created for foreign nationals willing to serve in the French Armed Forces.

registering and joining the FFL provoked huge debates originally amongst the public, which then had a great effect on the federal parliament and government's policy.¹⁸⁶ Many Germans who fought with the legion in Indochina immediately after WW II were not really volunteers, but had been recruited more or less forcibly in the POW camps. Many fought bravely in the legion, some others deserted to the Vietminh. They stayed in Indochina fighting on the other side and were then repatriated to (East) Germany mostly and encouraged to participate in anti-western propaganda.

At the very beginning the problem of young Germans joining the foreign legion only came about and was debated because many Germans saw that post-war West Germany needed manpower to reconstruct the country. Those young Germans, however, chose another future by joining the foreign legion, and fighting overseas for foreign interests, in this case, for French interests. The destiny of the German legionnaires in Indochina, notably after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu – a sad story for many Germans – was another chapter of the *Indochinapolitik* of West Germany. West Germany judged the Franco-Vietnam conflict in the following terms: “for most West German citizens there was no question that German freedom and Berlin's security were being protected in the jungles of Indochina.”¹⁸⁷ (*Für die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung in der Bundesrepublik stand außer Frage, daß die Freiheit der Deutschen und die Sicherheit Berlins auch im Dschungel Indochinas verteidigt würden*). Undoubtedly, the fall of Dien Bien Phu was considered one of the direct causes leading to the failure of the EDC plan pursued by West Germany for such a long

¹⁸⁶ Professor Fall's writings about the Legion are important because he personally visited units in the field and spoke with Legionnaires. However, it should be noted that by the time of Operation Castor (Dien Bien Phu - 1954), many if not most of the German Legionnaires who had enlisted in 1945 and 1946 had either deserted or completed their five-year contracts, so they were already gone. The desertion stories are fascinating in their own right; some Legionnaires enroute to Indochina jumped from their transport ships as they were passing through the Suez Canal, whereupon the French military police would open fire on them in the water. Two of the most interesting books on this are written by Bernard Fall: *Hell in a very small place: the siege of Dien Bien Phu*, Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1967 and *Street without joy*, The Stackpole Company, 1961.

¹⁸⁷ Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 23.

time. Even after its breakdown, the story continued when Vietnam was partitioned into two halves, which was almost the same as the German nation. This common characteristic would lay the foundation for West German Indochina policy, *Indochinapolitik*, in the 1950s and 1960s, when the second Indochina War broke out. Afterwards, West Germany again considered that “*Berlin wird am Mekong verteidigt*”.

4.2.1.2. West German federal government and parliament's attitudes towards the first Indochina War

As one can imagine, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the intervention of world powers in the first Indochina War attracted more international concern to the area. West German diplomatic representatives in South-east Asia and in France increased their observations and analysis in every aspect related to Asia and Indochina. On 9 July 1951, the West German Consulate in Paris sent a report to the West German Foreign Office analyzing the complicated situation in Indochina. In the report, it was predicted that the war would be gradually internationalized. France was in a position in which they had no other option than appealing to the U.S. for financial and military assistance, the report continued. In other words, France was more and more dependent on American financial and military aid because it was unable to act alone in the war. The situation, in the West German official view, would be more complicated and unpredictable if Red China intervened in the war. If any direct intervention from Red China occurred, the U.S. would immediately respond by sending its air force and then land troops to Indochina. Therefore, it would not just be a French War in Indochina, but a war of the Western world in South-east Asia.¹⁸⁸ In line with the free world's point of view, West German leaders in general and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer personally regarded “the war in Indochina as an attempt to curb communist expansion.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 1431, Drucksache 000018.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Hoerber, *The Foundations of Europe – European integration ideas in France, Germany and Britain in the 1950s*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006, p. 220.

As previously discussed, the federal government and Konrad Adenauer personally showed the attitude of an “observer” until the end of the Indochina War. By following the conflict’s progress in Indochina as well as the moves of the involved partners such as the main players France, the U.S., Red China and the SU, West Germany carefully reacted and adjusted her diplomatic strategies. Meanwhile, the new republic was keen on regaining an image of a peaceful Germany and aimed to be an equal member of the Western family. Therefore, any relations with the communists should be absolutely avoided and no evidence of such a connection in Indochina had been found so far. West Germany chose to recognize Bao Dai’s government as a signal to please the French. Hence, the French could easily understand that, at least, West Germany did not side with the communists in Indochina but in some way backed the French in the conflict against the “rebellion communists”.

In this case, although both West Germany and France were among the key players in WW II, no peace agreement between the two countries had actually been signed so far. Nonetheless, West Germany did not choose to act according to the old oriental saying that states “Our enemy’s enemy is our friend”. West German leaders were pragmatic enough to understand and respond flexibly to the new context of the European post-war period, notably through West Germany and Adenauer personally trying their best to regain full sovereignty and to integrate into the West. This forced the West German authority not to make itself an enemy of any of the Western allies. One should keep in mind that, if the Indochina question (*Indochinafrage*) was not West Germany’s main concern, the question of the Saar (*Saarfrage*) would be a barrier for the relationship with France. Only once the Saar problem was solved would West German sovereignty be almost fulfilled. Any more barriers – such as Indochina – which could badly influence German-Franco relations would be carefully considered by weighing the pros and cons.

Nevertheless, the problem of the Germans in the FFL (*Fremdenlegionäre*) was always the core issue that affected West German policy towards the war very profoundly. Were the Germans really a majority in the Legion at Dien Bien Phu?

If many of them were recruited from POW camps at the end of WW II, their five-year contracts were ended. Did many Germans sign up for further service after their initial contracts? Many sources have proved that the opposition political groups in the Bundestag took advantage of this problem to elicit Adenauer's policy. These groups even used the issue of the Germans in the French legion in Indochina to prevent West Germany from setting up any relations with France.¹⁹⁰

It was Adenauer who took the opportunity of this problem to proclaim his official attitudes towards the war in Indochina. It was considered a clear sign of solidarity with France in the conflict when on 29 April 1954 he spoke at the Bundestag: "The soldiers who are sacrificing their blood and lives in Indochina are doing so not only for France but for the freedom of the whole world."¹⁹¹ (*Die Soldaten, die in Indochina Blut und Leben opfern, tun dies nicht für Frankreich allein, sondern im Dienste der Freiheit für die ganze Welt*). This attitude was once again affirmed when Dien Bien Phu collapsed. In a telegraph to French Prime Minister Joseph Laniel, Konrad Adenauer expressed his "deepest compassion as well my admiration for the heroic defenders of the free world in Dien Bien Phu."¹⁹² (... *den Ausdruck meines tiefsten Mitgefühl... und gleichzeitig meine Bewunderung für die heldenhaften Verteidiger der freien Welt in Dien Bien Phu.*) These moves show that by the end of the war, West Germany felt that it had at least partly contributed to the French war in Asia against communist expansion. It was the right time for Adenauer to officially proclaim his attitude towards the war. One can also imagine that the wish for the EDC ratification still remained in his mind. A statement like this would help further the plan. Also, it showed Konrad Adenauer to be a very realistic politician in defining and adapting his political point of view. In other words, with the presence of young Germans in the French

¹⁹⁰ Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 97.

¹⁹¹ Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Adenauer in der 26. Sitzung des Deutschen Bundestages, 29 April 1954. See also: Presse-Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Hrsg.), *Die Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Adenauer zur außenpolitischen Lage, zur Saarfrage und zur Montan-Union vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 29. April 1954*, Bonn, 1954.

¹⁹² Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Hrsg.), *Bulletin* Nr. 90, vom 14. Mai 1954, S. 149. See also: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, B 11, Bd 1433.

legion in Indochina, West Germany was a crucial part of the conflict, and surely it had to be counted as part of the Western world.

At the 21st conference of the Foreign Committee of the Bundestag after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Deputy Becker from the FDP raised the issue of whether the French would continue to stay in Vietnam as the French army was still stationed there to protect its economic and cultural interests.¹⁹³ In addition, he warned the Bundestag that even though France had fallen in Indochina, the West German Bundestag should not think that France would be totally weak. In the meantime “the psychological connection between France and the U.S. were still very strong.”¹⁹⁴ (*Die psychologischen Verbindungen zwischen den USA und Frankreich sind von früher her sehr stark.*) This meant that West Germany should not take further action until that kind of connection was made clearer. The end of the Dien Bien Phu battle and then the Geneva Conference attracted a lot of attention from the West German leaders because the outcomes of those events would clearly influence the future of the EDC plan.

One should understand that the connection between the EDC and the first Indochina War was closer than ever, especially from mid-1954 onwards, which explains why West German politicians were so concerned by the war. In the 3rd meeting of the foreign ministers to discuss the financial issue of the EDC project, Dr. Walter Hallstein agreed that the financial contribution to NATO under which the EDC was controlled in the transitional period between France and West Germany would be counted equally. This meant that West Germany recognized the “French cost in Indochina was equivalent to the West German budget for the protection of the federal border and (West) Berlin.”¹⁹⁵ (*... so würden z.B. für Frankreich die Kosten für den Krieg in Indochina und für Deutschland wahrscheinlich die Kosten für den Bundesgrenzschutz und Berlin.*)

¹⁹³ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953 – 1957*, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2002, S. 281.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, S. 282.

¹⁹⁵ *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, München, 2000, S. 15.

Before the ratification of the EDC in the French parliament, on 30 June 1954, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer analyzed the situation and stated that the EDC now had a new sense in the American eyes.¹⁹⁶ This demonstrates Adenauer's strong hope in France's decision on the EDC profile which now would be more or less dependent on American influence. He also stressed the importance of American troops in Europe as he suspected that the EDC plan might be vetoed in the French parliament. In his eyes, "the failure of the EDC was the great success for the SU in the context of the Cold War."¹⁹⁷

Only one day after the collapse of the EDC, on 1 September the West German cabinet held a special meeting to discuss the issue and the government's next moves. Not all cabinet members had the same assessment of the failure of the EDC plan. The Minister of Labor, for instance, evaluated the problem differently from how people might have thought that, i.e., it would be a shock for the West German government if the EDC failed. He said that "he heard the news of the EDC's failure with a "relief" and that the failure ended the era of the so-called "concession". This would lead France to provide proof of its strength reacting to European problems. What West Germany should do at the moment was not to give any statement, but wait."¹⁹⁸ (*... dass er die Nachrichten aus Paris mit einer gewissen Erleichterung gehört habe. Sie bedeuteten das Ende der Politik der Vorleistungen. Die Einstellung der Regierung Mendes France zur EVG ist nach Ansicht des Bundesarbeitsminister damit zu erklären, dass die französische Regierung nach Indochina und nach den Ereignissen in Nordafrika den Beweis der Stärke habe erbringen wollen. Er empfiehlt, keine Stellungnahme abzugeben, sondern abzuwarten.*) The failure of the EDC project also made some other members in Adenauer's cabinet think about the future status of West Germany,

¹⁹⁶ *Die Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung*, Harald Boldt Verlag, Boppard am Rhein, 1989, S. 274.

¹⁹⁷ *Freiheit, Wohlfahrt, Sicherheit für Deutschland und Europa*, Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Adenauer zur Deutschen Außenpolitik vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 15. Dezember 1954.

¹⁹⁸ *Die Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung*, Harald Boldt Verlag, Boppard am Rhein, 1989, S. 345.

for which the Minister of Finance suggested three possible scenarios: *firstly*, West Germany would be subjugated by the SU; *secondly*, it would be neutralized; *thirdly*, it would keep on attaching itself to the West. Finally, he advised that the third choice would be the most favorable solution for West Germany.¹⁹⁹

With regard to the matter of security, the collapse of the project in fact had greater impact on West German political life when the foreign committee of the federal parliament continued discussing what West Germany should do after the failure of the EDC. Should it wait longer to see the next moves of the superpowers such as Great Britain and the U.S.? Deputy Becker of FDP raised the issue of West Germany's direct or indirect membership in NATO, to which Adenauer firmly answered "I believe I have stated very clearly: direct."²⁰⁰ (*Ich glaube, ich habe sehr klar gesagt: direkte*). However, earlier in 1953, stressing the importance of Indochina at the first meeting of the second election held on 12 November, Deputy Becker of FDP suggested the EDC's ratification might be decided by four factors: the *Indochinafrage*, the *Saarfrage*, French Union and British attitudes towards the EDC. Additionally, he emphasized the close link between the two questions of Saar and Indochina as he believed that even if there was a solution on the *Saarfrage*, the problem of Indochina would still have a great effect on the EDC's ratification.²⁰¹ In Adenauer's eyes, France would be nothing but a medium-sized power in Europe and he believed that "once France accepted it was one of the players in the process of Western integration, then France had to give up its leading role and French foreign policy would surely be influenced by other powers in the game."²⁰² (*Wenn Frankreich in der europäischen Integration ist, dann ist Frankreich nicht mehr die führende europäische Großmacht, sondern dann werden andere Faktoren die Außenpolitik Frankreichs und auch die der anderen großen Mächte stark beeinflussen.*)

¹⁹⁹ *Loc.cit.*

²⁰⁰ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953 – 1957*, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2002, S. 283.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, S. 17.

²⁰² *Loc.cit.*

During the Geneva Conference and the debate over the EDC in July 1954 in the French national parliament, Adenauer judged the conference itself a great success for the communists, since it included Red China and the Vietminh as participants. The conference would be a decisive moment in which the balance of power among the participants would be established. He may have foreseen that if the EDC failed then this would be a huge victory for the Russians as the plan had always been considered by the Russians unacceptable.²⁰³ Evidently, Adenauer himself saw that after what had happened to France in Indochina, a French veto against the EDC was only a final move in the bid to save its prestige if France still wished to retain the its greatness.

On the other hand, the collapse of the EDC project could not actually block West Germany from uniting with the West in the field of defense. Instead, West Germany was able to pursue a more independent and active European policy than to be cemented with France in solving any European matters. This also meant that France could not simply be the only driving force for European integration, but had to act in cooperation with West Germany, as observers have noted thereafter.

After the fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, West German politicians kept on watching the war in Indochina and French moves in the nearly ended conflict. According to a report submitted by the West German Embassy in Bangkok on 2 June 1954, France's military condition in Indochina was almost hopeless. The prestige or the traditional strength of the French army was no more. The bad condition of the military was blamed on the French army leaders in Indochina including generals Navarre and de Castries. More importantly, it was reported that the American attitude towards Indochina was very serious. The Americans controlled the use of goods and military materials and influenced military leadership.²⁰⁴ West German observers in Hong Kong, London, the U.S., Tokyo, New Delhi, etc. also reported comprehensively about the evolutions in

²⁰³ *Die Kabinetteprotokolle der Bundesregierung*, Band 5, Harald Boldt Verlag, Boppard am Rhein, 1989, S. 296.

²⁰⁴ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 1432.

Indochina, such as the attitudes of Red China, France, political development in South Vietnam, the future of Bao Dai, and notably the American moves during the first half of 1954. They soon realized that the U.S. would later replace France in Indochina. This helped West Germany define its diplomatic strategies in Europe as well as in Indochina in the forthcoming years.

4.2.1.3. West German politicians' attitudes towards the first Indochina War

Regarding the official West German official attitude towards the first Indochina War, researchers should be aware some West German politicians' actions of resistance. Otto John, President of the West German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*), is a striking example. On 20 July 1954, after a ceremony remembering the conspirators of 1944,²⁰⁵ he disappeared. He re-appeared three days later in East Berlin where he explained the reason for his escape and criticized Adenauer's policies of remilitarization. In his opinion, the EDC plan covered under the umbrella of the EDC would hamper German reunification.²⁰⁶

Another politician, Karlfranz Schmidt-Wittmack, a member of the Bundestag, quit office and escaped to East Berlin where he announced that he had been convinced by the Americans to rearm West Germany. Nevertheless, the outcomes of the Geneva Conference had a great effect on him and his comrades' opinions. He opined that the German problem could not be solved by rearmament. Instead, he believed only negotiations could make it possible. The EDC, in his opinion, would not meet German expectations on the matter of reunification but would lead to a deadlock.²⁰⁷

The new world politics and European internal transformation in the mid-1950s was marked by the escalation of the Cold War and the urgency for European defense and economic unification. This was also the period when it was

²⁰⁵ On 20 July 1944, some high-ranking military officers of the Third Reich attempted the assassination of the dictator Hitler but ultimately failed.

²⁰⁶ *Nhan Dan (The People)*, vol. 221, from 4 to 6 September 1954.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* However, Schmidt Wittmack was then discovered to be a Stasi spy.

thought more than ever the role of France should be more active. Obviously, West Germany observed and analyzed every move on the French political stage. On 14 June 1954, at the 15th meeting of the Bundestag, Adenauer evaluated the fall of Laniel's cabinet as a foreseen failure of the West world to communism. He judged that the Geneva Conference was the most important event that had ever been. If it still considered itself a great power, France had to have its say at the decisive conference, at which the presence of the Vietminh rebellion's leaders of represented a bitter defeat for France and the Western world.²⁰⁸

Again at the 17th meeting of the Bundestag on 6 July 1954, the Indochinese situation was reviewed much more intensively. The federal parliament acknowledged that the French situation in Indochina was quite hopeless and their rule there would be soon overthrown. The West German Bundestag also evaluated the price France had paid for this as France recognized the Chinese participation at the Geneva Conference. More seriously, France then had to join an on-going plan for the *South-east Asian Treaty Organization* (SEATO). Being defeated at Indochina and deciding to join SEATO proved that France was absolutely worn out after the war in Indochina and evidently, at least in the West German view, the total defeat of France in Asia was undoubtedly visible.²⁰⁹ Joining SEATO seemed to be a real solution for France to continue its presence in South-east Asia. So, did this have any influence on the EDC plan in Europe?

For Europe in general and West Germany in particular, there was a crucial connection between the Indochina problem and European issues, especially the EDC and even the matter of German unity, Dr. Walter Hallstein affirmed.²¹⁰ Only one week later, in the next meeting of the Bundestag on 13 July 1954, the Indochina problem was again debated, this time focusing on the destiny of

²⁰⁸ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtige Amts, Abteilung 2, Band 367. See also: *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953-1957*, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2002, S. 180.

²⁰⁹ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953 – 1957*, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2002, S. 204.

²¹⁰ *Loc.cit.*

Germans in the Vietminh's prison camps who would be treated equally to French soldiers as regulated by international law.²¹¹ Close connections among France-West Germany-Indochina and the EDC was once again on the debate agenda of the Bundestag when on 9 September 1954 Deputy Becker (FDP) put a question about what West Germany should do in the new context of Europe as the French had announced its refusal to ratify the EDC plan. These reasons for that were: *firstly*, the French were stuck in the mud (in terms of finance, military and human loss) in Indochina, this was the most important reason; *secondly*, troubles in North Africa; *thirdly*, its weaker economy compared to West Germany's advanced economy.²¹² As we can see, in the months following the fall of Dien Bien Phu and during the Geneva Conference, the Bundestag held meetings almost weekly to discuss European issues and matters outside Europe, like the Indochina War, for instance. It is understandable that West Germany felt anxiety about the Geneva Conference, as these were circumstances in which the destiny of Indochina would be discussed and decided, not by itself but by great world powers. Could history be repeated and the same things happen as to the German nation nine years before?

These activities informed the attitude of the West German regime towards the first Indochina War, which altered gradually from a position of observation to a more active one. Obviously, when the world as well as the regional political structure dramatically changed, West Germany could not stand outside. By following and adapting itself to what happened to France in the process of decolonization in Indochina, French ambition in maintaining colonial possessions in Africa, its independent tendency on the U.S. etc., West German foreign policy was shaped and proved itself to be on the right in the following years. However, one should keep in mind that the West German basic policy towards the Indochina War was no more than being an "observer", as the Chancellor Adenauer stated "we can only observe... Since we are still an occupied country and we are only spectators in Asia, we have no choice other than to wait for the next developments

²¹¹ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages 1953 – 1957, op.cit.*, S. 215.

²¹² *Ibid.*, S. 260.

there.”²¹³ (*Wir können nur beobachten... Da wir noch immer ein besetztes Land sind und in diesen Asienfragen wirklich nur Zuschauer sein können, bleibt uns nichts anders übrig, als den Lauf der Entwicklung dort abzuwarten.*)

4.2.2. West German policy on the Germans in the FFL

Up to now, no one knows exactly how many Germans served in the FFL but it is believed that more than half of the French troops in Indochina were of German origin or were German-speaking soldiers with origins in Austria or Switzerland. German youths joined the FFL with a variety of reasons. Many of them were escaping their current lives in Germany after WW II when Nazi Germany was defeated by the allies. Historically, some of them moved to France when Hitler came to power in 1933 and during WW II. During and after the war, a lot of them were caught and became war prisoners, kept in allied captivity. After being released they joined the French legion. Some of them were reported former SS officers. The majority of them grew up in German soil and had to face difficulties in life in Germany after the severe war. They could find no job, no food, and no future. They were forced to join the foreign legion as they thought that they could earn money from that to support themselves and their families. Besides, many of them were attracted by the spirit and images of adventure (*Abenteuer*). As a result of French propaganda, however, they were also convinced that joining the legion would bring them a chance to fight the communist expansion in Asia.

Where young Germans were recruited for the legion was fiercely debated by the West German public (mostly in the media). It was commonly agreed that young Germans were employed in the French occupation zone, even in West Berlin and other occupation areas. In fact, a lot of laws of the German Reich were repealed by the Allied Control Council.²¹⁴ The French authorities set up many

²¹³ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953 – 1957, op. cit., S. 209: Stenographisches Protokoll der 17. Sitzung des Ausschuß für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Bonn, Dienstag, den 6. Juli 1954.*

²¹⁴ Actually, article 141 of the Criminal Code of the German Reich from 15 May 1871 states that “whoever recruits a German for military service or to a foreign power or delivers him to the

agencies in many cities and French camps to advertise their recruitment activities. Applicants would then be brought to France to be trained in how to survive and combat in the jungle. After that, most of them would be sent to Indochina. In addition, the way they were forced to sign a five-year contract serving in the FFL was hotly disputed by the West German public. It was suggested that young Germans in the French occupation zone were invited to drink alcohol at bars in the Ruhr region or elsewhere in the *Bundesgebiet*. After getting drunk, they were forced to sign a five-year contract promising to serve for the FFL during which they had to serve at least two years in the Indochina battlefield. After signing the contract they would be transported to the harbor city of Marseille, then to Algeria, and finally to Indochina. The French authorities even sought out German prisoners of war in the French camps and encouraged them to join the legion. If they had been in the prison for five years then they would be released.²¹⁵

When serving in the FFL in Indochina, hundreds of them including their former comrades turned to side with the Vietminh front and fight against the French armed forces. These deserters who followed the Vietminh originated from different countries, i.e., Czechoslovakia, Poland, Serbia, and Greece, etc. Still, the majority of them were Germans. The first ever known deserter to the Vietminh front was Erwin Borchers, a Private of Bataillon 3, Foreign Regiment No 5 (5e R.E.I) who went to Vietnam in 1941. Furthermore, he persuaded some of his comrades such as Schröder (German), Frey (Austrian) and Golvald (Czech) to form a communist cell inside the legion. Moreover, they even contacted with some French officers who followed de Gaulle.

recruiters of the latter is punished with imprisonment from three months to three years". In the Code number 11 (Kontrollratsgesetz Nr. 11) promulgated by the Control Council on 30 January 1946, this article was abolished. The FRG's current Criminal Law (*Strafgesetzbuch*), article 109h on *Recruitment for foreign military service (Anwerben für fremden Wehrdienst)* regulates that whoever recruits a German for military service or similar military purposes will be punished with imprisonment from three months to five years.

²¹⁵ Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 146.

As early as September 1945, Borchers, Schröder and Frey left the French troops and sought the office of the *Cờ Giải phóng* newspaper²¹⁶ asking to cooperate with the party. Ernest Frey then served in the Vietminh army where he later became a colonel and took over responsibility for the security of the *An toàn khu* or *Security Zone* in Viet Bac.²¹⁷ Erwin Borchers worked for the newspaper *Le Peuple* or *Nhân dân* as a political commentator under his pen-name *Chiến Sĩ (Kämpfer)*. Under the pen-names *Lê Đức Nhân* and *Kerkhov*, deserter Rudy Schröder wrote many articles criticizing international issues. After some time, Borchers and Schröder produced a series of propaganda pamphlets in German in a bid to mentally influence Germans in the FFL, and then they published a newspaper, *Waffenbruder*.²¹⁸



Picture 11: German deserters to the Vietminh in Viet Bac (from left): Duong Bach Mai, Frey (Nguyen Dan), Truong Chinh, Le Van Luong, Wachter (Ho Chi Tho), Schröder (Le Duc Nhan).

Another study argued that there were two groups of Germans joining the FFL. The first group was made up of those who escaped from Germany and Austria after January 1933. They were active in anti-fascist movements but then

²¹⁶ *Báo Cờ Giải phóng* (*Liberated Flag* newspaper) used to be a popular propaganda organ of the central office of the Indochinese Communist Party.

²¹⁷ Viet Bac, located in Dinh Hoa District, Thai Nguyen province, North-east far from Hanoi, was a safe zone formed by the Vietminh where its main advisory offices stationed.

²¹⁸ Lưu Văn Lợi, *Chính sách địch vận Việt Nam và vấn đề hàng binh Đức (The policy of DRV on the German deserters)*, in: *Past and Present Magazine*, vol. 207, March 2004, tr. 10-12.

they had to take refuge in France where they were later arrested when the Franco-German war broke out in 1940, at which point they were recruited into the FFL. After some time in the FFL in Indochina, they went over to the Vietminh to struggle against the colonialists. This group included only twelve people who had been well-educated and were politically motivated. However, researchers assert that they do not represent the majority of deserters. When the Franco-German war broke out, every German from the age of seventeen to sixty-five including fascists, anti-fascists, tourists and businessmen in France was arrested. Most of them chose to join the French legion to fight against fascism. From 1939 to 1940 the number of recruits rose to more than 3,500. France was defeated in June 1940 and required to return those Germans serving in the French legion at the time back to Germany. Nevertheless, a French commander in North Africa, General Maxime Weygand, decided to rescue those who did not want to go back to Germany as he could see that they would be punished by the Nazi regime. Therefore, around 100 Germans were sent to Indochina before the expelling order came into effect.

The second group was those young Germans who lost their orientation after the fall of the Nazi regime. The main reasons for young Germans from seventeen to twenty-five years old (in 1945) joining the legion was that they were homeless, separated from their families, illiterate and jobless. They saw the legion as a new chance providing them with a new home or at least a community. They went over to the Vietminh due to many reasons but politics was definitely not the most important one. During the first Indochina War, there were about 1,325 deserters to the Vietminh front, half of whom deserted to the Vietminh between 1946 and 1948.²¹⁹

²¹⁹ E. Michels, *Deutsche in der Fremdenlegion. Mythen und Realitäten*, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999, S. 160. See also: Heinz Schütte, *Trí thức Đức tham gia kháng chiến Việt Nam (German intellectuals in the Vietnamese resistance)*, in: *Past and Present Magazine*, vol. 207, March 2004, tr. 13-15; Đào Đức Thuận and Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Mai, *Policies of the DRV towards Euro-African deserters and prisoners in the first Indochina War*, *Journal of Vietnamese Records and Archive*, vol. 6.2010.

The presence of Germans in the FFL was primarily due to the fact that “the FFL had had a long tradition of using German mercenaries. French authorities believed Germans were highly trained and instilled discipline.”²²⁰ If we look back in French history at the recruitment for its foreign legion, we find that in 1830 “Louis Philippe created the Foreign Legion in order to circumvent new restrictions on the service of foreign troops in the French army.”²²¹ But after WW II, German membership in the FFL became more problematic, notably from the end of 1950 when the French authorities in West German territory took advantage of their power as an occupying force to recruit legionnaires for their army.

The West German public was concerned about the increasing number of Germans serving in the FFL. Moreover, the tactics of the French authority in recruiting those young Germans worried the West Germans very much. Finally, the most psychological matter was the issue of German minors (under eighteen years old) recruited and serving in the FFL. At the same time West Germany needed manpower more than ever for the reconstruction of the state after the devastation of the war. Those German minors had been recruited without any consultation from their parents. Furthermore, the French authority also spent large amounts of money taken from the German contribution to the French occupation rulers to enlist Germans into the legion.²²²

²²⁰ Alec G. Hargreaves, *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonization: Legacy of French colonialism*, Lexington Books, 2005, p. 104.

²²¹ Jason Verber, *The Conundrum of Colonialism in Postwar Germany*, PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 2010, p. 84. See also: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1943&context=etd&sei-redirect=1#search=%22Jason%20Verber%2C%20Conundrum%20Colonialism%20Postwar%20Germany%2C%20Doctoral%20dissertation%2C%20University%20Iowa%202010%22>, (online accessed on 19 July 2012). It should be noted here that according to article 179 of the Versailles Treaty, France was in breach of the regulation. The right of France to recruit for the Foreign Legion was retained in accordance with French military laws and regulations. See more at: <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versa/versa4.html> (online accessed on 12 October 2012).

²²² Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 146.

After WW II, the French army was exhausted and young French men were kept back to serve in their own domestic missions. Some West German politicians argued that France's action endangered, even set back the relationship between West Germany and France that was being reconstructed after WW II. The press called attention to the visible lack of young men in West Germany and predicted great trouble for the federal government. Also the press called for closing all recruitment agencies and their operations in Landau, Offenburg and elsewhere in West Germany. The public went further demanding that it was time for the government to ask for its full sovereignty. The most urgent task the federal police had was to warn young Germans about the reality of the recruitment activities. The next measure was that the government must immediately improve social policies like job creation and a better education system.²²³ Not until after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu did the problem come to an end, but the West German public was more concerned by the destiny of German legionnaires. According to many primary and secondary sources, about 46,000 Germans died on the Indochina battlefield. At Dien Bien Phu alone 1,600 Germans were engaged. By 1954, there were 5,000 to 6,000 Germans still serving in the FFL in Indochina.

Konrad Adenauer and his government were at first a little disconcerted when dealing with the problem. They wondered whether Germans in the FFL were being treated according to German law compared to other German citizens. They even trusted that as soon as the occupation status was lifted the problem would be completely resolved. By asserting that "we cannot and will not support colonial wars of others"²²⁴ the West German official attitude still remained neutral towards the war in Indochina up to 1952. This would be altered by the end of that war. This can be seen to show that after the creation of the Federal Republic, an image of a peace-loving state should be firmly shown in West Germany. And in the formative years of the Federal Republic, West German officials were doing their best to prove themselves part of an anti-colonial state.

²²³ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, B 11, Bd 784. Public reactions to this problem will be discussed again in the next chapter.

²²⁴ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, B 11, Bd 784.

Moreover, if West Germany were to show any negative attitude towards the French colonial war in Indochina (in this case, in terms of the German legionnaires), it could be suggested that West Germany stood at the SU's side. This would violate its principles in foreign policy in closely tying with the West and anti-communist ideology. Even when West German attitudes shifted from neutral to support for the French war in Indochina in April 1954, it should not be understood that West Germany was backing French colonial interests, but rather as a gesture of West German confirmation of its ties with Western allies.

The West German government was criticized by opposition political groups including the communists after the first election of the Bundestag. However, at first it reacted patiently and blamed the country's occupation status under which government leaders could do nothing drastic. Behind this move, we can recognize that West Germany did not want to risk any sensitive relations with France. In the meantime, by exploiting this issue the GDR kept on launching propaganda criticizing Adenauer in order to protest against the ratification of the EDC plan.

In fact, the West German Foreign Office was sincerely concerned by the matter of German minors in the legion and negotiated with the French authorities to release them.²²⁵ During early 1950, many Germans in the legion in Indochina quit their service in the French legion and went over to the Vietminh. Hundreds of them were then released and came back to Germany. Many of them moved to West Germany, where they were caught and punished by the French military authority. This caused disquiet amongst the West German public and made them worried for sons or relatives who could be in the same position. In the Bundestag, too, the communists asked for resolutions on the issue of German deserters who might be punished by the French authority. After that, on 6 August 1951, the West German Foreign Office sent an official dispatch to the Allied High Commission and French authority to ask for the release of some sixty other cases.²²⁶

²²⁵ Volker Berresheim, *op.cit.*, S. 148.

²²⁶ *Loc.cit.*

The West German government's concerns on the issue of the *Fremdenlegionäre* went further than one might have thought. The Foreign Office on 10 April 1952 addressed an official letter to the General Consulate in Zürich asking it to investigate Swiss reactions towards the problem of foreign legionnaires. Such questions should be answered: Were young men younger than eighteen years old recruited? How did the Swiss government react to this issue? Was there any law in Switzerland controlling the issue?²²⁷ Also, the West German embassy to the Netherlands reported to the Foreign Office on 26 March 1952 that the FFL in the Netherlands only recruited young Dutch people over eighteen years old.²²⁸ This can be seen to show that the West German government was evidently concerned by the issue. The Foreign Office tried to consult other countries on their experience with that problem so that the government could define its own policy on the matter.

In fact, according to the report of the West German diplomatic officers to Argentina, the problem of Germans in the FFL to some extent influenced West German interests. In a record sent to the Foreign Office on 1 November 1953, Albrecht Boehme clearly warned that French colonialism and imperialism would soon end. He added that in the new world context, West Germany would be in a better position. Only one aspect influencing Germany's position and interests was the problem of Germans in the FFL as they were backing France to maintain colony. He also accused Adenauer of acting immorally by letting Germans serve in the maintenance of a foreign colonial rule.²²⁹

A German called Franz J.R., who had worked for the French military office in Marseille since 1948, submitted a report to the West German General Consulate in Marseille as he had been required. In the report, some facts on Germans in the FFL were described. According to his report, in 1954 there were

²²⁷ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 786. Actually, Switzerland had its own law on this called the Swiss Military Criminal Code promulgated from 1927 in which article 94 prohibited any military service in the legion.

²²⁸ *Loc.cit.*

²²⁹ *Loc.cit.*

14,501 Germans in the FFL in general. 6,000 Germans were missing in Indochina. From 1946, about 18,900 Germans died in the Indochina War. However, these figures were still lower than those of other sources. The Germans occupied 44.5% in the FFL. He knew that on German soil there were three main advertising agencies in Koblenz, Landau, Freiburg and some interim agencies in Kaiserslautern and Marburg. He also added those Germans who were working as advertisers such as: Sergeant-Chef Kratochiwil (Koblenz), Sergeant-Chef Kiel (Landau) and Sergeant Maiworm (Freiburg). About 200 new legionnaires were transported weekly from Strasbourg to Sidi Bel Abbes via Marseille,²³⁰ according to his report.²³¹

The Criminal Code was amended for the second time on 6 March 1953 but it still stipulated that any recruitment for the foreign army was strictly prohibited. West Germany continued to believe that the problem of the Germans in the legion would be settled once the EDC plan was passed and the problem would no longer be a question for West German state policy or the public view. Supporters for the recruitment would be punished as well. Despite this, the issue remained on the debate agenda of the Bundestag until 1955.

4.3. The attitudes of West German political groups towards the first Indochina War

The first Indochina War was one of many topics causing heated debates among West German political groups and organizations. As previously discussed, in its formative years West Germany did not have any direct interest in the politics and economics of Indochina. West Germany's recognition of Bao Dai's government, not the Ho Chi Minh-led government, showed only the diplomatic gesture of an ally to France. If West German political groups and other social organizations were interested in the first Indochina War it was with regard to the matter of Germans in the FFL in Indochina. This problem served as the core reasons for many political debates and movements in the post-war West Germany.

²³⁰ Sidi Bel Abbes was the training center in modern Algeria.

²³¹ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtige Amts, B 11, Bd 1432.

From 1950, the problem of *Fremdenlegionäre* concerned different political groups in the Bundestag. The SPD was consistently the group that opposed the CDU led by Konrad Adenauer on this issue. As early as 1952, the SPD judged that since the war in Indochina was escalating with the intervention of some other powers, and France was not receiving much assistance from the Western allies in the Western world's struggle against communist expansion in Asia, West Germany was contributing a great number of young men for the cause of "defense of the Western culture in the Asia-Indochina front". The SPD mentioned the unbelievable number of 80% young Germans in the French legion in Indochina.²³²

In a question document entitled "*Kleine Anfrage 67 der Fraktion der SPD*" of 26 May 1954, the SPD group demanded that the federal government make clear the following issues which had attracted very attention from the West German public: *firstly*, the number of Germans in the FFL who had died or were missing in the Vietminh's prisons in Indochina; *secondly*, the proposals of the federal government to solve the issue of German prisoners and lost fighters in Indochina – the POW/MIA issues; *thirdly*, the federal government's measures to stop the advertisement for the foreign legion on West German soil.²³³

Then, on 15 June 1954, more than a month after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the State Secretary of the Foreign Office, Dr. Walter Hallstein, responded: i. German diplomats in Paris had asked the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the number of German citizens in the French legion in Indochina but no exact number had been given so far as the French classified the *Fremdenlegionäre* by the languages they spoke, not by nationalities. Therefore, the Swiss and Austrians were counted as well. In Dien Bien Phu, around 1,600 Germans had been engaged, most of them caught and held as prisoners of war in Vietminh camps; ii.

²³² Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 784.

²³³ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 781. It is necessary to add here that this issue was more serious and later became more critical when the survivors of the Vietminh's POW camps were released. Their bad status of health shocked the public. Meanwhile, others were exploited as propaganda tools in the GDR, recounting to the public their good treatment at the hands of the Vietminh.

before the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the Federal Republic's General Consulate was sent to Geneva to take responsibility and cooperate with the International Red Cross to discuss the future of the Germans in the French legion in Indochina but as the Geneva Conference was still going on, there had been not any final results so far. After the fall of Dien Bien Phu, West German diplomatic representatives in Paris did the same, too. Furthermore, the German Red Cross was committed to pursuing every international route to save the Germans in the legion. Finally, the federal government promised to make every effort to return them home; iii. since the second amendment of the Criminal Code on 6 March 1953, article 141 was applied to deal with any advertisement for the foreign army on West German soil. So far sixty-eight cases had been investigated, of which only two cases had been condemned, no evidence of guilt had been found with forty-eight cases. Some other eighteen cases were under investigation.²³⁴

Surprisingly, the French High Commission in the Federal Republic reaffirmed there was no official office in Germany recruiting Germans for the legion but there might have been people who individually did the job of advertising. Dr. Walter Hallstein also suggested not only that the federal government should do something to improve social welfare for the young Germans but also that the government of each state should share the burden with the federal authorities. In the previous years reinforced the federal budgets for the youth and created a number of institutions devoted to the integration of the young Germans who were homeless and jobless in West Germany.²³⁵

At the 18th meeting of the Foreign Committee of the Bundestag on 13 July 1954, in response to the SPD's questions on the fate of Germans in the FFL, Deputy Walter Hallstein said that according to international law they would be treated like other French prisoners of war.²³⁶ In the internal document passed within the Foreign Office between Referat 302 and Referat 500 on 24 July 1954, the issue of Germans in the legion as prisoners of war was also mentioned. The

²³⁴ *Loc.cit.*

²³⁵ *Loc.cit.*

²³⁶ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953-1957, op.cit., S. 216.*

West German Foreign Office had two concerns: *firstly*, where German prisoners of war were being kept in Indochina; *secondly*, was the return of German prisoners of war to the GDR in accordance with international law?²³⁷ Many former German legionnaires returned to the GDR after being released by the Vietminh in the early 1950s onwards. They were used as a propaganda tool by the GDR to criticize the federal regime and the Chancellor Konrad Adenauer personally. Furthermore, in the context of both two German states attempting to be internationally recognized as the unique legal representative for the whole German nation, this problem caused more trouble than ever before.

Even one year later, the destiny of Germans in the legion was once again talked over at the 27th meeting of committee in which the FDP group again raised the question of the exact number of Germans in the legion and what the German Red Cross and Geneva Conference could do to deal with the issues of German prisoners of the Indochina War after they were released.²³⁸ One should know that it was not only the CDU's political opponents that raised those debates against Adenauer's government, even inside the CDU there were many concerns about the issue. This is proved by many speeches given by Konrad Adenauer during his talks with CDU members in 1954. Konrad Adenauer stated at a CDU meeting on 26 April 1954 when the Geneva Conference had started that the Geneva Conference and the end of the Indochina conflict were being counted by hour. He added that the outcome of the first Indochina War was very influential for world politics, as the U.S. engaged in that war. Once Indochina fell, other states in South-east Asia would fall also. No one could predict what would happen in Indochina, he argued, because at first, it was only a colonial war or a limited war but then it became internationalized with the engagements of other world powers.²³⁹

From 1954, Adenauer's government and he himself became less patient on the issue of full West German sovereignty. Without French consultation on the

²³⁷ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B. 11, Bd. 783.

²³⁸ *Der Auswärtige Ausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages 1953-1957, op.cit.*, S. 450.

²³⁹ *Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands 1953-1957*, Droste Verlag, 1990, S. 139.

issue, the West German goal would be hard to achieve. But ironically, at the exact moment when West Germany needed full national sovereignty, the French cabinet was deeply involved in the Indochina question and it was impossible for Laniel's government to deal with any other issues including the *Saarfrage*.²⁴⁰

West German social organizations also reacted to the first Indochina War in their way since the war was still underway. Before a meeting of the German Youth's Protection Organization (*Aktion Jugendschutz*) held in May 1952, some leaders demanded from the Foreign Office documents related to the issue of advertising for the foreign legion. The documents should make clear the following:

- The federal government's actions towards the issue
- Where people could find the advertising agencies
- What impact the advertising campaign would have
- Reports on the results of the advertising activities
- Reports on the age, social background etc. of the applicants
- Statistics on the reasons or motives for registering for the legion
- Living conditions of legionnaires
- Number of Germans in the legion
- Fates of legionnaires after finishing their time in the legion.²⁴¹

Also, religious associations calculated different numbers of young Germans in the FFL. According to the statistics of the Protestant church, up to April 1954, 25,000 Germans had died on the Indochina battlefield.²⁴² But earlier,

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, S. 154.

²⁴¹ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 1432.

²⁴² Cited accordingly to Eckard Michels, *op.cit.*, footnote 27, S. 237.

from 1952, some young members of the SPD had raised awareness as they protested against the French authority's recruitment activities in the South-West area of Germany. In summer 1952, they produced and distributed their first brochures – a propaganda tool – declaring the incredible number of 90,000 young Germans serving in the foreign legion, among which 13,520 had died in Indochina alone. Even as early as 1953 in the area of Rhineland-Pfalz and some other locations, a poster war (*Platkatkrieg*) was carried out. The main content of these posters was to warn young Germans about the danger of French recruitment for their legion, and awaken them to the fact that all of the French promises were lies. The truth of the foreign legion was: sickness, and death.²⁴³ Then, after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, young members of the SPD argued that 46,000 young Germans had died on the Indochina battlefield.²⁴⁴

Another youth organization, the *Stadtjugendring (Abteilung Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendpflege Marburg an der Lahn)*, chose to question the West German authorities on the matter of young Germans recruited into the FFL. In a letter dated 29 September 1952 to the federal government and Bundestag as well as many relevant governmental bodies, this organization questioned the issue of the advertisement of recruiting young Germans for the FFL. The letter condemned the French authority for what they had done with young Germans who had been recruited and risked their lives for foreign interests in maintaining order in its colonial possessions. It even questioned their aims in doing that and suggested that the issue could only be accused for French flirtation to German minors who were facing social and political difficulties. This organization repeated what the allies at the Nürnberg Trials had said in condemning the people in Nazi-occupied nations who had actively collaborated with Germany or been passively exploited to work for Nazi Germany during WW II. This connected to what the French did with young Germans when hiring them, although in different circumstances, to serve its own interests. Also, they begged

²⁴³ Eckard Michels, *op.cit.*, S. 241.

²⁴⁴ *Loc.cit.*

people to listen to their own conscience and sense of responsibility in dealing with the problem.²⁴⁵

The youth organization went further, requiring the French government and churches to solve the problem by immediately ending every contract signed by German minors and prohibiting any continued advertisement and/or recruitment of German underage youths in the foreign legion. Article 141a of the Criminal Code had to be enforced seriously again. This organization also called for other social organizations such as the Youth Association, schools, and families to protect German youths from being recruited into the legion.²⁴⁶

Additionally, many individuals were very concerned by the issue of *Fremdenlegionäre* too. Mr. Hans-Ludwig Seresse sent a letter to Adenauer on 12 July 1952 mentioning the number of 400 to 600 young Germans joining the FFL monthly. In his letter, he asked whether the Chancellor was aware of the situation or not. And again, the Foreign Office replied that they had been concerned by the issue for a long time but the federal government could do nothing to completely prevent underage Germans from joining the legion as West Germany was still an occupied land.²⁴⁷

In short, the first Indochina War did not only influence colonized countries but also the Western world including the U.S., France, the SU, Red China and West Germany. Although the West German government, political groups, other social organizations, and individuals reacted differently to the war, they all shared a common concern about the political and military events outside Europe. Thus, the problem of Germans in the FFL in Indochina served as a central political and social issue disputed by different political and social organs because humans have always been the most crucial element of any conflict in world history. It is understandable that the matter of *Fremdenlegionäre* in the Indochina War had a

²⁴⁵ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 780.

²⁴⁶ *Loc.cit.*

²⁴⁷ *Loc.cit.*

great effect on the post-war West German political life embodied in the media, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE WEST GERMAN PUBLIC VIEW OF

THE FIRST INDOCHINA WAR

There were a number of public attitudes towards the first Indochina War. One of the main purposes of this thesis is to survey on the West German public view and mass media on this issue. In order to achieve this, most popular newspapers published from 1950 to 1954 in West Germany were examined, such as *Die Zeit* (DZ), the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ), the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and *Der Stern* (DS).²⁴⁸ Together with these newspapers and other daily or weekly magazines, journalists and commentators also reported moderately on the first Indochina War. There is no doubt that the mass media often follows the agenda set by government, in part because government policies and pronouncements are considered inherently newsworthy according to the news values governing decisions by journalists and editors. In the main, the reporting of the war that was published or broadcasted was a largely uncritical reproduction of the official military line.²⁴⁹

Although many journalists made accurate reports, these would often be changed by publishers, a process referred to by journalist David Halberstam as

²⁴⁸ The Indochinese colonial conflict was repeatedly reported in the first three above-mentioned newspapers from 1950 onwards, whereas *Der Stern* covered it less than others. *Die Zeit* (The Time) was first published in February 1946, and is the most widely read German weekly newspaper; its political direction is centrist and liberal. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (South German Newspaper) has been published continuously since October 1945 and has nearly the same editorial stance as *Die Zeit*. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Frankfurt General Newspaper), a national German newspaper founded in 1949, is a center-right and conservative-leaning newspaper. *Der Stern* (The Star), founded in 1948 as a weekly news magazine, has been seen as liberal-critical and partially left-liberal.

²⁴⁹ Edward S. Herman, and Noam Chomsky, *The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. London: Vintage, 1994, pp. 169-296.

“the hamburger machine.”²⁵⁰ In fact, they had their own approach for corresponding and commenting on the conflict. As the war intensified, they intensively focused on the year 1954. We recall that after the fall of Dien Bien Phu the final decision on the hotly-debated project of the EDC was to be made. Besides, other media sources like memoirs of the former German legionnaires were also collected and surveyed.

5.1. West German newspapers and the first Indochina War

It is widely accepted that in democracy-based society, the press is considered “the fourth power” of the state. However, this consideration might not be true in the case of the former GDR as most newspapers, magazines, radio and later television were mainly controlled by the authorized party or by the government. From 1950 onwards, a series of East German newspapers, whether they officially saw themselves as “the voice of the SED” or not, published many articles, news stories, etc. reporting what was happening in Indochina. Compared to the Soviet-zone at that time, the press was treated differently in the FRG. We all know that freedom of speech was guaranteed in the *Bundesgebiet* according to the Basic Law so that everyone could raise their voice and express their opinions on every political and/or social event. But why did the press have so much influence on society? And what were the main events covered by West German newspapers in the early 1950s? It is also commonly agreed that the media in general and the press in particular, play a crucial role in society. The press is a society’s mirror reflecting every aspect of social life. It reflects the government’s policies and their implementation in society on the one hand and has its own power that can greatly influence government policy on the other. In other words, the press and policy-makers have a close connection with one another. Regarding the first Indochina War, all the aforementioned newspapers concentrated on the issues, through which one can trace the war in Indochina logically and interestingly as follows.

²⁵⁰ David L. Anderson (ed.), *Facing My Lai: Moving Beyond the Massacre*, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998, p. 66.

5.1.1. The attitudes of the world great powers

As discussed above, at the outset the first Indochina War was simply a colonial war in which the French colonialists sought to regain their former colonial possession. To achieve that goal, they had no other choice than to engage in military combats with the Vietminh who were attempting to liberate Indochina. This colonial war then became internationalized with the involvement of the U.S. since they decided to assist France financially and militarily from May 1950. We remember that, as early as 1950, the SU, the PRC and other socialist countries started recognizing Ho Chi Minh as the leader of the DRV. The PRC began to support the Vietminh after the success of the Vietminh border campaign. This move was closely reported by the West German newspapers.²⁵¹

In January 1950, the SU officially recognized the government of Ho Chi Minh, thereby offering a diplomatic gesture to a colonized region in Asia. Meanwhile, there were some contradictory public opinions on this diplomatic gesture. Most of the West German press called the French-backed government of Bao Dai a “legal government” and described the Vietminh as “rebels.”²⁵² Moreover, France was very worried about the U.S. intentions of cutting aid to France in Indochina as well as not directly intervening in the war. One month earlier, the U.S. had considered a direct intervention in the Indochina War, but the U.S. would find this almost impossible (*wenig wahrscheinlich*) due to its vivid experiences in Korea. The inflexible attitude of the U.S. put France under the hardship at Geneva.²⁵³ From the American perspective, Indochina played an important role in global politics and “if communism expanded into this area, it would be dangerous for the free world.” (*Die Gefahr einer Einverleibung Südostasiens in den kommunistischen Block ist eine Gefahr für die ganze Freie Welt.*) The U.S. also warned that if Red China intervened in Indochina then the free world would immediately be united according to the so-called “united actions”. The press also reported that both France and Britain were wary of any

²⁵¹ SZ, 11. Oktober 1950.

²⁵² FAZ, 01. Februar 1950.

²⁵³ SZ, 01. April 1954.

Chinese intervention in the conflict. This fear was absolutely understandable considering the war in Indochina was becoming more internationalized with the involvement of great powers.²⁵⁴

Concerned by the on-going conflict, West Germany was itself seen to be indirectly involved and very much affected by the Indochina War. West Germany was actually an advocate of the Western family of which the U.S. and France were key members. Consequently, it observed out the war process in Indochina with close attention. The West German press, nevertheless, went further by predicting that the U.S. would soon construct a defense system for the region of South-east Asia.²⁵⁵ West Germany also confirmed definitely that the Americans would continue assisting France in Indochina only on the condition that France would ratify the EDC as soon as possible.²⁵⁶

It would be a mistake not to mention Britain even though it was not a member of either European organization, like the on-going plan of the EDC or the ECSC. Its position seemed to be outside of common European issues, but it was also a key component in the Western club. This is why the West German press did keep a watchful eye on British policy towards the Indochina War also. In 1953, the British government refused to send its air force to assist France on the Indochina battlefield.²⁵⁷ Just at the outset of the Dien Bien Phu battle in March 1954, the U.S. had called for Western participation in the conflict in order to share

²⁵⁴ SZ, 09. Januar 1952.

²⁵⁵ Later known as SEATO, whose principal architect was Secretary Dulles, this originated from that defense treaty in an effort to stem further communist takeovers of countries in the Pacific region and to legitimize the U.S. presence in South Vietnam. Representatives from the eight original signatories pledged to defend against what it saw as an increase of communist military aggression against democracy. But in the end, the U.S. carried the heaviest burden in defending against that aggression. *See also:* DZ, 13. Mai 1954.

²⁵⁶ FAZ, 23. März 1954.

²⁵⁷ FAZ, 05. Mai 1953.

the burden with France. But again, Britain was undecided on whether to involve itself in the war or not.²⁵⁸

Taking India for consideration, although India was not considered a world superpower but rather a newly independent state,²⁵⁹ it had a gradually growing role in Asia as a neutral country with a large population. Jawaharlal Nehru's call for peace in Indochina, to some extent, attracted the West German press.²⁶⁰ There was no doubt that India was emerging in world politics as an influential power; and in any case, West Germany wanted to keep an eye on the growing countries in Asia, for which India served as a good example of the new world power.²⁶¹

Rapid victories of the Vietminh forces over the French army on the battlefield, added to by the increased cost of war meant that France found itself unable to bear the burden alone. France kept on insisting that its attempts in Indochina must be recognized as its significant contribution to the Western common action against communist expansion in South-east Asia and through out the world. Therefore, France had to upgrade the scale of warfare. With no hesitation, the U.S. repeatedly appealed to its Western allies to assist France in Indochina in stead of leaving America to help alone in that cause.²⁶² However, when other Western allies did not respond to the American request as quickly as expected the U.S. became angry and suspected the Western allies' loyalty. The

²⁵⁸ SZ, 27. April 1954.

²⁵⁹ India was declared an independent state in 1947 and liberated from British colonialism after the partition of British India on the basis of religious demographics. This led to the creation of the sovereign states of the Dominion of Pakistan (later the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) and the Union of India (later Republic of India) which took place in 1947, on August 14 and 15 respectively.

²⁶⁰ SZ, 23. Februar 1954.

²⁶¹ The term was used during the 20th century by many statesmen (Woodrow Wilson and Winston Churchill). It refers to a new period of history displaying a dramatic change in global political thought and the balance of power after WW I and WW II.

²⁶² SZ, 06 April 1954.

Americans immediately cautioned their allies about their unclear attitudes and slow response towards the war in Indochina.²⁶³

West German newspapers asserted that the loss of Dien Bien Phu was a great victory for the communists. Clearly, this was unacceptable for the free world because it would soon be endangered by communism.²⁶⁴ When the Indochina War was almost at an end, along with calling for the Western allies to rescue France in the battlefield, the U.S. simultaneously kept on urging France to ratify the EDC. Any delay in ratifying the EDC would be unfavorable for the Western world, they argued. In the meantime, many Western countries were welcoming German rearmament and the German contribution to the EDC.²⁶⁵

Military developments in Indochina in general and on the Dien Bien Phu battlefield in particular disturbed the West German press a great deal. Articles published on the launch of the Vietminh's decisive campaign (from 13 March 1954) gave readers the reactions of the great powers, and details of a possible intervention of China in Dien Bien Phu. For the time being, France impatiently urged the U.S. for more intensive assistance.²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the U.S. had to wait and see others' moves. Most importantly, they had to observe Chinese attitudes before they could react. As a matter of fact, this waiting worried Paris very much.

The position of the UN was a crucial topic which also concerned the West German press. As a common home of all nations, the UN was also alarmed by the idea of any intervention by Red China on the battlefield. France continued opposing an internationalized war. Meanwhile, socialists in the French government and national assembly were wary of a war escalation.²⁶⁷ The West German press was firmly convinced that the U.S. would not interfere in the Franco-Vietnam war, at least not by sending troops there. Meanwhile, France was

²⁶³ FAZ, 10. April 1954.

²⁶⁴ SZ, 10, 11. April 1954.

²⁶⁵ FAZ, 06. April 1954.

²⁶⁶ SZ, 07. April 1954.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

still hoping for a favorable arrangement, a ceasefire agreement, for instance, in the up-coming Geneva Conference.²⁶⁸

The American position towards the conflict also attracted the attention of the West German press when the SZ ran the news that the Vice President of the U.S., Richard Nixon, might send troops to Indochina in a case of urgency. Nonetheless, it would not be easy to do as a decision to send troops into battle must be ratified by the U.S. parliament.²⁶⁹ One can conclude that the U.S. policy towards the first Indochina War was not always clear, and sometimes confused their allies at different and decisive moments.

In hindsight, post-war Indochina was calculated and formulated by the powers even before the fall of Dien Bien Phu. Naturally, West Germany observed the process with great anxiety. The West German press tried to understand why France did not wish to see Indochina divided as the peace agreement was settled. This problem would be discussed in detail at the Geneva Conference in the months to come. Before the collapse of Dien Bien Phu, the attitudes of the great powers towards a political and military resolution for Indochina were still unclear.²⁷⁰

Not long before the Geneva Conference, West Germany was able to detect disagreements among the great powers, particularly between the U.S. and France. At the end of war, the U.S. foresaw that France would no longer be able to maintain a presence in Indochina. More importantly, as the fate of Dien Bien Phu had not yet been determined, all the superpowers had their own scheme in the world political theatre, in which Indochina would definitely be used as a playing card. At the outset, the West German press predicted that the U.S. was willing to support a divided Vietnam, in which the U.S. could then intervene and replace France.

²⁶⁸ FAZ, 09. April 1954.

²⁶⁹ SZ, 20. April 1954.

²⁷⁰ FAZ, 26. April 1954.

The attitudes of the great world powers towards the conflict in Indochina were shown very clearly in the West German media, especially with regards to the event of Dien Bien Phu, where French prestige was challenged. As a result, this could take the French colonial empire into another era. West German newspapers strongly stressed that the whole world was focussing on Dien Bien Phu, seeing it as the Stalingrad or Verdun of Asia.²⁷¹ The U.S. did not doubt that the fall of Dien Bien Phu would be unavoidable. Political commentators and analysts pointed out that the U.S. policy under the Eisenhower administration was more active than during the Truman period in preventing communist expansion in Asia. They also asserted that European politics should be accompanied by U.S strategic policy in Europe. This meant European interests must always be coupled with the U.S. policy in the European continent. Lastly, the West German press supposed that, whatever the situation in Indochina, the SU would not join the battle in Indochina.²⁷²

By observing all the effects of policies of the great powers, notably the U.S. policy in Korea previously, West Germany was vigilant enough to analyze and shape its own attitudes towards the war. From then on, other future conflicts outside Germany would be seriously considered before the country showed any official attitude or took action.

5.1.2. West German government's attitudes towards the first Indochina War

At the beginning, West Germany did not concentrate on the war in the Far East as Germans had no direct interests in the region. Even after the foundation of the Federal Republic in 1949, the West German state only observed the changing

²⁷¹ *Stalingrad* – the name of the city was used to refer to the great battle between the German army and the Red army of the SU in the Second World War. The battle lasted from 17 July 1942 to 2 February 1943. This was seen as one of the bloodiest battles in the Second World War in which German army failed to succeed. It was also a turning point in which the war entered a new period favourable to the allies. *Verdun* – another severe battle in the First World War between the German army and the French army lasting from February to December 1916. Despite the fact that France was the victor, its human losses were reported to be higher than those of the Germans.

²⁷² FAZ, 27. April 1954.

moves in Europe, focused on its post-war affairs and sought for integration into the West. From 1950 onwards, at the time of the Korean War, the Germans were concerned by Indochina where the French were fighting against the Vietminh forces. There were two main reasons for the West German concerns about the Indochina conflict. Firstly, for Western Europe, if Asia fell into communist' hands it would be a defeat for the Western world. Secondly, West Germany observed the first Indochina War because Indochina was still significant for the French as part of their cultural and economic interests, and above all, because their national prestige were represented there.

The West German press started observing the first Indochina War more intensively just after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. With American indirect intervention through military and financial aid for France, the war undoubtedly became more popular. To some extent, it could influence world politics. The West German press was soon paying attention to French public opinion and wondering where the real interests of France in Indochina lay. To maintain the war, France had to spend 50% of its budget on the war and manpower for a meaningless war in which a victory for France would hardly be possible. Meanwhile, French domestic politics was constantly unstable.²⁷³ Daily news stories and articles were brought to readers reporting the escalation of the war.

With the atmosphere of the Korean War and the rise of Red China, the first Indochina War had to be seen in the context of the Cold War of which Asia was the center. Since the second phase of the war in Indochina, the West German press could see that the French policy towards the *Indochinafrage* was not being clearly declared by French defense minister Pleven.²⁷⁴ Therefore, France had to re-access the connection between the three states of Indochinese Union and their "mother country". This forced France to hesitate before shaping any foreign policy towards West Germany.

²⁷³ FAZ, 29. Juni 1950.

²⁷⁴ FAZ, 20. Oktober 1950.

Military victories gained through the entire conflict by the Vietminh were regularly viewed and assessed by many newspapers. Indochina could be seen as “another Balkan in Asia”, according to the analysis of *DZ*, 28.12.50. In Europe in the early 1950s when West German leaders feared a communist expansion from the east led by the SU, it is understandable that the West German press was concerned by Soviet aid to the Vietminh via Chinese land. Any military movements in North-west Vietnam in 1952 were judged and reported constantly by West German journalists. The West German media also evaluated the effectiveness of Chinese aid to the Vietminh.²⁷⁵ One should keep in mind that after the Korean War ended in 1953, the Indochina War was then considered an extended war with the indirect intervention of the same great powers like the U.S., the SU and Red China. Convinced that those world powers were, at that time, ruling world politics, the West German press started to observe their own government’s official attitudes towards the war.

As early as 1954, observing increasing American aid to France in Indochina, West German leaders questioned themselves about how they should react.²⁷⁶ Should West Germany be in the same front as the U.S. in Indochina to show loyalty to its biggest ally? On the one hand, West Germany hoped stability in Indochina would soon be restored so that France could withdraw and then ratify the long-awaited EDC project. On the other hand, could it be that West Germany had long been hoping for some kind of French defeat in the colonial territories, so that any game in Europe would be fairer amongst the players? Did all these West German calculations cause Adenauer’s policies towards Indochina to be sometimes confused? As it was, Adenauer’s attitude towards the war was always that of a mere “observer”.

From the outset of the Dien Bien Phu campaign, the West German press closely followed and soon predicted Dien Bien Phu a visible disaster for France.²⁷⁷ Dien Bien Phu was then observed and reported on regularly in every

²⁷⁵ *SZ*, 29, 30. Oktober 1952.

²⁷⁶ *FAZ*, 05. Januar 1954.

²⁷⁷ *FAZ*, 20. März 1954.

West German newspaper. The press saw France would not be able to escape the consequences of Dien Bien Phu. Thus, reluctantly or not, France should seek a political solution. The West German press could see the connection between Indochina and decisions made in the French parliament where a majority of deputies hoped to put an end the war. Thereupon, all observations actively led West Germany to the subsequent decisions dealing with regional and international issues.

The West German public also even compared Vietnam after Dien Bien Phu with another Korea by which the whole world's political situation might be changed significantly.²⁷⁸ Two days after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the *FAZ* ran an article on the front page reiterating that Dien Bien Phu reminded Germans of Stalingrad where the German army was defeated in WW II. Obviously, the West German government's attitudes towards the first Indochina War as viewed by the West German press are only one channel for historical researchers when examining West Germany's policies on the French colonial conflict.

5.1.3. French dilemma in Indochina

As is commonly accepted, the return of the French to its former colony of Indochina presented a mountain of difficulties compared to what the French colonialists had experienced prior to 1945. The conflict was between one side who had been a weak victor in WW II and wanted to regain control over its former colony in Indochina in an effort to rescue its image as a great empire, and the other side who were the indigenous men of a newly liberated nation, ready to pay any price to maintain their immature independence. By their own tactics, the communist guerrillas pushed the French troops into getting constantly stuck in the mud.

The West German press saw the irony in the fate of the French when France had to keep on demanding American financial and military aid for France in Indochina. Yet up to the end of 1950, France received from the U.S. only one-

²⁷⁸ *FAZ*, 20. April 1954.

fourth of the total cost of the war. Also, German journalists analyzed the French economic conditions of the French at that time.²⁷⁹ The West German media described the French war in Indochina as one in which even a victory would be a defeat (*Ein Krieg, in dem auch der Sieg eine Niederlage wäre*) when criticizing the French dilemma on the Indochina battlefield. France depended too much on American aid at this time. One option for France was to internationalize the war, from which would pave a way for the UN to intervene in the conflict. France could therefore end the war honorably. Another option for France was to continue the war, which would increase the financial and human burden on itself. With regard to the latter, France was no longer able to do it due to terrible domestic problems of financial weakness and political instability.²⁸⁰

West German correspondents in Paris also reported that the French National Assembly and the French people were indeed fed up with the war in Indochina. Evidently, this made the long-drawn-out war in Indochina unfavorable for France because the majority of French did not want to lengthen the war. West German journalistic commentators realized very clearly that negotiation with Ho Chi Minh to find a peaceful solution would be unavoidable for France.²⁸¹ Several months later, the *SZ* shared this view.²⁸² This meant in the West German view, it was considered a future defeat of France in the war when the conflict almost came to an end.

In February 1954, a conference was held in Berlin for the first time with the intention of discussing the issues of Germany and Austria, but they then turned to related issues of Asia. The meeting place for the next conference on Asia in Geneva was also decided. The Geneva Conference would be very crucial for the whole of Europe. This is because in fact, the Indochina War did not only influence France but the process of European integration and the French role in

²⁷⁹ *SZ*, 16. Oktober 1950.

²⁸⁰ *DZ*, 20. November 1952.

²⁸¹ *FAZ*, 28. Oktober 1953.

²⁸² *SZ*, 15. Februar 1954.

that process as well. The influence of the war might slow down this European integration process.²⁸³

More importantly, it could change both German and French awareness and actions in their development aid strategies in Africa. In terms of finance and military, Indochina became a huge burden for France towards the end of the war. According to what France had proposed in the framework of the EDC, France had to contribute 14 divisions; meanwhile West Germany was committed to providing 12 divisions. Nonetheless, the realities on the Indochina battlefield meant that France could never meet these demands while most of its divisions were stationed in Indochina or in North Africa.²⁸⁴

Last but not least, the West German press was to some extent interested in what the position and role of Indochina would be when it was completely decolonized. Would Indochina still belong to the French Union? The press predicted possible scenarios for Indochina as follows: Indochina would be independent and fully separate from France; or Indochina would be autonomous and would then volunteer to join the French Union.²⁸⁵ For the Federal Republic, this was very important while Germany was attempting to assess French domestic and overseas problems. West German leaders fully understood that French eminence depended heavily on its colonial territories in Asia and Africa. Therefore, what would France be without its colonial territories? The West German press observed French attitudes towards the war during which France

²⁸³ For more discussions on the connection of the first Indochina War, Dien Bien Phu and the European integration, see also: Philippe Mioche, *If European Integration Had Stumbled at Dien Bien Phu*, in: (ed.), Piyanart Bunnag, Franz Knipping, and Sud Chonchirdsin, *Europe-Southeast Asia in the Contemporary World: Mutual Images and Reflections 1940s-1960s*, International Conference of Historians, Bangkok, 25-27 August 1999, pp.51-58.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ SZ, 09. März 1954. In fact, French Union did not last long after the French decolonization in Indochina. This political entity of France was then replaced by the French Community under the Fifth Republic from 1958.

opposed any “united actions”²⁸⁶ in Indochina despite fearing an intervention from Red China.²⁸⁷ France did not want to see this happen because, if it did, France would have to distribute its interests to those who intervened. The press continued reporting on Indochina even after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and saw that the French National Assembly did not intend to send more troops to Indochina after the fall of Dien Bien Phu.²⁸⁸ This was seen as a signal of the total defeat of France in Indochina in West German public opinion.

5.1.4. The fall of Dien Bien Phu and its impacts

It is not difficult to understand why the West German media focused intensively on the event of Dien Bien Phu and its echoes in world politics. Almost every West German weekly or even daily newspaper reported comprehensively on what was happening at Dien Bien Phu from the launch of the mission on 13 March 1954 as well as the surrounding circumstances. Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Conference had a great influence on one another. The *SZ*, for instance, gave weekly coverage to the gradual collapse of Dien Bien Phu. Additionally, it followed the event to evaluate how the American intervention proceeded.²⁸⁹ They realized Vietnam’s strong will and might in gaining a decisive military victory over Dien Bien Phu because the Vietminh leaders believed that by winning the

²⁸⁶ Rather than bear the entire burden of containment in South-east Asia, the U.S. began to favor what Secretary of State John Foster Dulles called “United Action”. Under the plan, a coalition of local forces would be called upon to assist with disputes. Out of the “United Action” approach came the South-east Asia Collective Defense Treaty, referred to as the Manila Pact. The pact was signed by Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the U.S. on 8 September 1954 in Manila. The aim of the Manila Pact was to find peaceful means to resolve differences in South-east Asia by establishing a council to determine how to implement the treaty and to provide consultation for military and other planning within the treaty area.

²⁸⁷ *SZ*, 08. April 1954.

²⁸⁸ *SZ*, 03. Juni 1954.

²⁸⁹ Actually, the U.S. had funded approximately one-third of France’s attempt to retain control over Indochina. Although the defeat brought an end to French colonial efforts in Indochina, the U.S. soon stepped in to fill the vacuum, increasing military aid to South Vietnam and sending the first U.S. military advisers to the country in 1959.

battle they would have a better position at the negotiation table in Geneva in May 1954.²⁹⁰ The *FAZ* compared Dien Bien Phu to Verdun and predicted that the fall of Dien Bien Phu would be a great defeat for France which would also badly damaged its prestige and honor.²⁹¹

The West German press also showed their concerns about the fate of Dien Bien Phu when they criticized the military situation. By referencing the Vietminh's continuous success on the battlefield they affirmed that the outcome of Dien Bien Phu was being finalized in a way that would be unfavorable for France and its allies.²⁹² With the headline "*Frankreich gefallen*" (France defeated), *DZ* stated outright that France was absolutely the loser and Dien Bien Phu was a great symbol for France's defeat. The newspaper went on to conclude that, Dien Bien Phu would be written about in the history books as one of the most impressive oriental victories but the worst catastrophe of the Western world, and that Dien Bien Phu totally destroyed the image of France as a great nation.²⁹³

Evidently, the outcome of Dien Bien Phu demonstrated the inevitability of French defeat in Indochina and this would have a profound effect on the attitudes and moves of the participants at the Geneva Conference which was about to be held mainly to discuss Indochinese issues. After nine years of fighting against the Vietminh, the French control in Indochina declined shortly after the bloody battle of Dien Bien Phu because they were unable to obtain U.S. reinforcements or additional military aid. The West German press saw that a win for the Vietminh in Dien Bien Phu would be a huge challenge for France at the Geneva Conference. The day-by-day process on the Dien Bien Phu battlefield created difficulties not only for the French military forces in Indochina, but also for the French diplomatic delegation at Geneva.

²⁹⁰ *SZ*, 17. März 1954.

²⁹¹ *SZ*, 07. April 1954.

²⁹² *SZ*, 03,04. April 1954.

²⁹³ *DZ*, 13. Mai 1954.

More than that, it would have a great influence on the French domestic political stage if the national assembly kept on opposing Laniel's government.²⁹⁴ All national theaters were closed after the fall of Dien Bien Phu.²⁹⁵ This was not a military failure alone but rather had a profound impact on the French domestic political theater. The West German press predicted that Laniel's government would be pulled down after the shameful fall of the stronghold.²⁹⁶ Besides, the French defeat would cause a lot of disputes within both the government and the national assembly, especially about the fate of more than 16,000 troops fighting there.²⁹⁷

Moreover, *DZ* commented that happened in Paris and Geneva would have enormous consequences for Germany as it could totally change the world's political complexion which in turn could have a crucial impact on Germany.²⁹⁸ From the beginning of May 1954, West German public opinion was concentrated on the Geneva Conference and the fate of the EDC as the two issues that were always connected and influenced by one another. EDC protesters in West Germany were looking and hoping for a ceasefire and peace agreement for the whole of Indochina. They also opposed talks with Bao Dai and demanded negotiations with Ho Chi Minh.

At Geneva, an eight-point proposal proposed by the communists for a general and free election for the whole of Vietnam greatly attracted the attention of the West German press. It reminded Germans of the same suggestion made by the SU two years before, of a similar proposed election in both the Soviet Zone and the *Bundesgebiet*. At the negotiation table France supported a general election for the whole of Vietnam controlled by an international control committee. West Germany carefully watched this move, wondering whether the same model could

²⁹⁴ Spencer C. Tucker (editor), *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, 2nd. Ed. USA, 2011, p. 626.

²⁹⁵ SZ, 11. Mai 1954.

²⁹⁶ FAZ, 11. Mai 1954.

²⁹⁷ FAZ, 12. Mai 1954.

²⁹⁸ DZ, 13. Mai 1954.

be applied for the whole of Germany.²⁹⁹ The West German view suggested that the outcome of the the situation in Indochina would be decisive for peace not only in Asia but also in the entire world.³⁰⁰

Thus, Dien Bien Phu and its consequences at the Geneva Conference were becoming heated issues in the West German press. A large number of articles and news stories in West German newspapers reported on Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Conference. Dien Bien Phu and its fall finally marked French military and political destruction in the former colonial possession. This can be inferred from the West German description of the battle and its suggestions that it would lead to an end of the French colonial presence in Indochina and Asia as a great empire. Rarely, however, did the West German use the exact term “French decolonization”. What happened to France in Indochina, notable in the failure of Dien Bien Phu and at the negotiating table at Geneva, directly indicated the beginning of French decolonization, with all its subsequent consequences.

5.1.5. West German state and other countries’ attitudes towards EDC and West German rearmament

In most of the West German newspapers, the story of the Indochina War and the EDC plan were regularly reported and discussed on the front page, notably when the Indochina War was reaching its final scenes in 1954. Also, given the context of the Korean War and the internationalized escalation of the first Indochina War, West German leaders were anxious to the EDC plan come into effect soon. In the early 1950s, the public view in both German states was often concerned by the issue of German rearmament. Being a part of the European defense community seemed feasible for the federal state. Nevertheless, the West German public view never forgot the two previous wars waged by Germany.

Only one year earlier, the question of West German rearmament was much in the public’s minds when *DZ* started a series of debates on the issue “*If we*

²⁹⁹ SZ, 13. Mai 1954.

³⁰⁰ FAZ, 29. Juni 1954.

Germans have to be soldiers again...” (*Wenn wir Deutsche wieder Soldat sein müßten...*). The answers were different most likely because what had happened in German history was still present in their thoughts: “If we are again soldiers – good, but for what?”³⁰¹ One can see that West Germans were still suspicious of West German ambition in this matter and the goals of German rearmament were still suspected by themselves.

In an interview with the *Deutschland-Union-Dienst* on German remilitarization, Dr. Konrad Adenauer asserted that “German remilitarization (within the framework of the EDC) could not be questionable... The government and the Chancellor think that (German troops) could protect France.”³⁰² (*...dass von einer deutschen „Neuaufrüstung“ oder „Wiederaufrüstung“ oder „Remilitärisierung“ keine Rede sein kann. Die Bundesregierung und der Bundeskanzler denken allein und ausschließlich an eine mögliche Verteidigung Frankreichs*). Again, he reaffirmed the American role in solving the problem. The West German leader was at first wise enough to link West Germany and France within the framework of the EDC. This diverted the public’s attention and made them think the EDC was not for West German interests alone but for the security of France as well. From this point of view, West German rearmament was just a question of time. Adenauer and his followers in the parliament and government understood the connection between the project of the EDC and the *Indochinafrage*. In contrast, some key elites in France feared “if the EDC came into being while the Indochina conflict continued to drain French troops from the continent, the Germans would achieve numerical superiority in the EDC and consequently in Europe.”³⁰³ However, we know that the EDC project was not conceived in the same way by all politicians, even by those of the CDU and the main opposition party SPD. Only military and economic power could ensure German peace against the sphere and expansion of the SU from the eastern part of

³⁰¹ DZ, 07. Dezember 1950.

³⁰² SZ, 16. November 1950.

³⁰³ Kathryn C. Statler, *The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam*, Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007, p. 65.

Europe, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer repeatedly stressed. Meanwhile, SPD favored a neutral West Germany.

The West German press did not forget to observe the public view in America and Britain towards this matter. Both Schuman and Acheson believed the European defense system could be accomplished only if it was included a German presence, but only within the framework of the EDC.³⁰⁴ Until 1951, Western allies still did not really desire to see Germany join a broader defense organization, NATO for instance, but they needed to restrain West German armed forces that would be controlled by a supranational defense organ of European states.

In early 1952, French representatives in NATO stated that France would never accept West German membership within it; a West German national army would thus never exist in their minds.³⁰⁵ It is easy to appreciate that given the severe feelings experienced with Germany in the past, France would never again wish to see a strong German army. This also explained why West Germany kept on watching the fierce debates in the French national assembly on the EDC and soon realized there were only a few deputies in the French national assembly supporting EDC.³⁰⁶ From early 1953, the West German public started evaluating the possible ratification of the EDC. One of the possibilities was that the EDC would never be ratified in the French national assembly due to diverse opposition groups within it. No individual in the French national assembly could have any effect on that. At the time, West Germany even started thinking of a further step: if the EDC failed to be ratified then West Germany might have its own national army.³⁰⁷ West German journalistic commentators soon judged the positions of the

³⁰⁴ SZ, 28. November 1951.

³⁰⁵ SZ, 01. Februar 1952.

³⁰⁶ SZ, 13. Februar 1952.

³⁰⁷ FAZ, 08, Januar 1953.

communists in the French national assembly who would never be in favor to ratifying the EDC.³⁰⁸

Towards the end of 1953, West Germany no longer hid its ambition of remilitarization. West German rearmament was a uniquely important goal as it would not only serve as national security but also bring the German occupation status to an end. Then it could pave a way for German reunification.³⁰⁹ Therefore, Konrad Adenauer deeply understood both advantages and disadvantages of the allies' troops being stationed on German soil. On the one hand, it guaranteed security for Germany against any threat which might occur from the Soviet bloc from 1945 to 1953, but on the other, the German budget for the allies' troops was becoming a great burden on the German economy.

Moreover, the West German political elite might learn that West Germany was ready to protect itself, so the allied troops within West German territory would no longer be needed. As far as one could tell, what Adenauer envisaged looked the same as what Stalin had proposed in notes sent to West German leaders a couple of years before. Stalin suggested a general election for the whole of Germany with the preconditions that all allied troops must be withdrawn from German soil. Adenauer strongly rejected the proposal and believed that with German economic and military strength, Germany could be later reunited.

Convinced by those theoretical points, West Germany hoped the EDC would be passed by the end of 1954 because in December 1954 there would be a presidential election in France which could, to some extent, influence the process of ratification. West German leaders and the public fully acknowledged that the EDC's fate would be decided mainly by the French domestic political situation which was always to be seen in close connection to the situation in Indochina. This is the reason why West German politicians paid great attention to every move in the French political arena. As early as 1954, West Germany could see instabilities in the French political and social life.

³⁰⁸ FAZ, 23. Oktober 1953.

³⁰⁹ FAZ, 22. Dezember 1953.

Increasing awareness of French people on the issue of Indochina was also observed. West German leaders were aware that if a new government was formed in France or Laniel's opposite members in the national assembly took advantages of the French political and social weakness, it would for sure re-assess German policies including the EDC.³¹⁰ Meanwhile, the West German public view also saw the common understanding between Britain and West Germany in the profile of Indochina as Indochina problems would in turn influence Europe.³¹¹

As time went on, the West German media's interest was dramatically growing about the exact date when the EDC would be ratified by the French national assembly. Meanwhile, lots of French former soldiers objected to the ratification of the EDC due to what they had experienced in the last two wars with Germany.³¹² In a speech addressed to French voters in St. Etienne, French foreign minister Georges Bidault did not hide his dream of the EDC project when he stressed that the EDC plan would ensure world peace. Through such a supranational structure, France would play a leading role in Europe, he added. He showed his hard stance by assuring that he would never exchange the EDC for peace in Indochina.³¹³ As one can see, his hawk policies on Indochina formed a stark contrast to those Mendès France, his successor, showed in the months to come.

As for the West German top leader, the EDC plan was always in the mind of the Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and other policy makers of the CDU party who were hungrily waiting for its ratification at the French National Assembly.³¹⁴ West Germany was not only the state that truly expected it to be ratified soon, but West Germany soon also realized the U.S.' pressure on related governments and parliaments of their West European allies in ratifying the EDC project. If not, no

³¹⁰ FAZ, 05. Januar 1954.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² SZ, 05. März 1954.

³¹³ SZ, 29. März 1954.

³¹⁴ DZ, 13. Mai 1954.

more foreign aid would be offered.³¹⁵ (*Ohne Ratifizierung der Europa-Armee keine weitere Auslandshilfe*). West Germany believed that the current French government was not strong enough to push the EDC plan through. Thus, it hoped for a change in the French cabinet which would result in the EDC being ratified.³¹⁶ In contrast, SPD deputies in the Bundestag kept on debating about the EDC as the leader of this, Schumacher protested against Bonn's *Vorleistungspolitik* – Concession Policy.³¹⁷ In the mean time, the communists in the Bundestag stood in line with the SPD by organizing many demonstrations outside the Bundestag building to object to a plan of German rearmament.³¹⁸

As analyzed above, many articles demonstrated that West German media and citizens observed and analyzed the French dilemma in Indochina and North Africa in detail. The two French overseas territories were at the same time demanding more aid both in finance and human resources. Therefore, how could France meet the demands of the EDC project which required a significant military contribution from the French army? Obviously, French military resources were divided and mainly stationed in Indochina and North Africa. As a result, France was threatened by the idea of a superior German army within a prospective European defense organization like the EDC. This was an indication of French awareness and timidity around international and regional affairs after being defeated at Dien Bien Phu. However, from mid-August 1954 West Germany realized that many members in the French cabinet would oppose the ratification of the EDC. Finally, on 30 August 1954, the EDC was rejected in the French national assembly with 319 votes against and 264 votes for.³¹⁹ Many reasons were blamed for this failure but the main one was the French attitude towards German strength and their perception of it as a threat once the EDC was ratified in the near future.

³¹⁵ FAZ, 25. Mai 1954.

³¹⁶ SZ, 04 Juni 1954.

³¹⁷ SZ, 09. Februar 1952.

³¹⁸ SZ, 08. Februar 1952. Protest movements against West German remilitarization and other political as well as social issues shall be further explored in the next chapter.

³¹⁹ FAZ, 31. August 1954.

Not very long thereafter, French prestige was again challenged in Algeria. France had to leave this African colonial possession in 1962. The failure of the EDC, to some extent, might not be considered such a bad thing for West Germany. Just several months after the death of the EDC, West Germany was invited to join NATO – a broader transatlantic defense system. More importantly, being a member of NATO, West Germany would not be restricted strictly as much as in the structure of the EDC. The EDC was indeed, like other realistic projects, watched closely by Adenauer due to the fact that he tried to grab any possible chance to rescue German international prestige and credit not only in economics and politics but also in military terms. He also argued in the *SZ* on 12 and 13 December 1953 and in some other writings that a neutral Germany would mean a victory for the communists and the Soviets over Western Europe. He was a man who advocated the politics of strength, the theory that the stronger party would always win. Finally, West Germany's goal was to firmly integrate into the West in order to reach a further goal: German reunification.

5.1.6. Germans in the FFL

The presence of Germans in the FFL in Indochina was perhaps the issue that most attracted the attention of the West German public, as it was seen as an indication of direct involvement in the conflict. Ironically, this presence was not only to assist France in maintaining its colonial interests in Indochina, but later, in Algeria as well. It can be argued that the issue the West German press focused on in this area was not the legitimacy of the French military actions in Indochina, but “rather the legitimacy of French recruitment for the Foreign Legion.”³²⁰ According to the East German leaders' view, this action proved that France was trying to exploit West Germany as its colony in Europe. Meanwhile, many Germans who joined the FFL thought that experiencing the danger in Indochina would be better than confronting the Soviet army when the need arose.³²¹

³²⁰ Jason Verber, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

³²¹ *DZ*, 18. September 1952.

The issue of the recruitment of Germans for the FFL, including tactics of recruitment, increasing numbers of Germans joining the legion and German minors serving in the legion, was the central topic of many West German newspapers. The West German press estimated the number troops stationed in Indochina at 150,000, of which many were Germans but no exact number was counted.³²² However, the SPD believed the number of 80,000 Germans serving in FFL in Indochina from 1946.³²³ Those Germans involved in the recruitment had to be brought to justice, the Chancellor declared. Moreover, he also requested an amendment of the Criminal Law. In the meantime, Bundestag SPD members condemned the so-called “brutal actions” of the French occupation authority in recruiting young Germans into the foreign legion. They were joined in this by the communists in the parliament.³²⁴

Regarding their transportation to the battlefields, all newspapers agreed that young Germans were gathered in Landau, then transported to Marseille, and then to Saigon or North Africa.³²⁵ They were categorized as the third or fourth class of society. They were divided into two groups: group one included those who were jobless, parentless, homeless and unsure for future. Group two contained those who had unclear reasons such as arguments with girlfriends, not enough money to buy motorcycles or they were simply interested in adventures.³²⁶

The West German press also worried about the legal consequences of the French recruitment. On 13.5.1954 *DZ* questioned whether the French occupation authority on West German soil was not outside the scope of the Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch*) or at least whether this matter should be ruled on (by the Allied High Commission)? Article 141 of the Criminal Code stipulated that whoever recruited a German for military service to a foreign power would be punished

³²² FAZ, 16. Oktober 1950.

³²³ This accounted for more than 50% of the troops of the FFL.

³²⁴ FAZ, 30. Januar 1953.

³²⁵ Landau is a small city in the modern state of Rhineland-Pfalz which was in the French occupational zone after 1945; Marseille – a harbor city in southern France.

³²⁶ *DZ*, 13. Mai 1954.

with imprisonment from three months to three years. Unfortunately, after WW II the Allied Control Council repealed many former German laws including paragraph 141 and there were no articles in the Basic Law against recruitment for foreign military service. It can be argued that the Allied Control Council Law Nr. 11 limited West German actions against the recruitment.³²⁷ Again, the country's lack of full sovereignty should be remembered. On the one hand, as an occupied state, it was impossible for West Germany to solve its foreign affairs. On the other hand, this limitation was the result of the Adenauer government.³²⁸

At the same time, the French occupation authority confirmed that they had no official policy of recruiting Germans for their foreign legion. In the *SZ* on 10 May 54, French officials admitted to only 18,000 Germans serving in the FFL. However, the SPD asserted that the number must have been 90,000. They also noted that 80,000 of them had been fighting in Indochina. The French communists even accused the French military leaders of recruiting former SS officers into the legion.³²⁹ At the end of June 1954, the French Foreign Minister downplayed that number by stating that at Dien Bien Phu, around 1,600 Germans or German-speaking people were engaged. The West German press reported that diplomatic representatives in Paris had officially requested the French authority to take good care of them after the fall of Dien Bien Phu. However, SPD deputies were not convinced by the number or satisfied with the solutions and demanded to continue improving the situation.³³⁰

How the minors were recruited and how they must be released were questions intensively debated in the West German press. The French authority claimed that they had freed from 150 to 200 German minors but only twelve of them had travelled to West Germany. In fact, no one really knew the exact

³²⁷ See more at: http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Enactments/02LAW11.pdf, (online accessed on 23 July 2012).

³²⁸ Jason Verber, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³²⁹ *SZ*, 04 Juni 1954. See also: Eckard Michels, *op.cit.*

³³⁰ *FAZ*, 30. Juni 1954.

number of German minors serving in the FFL. State Secretary Hallstein affirmed that this problem would be talked over in detail with his French counterpart.³³¹

Thus, the problem of Germans in the FFL was examined regularly in the West German press during the first Indochina War. However, the second phase of the conflict received far greater attention. This reflected the increasing concerns among West Germans on the war in the Far East, where many Germans were serving for the French colonial interests. It could be inferred that Adenauer and his government never wanted to push this issue too far, as they did not want to put the relationship with France at risk.

According to the West German press, the important issue of Germans in the FFL served as a very typical example of the problem of post-war German society. Each picture of Germans reflected in the West German newspapers was one of a multi-faceted West German society. The destiny of Germans in the FFL was considered to be one of the reasons to analyze government attitudes towards the war in Indochina. We might not see clearly the attitudes of the West German public towards the French colonial war if we did not analyze it through the lens of the West German press. This was to answer the question of under what circumstances and by what means was France able to maintain colonial possession in Indochina during the unavoidable wave of decolonization after WW II. This in turn also led to the reactions of the federal government and other political organizations towards the problem of German rearmament and future West German strategies.

From the above study, we find that West Germany and Indochina had some common points: both were seeking full sovereignty, freedom and independence from occupiers and colonizers. All in all, the first Indochina War to some extent played as a factor causing debates both in the government and in public opinion. These demonstrated the realities and tendencies of the very complicated political life of post-war Germany in the early 1950s.

³³¹ FAZ, 17. Juli 1954.

5.2. The first Indochina War in the memoirs of former French legionnaires

The importance of the first Indochina War is memorialized in the minds of those Germans who engaged in it. Their service as legionnaires in Indochina was written down to share with audiences, revealing part of their lives in a war in which they had fought not for Germany, but for French interests. Researchers studying on the first Indochina War all know some well-known authors like Peter Scholl-Latour who served in Indochina at this time. In 1945 and 1946 he was a member of the *Commando Parachutiste Ponchardier*, a unit of French paratroopers. In 1973 he and his team were prisoners of the Viet Cong for one week in the second Indochina War. His most widely-read books are *Der Tod im Reisfeld – 30 Jahre Krieg in Indochina* and *Der Ritt auf dem Drachen – Indochina – von der französischen Kolonialzeit bis heute*. In addition, researchers can find other memoirs by some other Germans who had been in the FFL in Indochina, such as Albert Verbeet with his book *Freiwillige in den Tod – Ein Deutscher erlebt die Dschungelhölle von Indochina*. Here, we will examine what was written in these books and what impact they had on the German public opinion.

Der Tod im Reisfeld – 30 Jahre Krieg in Indochina was published in the 1980s. The author acted first as a legionnaire, then as a journalist in the first, the second and even the third Indochina War. He states in the acknowledgements that he has experienced part of his life in Indochina. He writes about the three Indochina Wars from 1945 to 1980s and, evidently, what he has written in his books seems most likely true and reliable. The first chapter deals with the first Indochina conflict in which the author found that two-thirds of the travellers on the ship *Andus* to Saigon in 1946 were Germans. He also mentions the reasons why the Germans joined the FFL and came to serve in Indochina; he found that they came from French prison camps where they had suffered and almost starved. They sought to join the foreign legion as they had given up on a reunion with their missing relatives in the East, and they needed simply to feed themselves.³³² With a charming writing style, the author guides readers through many different periods of the war, accompanied by his comments as a member of the war and a war

³³² Peter Scholl-Latour, *Der Tod im Reisfeld*, Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1981, S. 21.

journalist. His general view on the war was that it was in no way a victory for France.

Another of Peter Scholl-Latour's books was *Der Ritt auf dem Drachen – Indochina – von der französischen Kolonialzeit bis heute*. In this book, he provides another figure for the number of Germans in the French troops in Indochina. He believed that of the total 160,000 troops in Indochina, 60,000 were French; the rest were legionnaires including 20,000 Germans.³³³ With hundreds of illustrations and short descriptions of the wars in Vietnam from 1945 to the 1980s, from the Vietminh victory at Dien Bien Phu to the Vietnam-Cambodia or Sino-Vietnam conflicts in the late 1970s and 1980s, the author links those wars through a journalist's lens. Not only during the first Indochina War did he predict precisely the outcomes of the war, but also in 1965, when he returned to Vietnam when the Americans landed in the South, the author was skeptical about American victory.³³⁴ However, at the time the Federal Republic was siding with the Americans and when it was required by the Americans to send battalions to South Vietnam, his act was criticized by some of his colleagues and German politicians. Finally, only a Red Cross Ship, the *Helgoland*, was sent there.³³⁵ He also mentioned the students' protest movements against the American war in Vietnam in West Berlin and in the FRG. Ho Chi Minh became the catalyst for the emergence of the German left movement.

Another book on the subject is *Freiwillige in den Tod – Ein Deutscher erlebt die Dschungelhölle von Indochina*, written by Albert Verbeet and published around 1955. As explained in the introduction, this book was partly printed in daily and weekly magazines and newspapers in West Germany. Additionally, three radio programs and more than a hundred newspapers broadcasted and hosted discussions on it. About two hundred mining companies and student hostels, schools and other youth organizations invited the author to give talks on the "Foreign Legion in Indochina". One can read the following comments in the first

³³³ Peter Scholl-Latour, *Der Ritt auf dem Drachen*, Wilhem Heyne Verlag München, 1988, S. 50.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, S. 79.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, S. 80.

pages: *Freiwillige in den Tod* is not only a live fact but also adventurous and sometimes, full of unbearable tension”, according to *Hessischer Rundfunk, Frankfurt*.³³⁶ Another radio program, *Süddeutsche Rundfunk, Stuttgart*, commented that “this book can prevent young people from joining foreign legions.” A Catholic newspaper, the *Passau Bistumsblatt*, also offered the comment that the book is “a full description of breathless excitement. His experience was better than any theory.”³³⁷ Raising his voice on the problem of Germans in the FFL and the EDC plan, *Der Neue Vertrieb, Flensburg*, suggested: “It enlightens the Germans and French who were still confused about the issues of pro legionnaires and anti EDC.”³³⁸ *Waldeckische Landeszeitung, Korbach*, went further, directly criticizing the advertisement of the recruiters: “every young German must have read this excellent book about the foreign legion. The book destroys illusions constructed by a thousand advertisers.”³³⁹

The West German mass media had a very positive reaction to the book. It tells the story of a German who had been in the FFL and was also a war witness, and it attracted many readers because of its exciting and ironical scheme. The main character, Erich Kuran, a former SS soldier, is caught and imprisoned in a French camp after WW II. A French officer tells him that one way to free himself is to join the FFL. Kuran agrees in a mood of hopelessness.³⁴⁰ When he attends a compulsory training course at St. Nicolas in Marseille, he and his comrades feel betrayed on seeing a sentence written in German and hung right on the wall of his living room “*Legionär, du bist gekommen, um zu sterben*” (Legionnaires, you join to die).³⁴¹

Another character is Nagel, whose mother is a Jew who died in a Nazi-concentration camp during WW II. Nagel was also in the concentration camp

³³⁶ Albert Verbeet, *Freiwillige in den Tod*, Verbeet Oberhausen, ca. 1955, S. 3.

³³⁷ *Loc.cit.*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, S. 4.

³³⁹ *Loc.cit.*

³⁴⁰ Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 10.

³⁴¹ Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 12.

from 1938. At one point when he tells his comrades, “I have no father and no more motherland. I will never go back to Germany. I will stay in the legion, till I fall.”³⁴² (*ich habe keinen Vater und habe keine Heimat mehr... Ich werde nie mehr nach Deutschland zurückkehren. Ich will Legionär bleiben, bis ich falle.*) He is another case whose origins are not one hundred percent German blood. What he says shows clearly his disappointment, hopelessness and unbalance. There seems no way out for him other than staying in the legion. After such bitter experiences on the battlefield, Nagel once more expresses his thoughts: “I am quite alone in the world, because the people have shut me out. Death is nothing for me, because living is nothing for me either. I see myself as a machine; when it breaks, another will replace it, as if I had never existed.”³⁴³ (*ich bin allein auf der Welt, weil die Menschen mich ausgeschlossen haben. Das Sterben ist für mich nichts, weil auch das Leben nichts für mich ist. Ich komme mir vor wie eine Maschine; ist sie kaputt, wird eine neue an ihren Platz gestellt. Dann war ich nichts gewesen.*) Because legionnaires were part of the public view, in some cases, they represented their generation’s images and viewpoints.

A third character, another German-speaking soldier called Walter Ott, shares his opinions with Kuran after his move to the Korean battlefield on the situation in Indochina: “Ho Chi Minh and his people seem to be on their way to victory. They keep on preventing us receiving our supplies... Our reinforcements are insufficiently trained or not at all... most of us have fallen.”³⁴⁴ (*Ho Chi Minh und Viet scheinen auf dem Wege des Sieges zu sein... sie schalten immer mehr unseren Nachschub aus... Der Ersatz ist gar nicht oder mangelhaft ausgebildet... das alte Führer und Unterführerkorps zum größten Teil gefallen.*) Another of Kuran’s comrade in Indochina, Stephan Schneider, writes to him, “In my depthless sadness and despair I now have only one wish, not to have to suffer much longer. Legionnaires, you join to die.”³⁴⁵ (*... nun habe ich in meiner abgrundlosen Traurigkeit und Verzweiflung nur noch den Wunsch, nicht mehr*

³⁴² Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 55.

³⁴³ Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 107.

³⁴⁴ Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 163.

³⁴⁵ Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 164.

lange Zeit leiden zu müssen... Legionär, du bist gekommen, um zu sterben!) After suffering through the two wars in Asia, Kuran swears to tell the public what he and his comrades encountered in the legion in Indochina: “I just want to tell what I and hundreds and thousands of my comrades experienced. But first let me come home, to Germany, to my motherland.”³⁴⁶ (*Sonst will ich nichts mehr vom Leben, nur noch sagen, was ich erlebte. Was hundert und tausende Kameraden erlebten. Dann habe ich meine Aufgabe erfüllt. Laßt mich erst einmal nach Hause kommen, nach Deutschland, in meine Heimat!*)

By the end of the war, Kuran has become more and more suspicious of the French game in Indochina, as he realizes that the French setback in Indochina is catastrophic, a repetition of Napoleon’s withdrawal from Russia. Also he describes how the French army recruits Germans into the legion: “They have a head office in Germany, which have spread its net over the whole country, especially in the refugee camps, old parts of town, in front of job centers, coal mines, railway stations and waiting rooms. Money, alcohol, idle girls and tempting work contracts are their means. For each German taken they receive – on top of their fixed salary of 400 DM – a bonus... Legionnaires are soldiers who are destined to die in battle.”³⁴⁷ (*Sie haben eine Zentrale in Deutschland, die ihr Netz über das ganz Bundesgebiet ausgebreitet hat, besonders in Flüchtlingslagern und Altstadtvierteln, vor Arbeitsämtern, Zechen, Bahnhöfen und in Wartesälen. Geld, Alkohol, leichtsinnige Frauen und lockende Arbeitsverträge sind ihre Hilfsmittel. Pro Kopf erhalten sie für den Fang – neben dem Fixum von 400 DM – eine Prämie... Legionäre sind Soldaten, denen es bestimmt ist, im Kampf zu sterben!*)

The four central characters in these books were identified with four different backgrounds and demonstrated their lives in the wars both in Indochina and Korea. Their stories can be understood as part of the public view of those wars, particularly the war in Indochina which the witnesses saw as “dirty, despair and meaningless”. Reading them, readers could imagine and reflect on the whole

³⁴⁶ Albert Verbeet, *op.cit.*, S. 165.

³⁴⁷ *Loc.cit.*

issue of the Germans in the FFL, from how young Germans were recruited in the legion, the tactics of French officials in doing so, to the attitudes of the young German generation towards the war. In summary, the books had a great impact on West German public opinion at the time. The main characters of the book represent a large part of the young German generation during Europe's post-war period. What they witnessed and commented on within the book on the first Indochina War can be interpreted as the common consensus and voice of their generation about the "dirty war" in Indochina.

Additionally, in post-war Germany, radio played an important role in reflecting social events and orienting public opinion, even on some level, adjusting public attitudes and influencing actions. Traditionally, radio programs were very popular in Germany. Former leaders of the Third Reich took advantage of this to run effective propaganda campaigns supporting Nazi regime. It was estimated that Germany under the Nazi regime spent over 540,000,000 USD on propaganda. During that time, radio was believed to be and used as an instrument of modern war; Hitler said, "In war time, words are acts", and radio creates "mental confusion, contradiction of feeling, indecision and panic."³⁴⁸ Radio in particular or media in general were seen as a powerful tool of modern times.

After WW II, warfare was a continual topic of many radio programs. Furthermore, war became a central topic in film and TV programs (in the second half of the 1950s). The main content of those radio or TV programs was about the last war in every aspect: harassment, corollaries of war, the destiny of prisoners of war in the allies' prison camps and other negative effects of war as well as associated affairs.³⁴⁹ Concerning the war in Indochina, radio programs from 1950

³⁴⁸ Charles Siepmann, *Radio in Wartime*, Oxford University Press, 1942, pp. 4-6.

³⁴⁹ For further discussions on this issue, see: Ursula Heukenkamp (Hrsg.), *Schuld und Sühne? Kriegserlebnis und Kriegsdeutung in deutschen Medien der Nachkriegszeit 1945 – 1961*, *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, Bd 50.1, 2001 in which Wolfgang Mühl Benningshau's article: *Vergeßt es nie! Schuld sind sie! Zu Kriegsdeutung in den audiovisuellen Medien beider deutscher Staaten und den vierziger und fünfziger Jahren* was printed in page 743,

onwards in West Germany concentrated mainly on the issues of the recruitment of young Germans into the legion and their fates after desecrating from their service in Indochina or finishing their service there; and the connection between the “dirty war” and the EDC plan. From these radio programs, researchers can see that, along with West German printing publications, audiovisual sources also show West German public opinion on the war and related matters. What can be inferred from them is that West German public opinion was against the war and the plan of German rearmament within the framework of the supra-national defense system of the EDC, and notably the weak relations between West Germany and France.³⁵⁰

All of the above-mentioned sources prove the widespread influence of the first Indochina War on West German public opinion. Obviously, it was a great media event in the early 1950s. One can understand that media, on the one hand, reflects opinions of society and, on the other hand, has an effect on society. In other words, media can both direct and change the awareness of any society. More importantly, all stories presented to audiences were written by witnesses, and the recent history of the previous war was still fresh in the minds of Germans living in post-war Germany. At the time, many Germans’ relatives were in the prisons of the victors. The future and destiny of the next German generation, as a result, must be taken into account. Finally, curiosity about the adventures in the lives of Germans outside Europe and their experiences in another war in Indochina encouraged many Germans to keep a close watch on the media.

Last but not least, it is interesting to realize that the internationalization of media trends after WW II became increasingly evident. Readers and audiences all

and Knut Hickerthier’s work: *Kriegserlebnis und Kriegsdeutung im Bundesdeutschen Fernsehen der fünfziger Jahre* was printed from page 759.

³⁵⁰ One can listen to some typical West German radio programs in the early 1950s on Indochina for more details: *Gespräch mit einem ehemaligen Fremdenlegionär Franz Goratzy*, 24.10.1950, Archivnummer 00 2773473 at the Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv, Frankfurt am Main; *Das weiße Kepi*, 10.9.1954, Archivnummer B002751169, Hessischer Rundfunkarchiv, Frankfurt am Main; *Gespäch über die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen*, 22.02.1954, Archivnummer B00273149, Hessischer Rundfunkarchiv, Frankfurt am Main.

over the world were becoming more concerned about international issues. Under these circumstances, the issue of the first Indochina War was internationalized. It was not only observed by the West German press but also by a wider press community. As a matter of fact, many media channels of the main players in the first Indochina War such as France, the U.S. and the PRC were also interested in this controversial international issue. Obviously, how the international media viewed Indochina demonstrates the attitudes of the involved partners towards that conflict.

CHAPTER 6

THE IMPACTS OF DECOLONIZATION IN INDOCHINA AND LESSONS LEARNT FOR THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

There have been a number of definitions of decolonization propounded by historians and scholars. John Springhall has explained that “the taking of measures by indigenous peoples and/or their white overlords intended eventually to end external control over overseas colonial territories and the attempt to replace formal political rule by some new kind of relationship.”³⁵¹ In recent years, there have been significant changes in research on colonialism. Scholars have shifted from center-periphery models to the idea of entanglement and from colonies viewed as passively subdued to colonial power to a large array of human interaction based on the colonial experience. Decolonization has been seen as one of the outcomes of WW II; and it was also a result of developments since WW I, however.

After WW II, there were many international factors governing and deciding the matter of colonialism and decolonization. The factors are changes at the extent of global distribution of power and the effects of WW II. One of the leading world powers now seen as a sponsor of the Western countries, the U.S., took the responsibility in guaranteeing security for the Western world, i.e., Great Britain, France, and West Germany and so on. It is important to mention here that the U.S. also expressed the importance of decolonization, but not only for the benefit of colonies. This led to the question of whether the above – mentioned countries needed colonies for their military purposes or other reasons. Colonial

³⁵¹ John Springhall, *Decolonization since 1945: the collapse of European overseas empires*, Palgrave, New York, 2001, p. 3. See also: Giuliano Garavini, *After empires: European integration, decolonization and the challenge from the global South 1957-1986* (translated by Richard R. Nybakken), Oxford University Press, 2012; Martin Thomas (Hrsg.), *European decolonization*, Ashgate, 2007; Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization* (2nd edition), Routledge, New York, 2006; Clive J. Christie, *A modern history of Southeast Asia: decolonization, nationalism, separatism*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 1996.

empires would affect their dominance in the world's economic power. All of these factors affected colonial powers on the issue of re-defining their main political and economic interests.

6.1. The impact of decolonization in Indochina on the FRG

6.1.1. Impact on political and social life

The impact of the first Indochina War and French decolonization in Indochina on the FRG can be seen by tracing the Federal Republic's foreign policy. Obviously, the newly established state of the FRG had to deal with the issue of "One Nation – Two States", in the context of which West German foreign policy would mostly focus on the German question (*deutsch-deutsche Frage*). After 1955, this question revolved around who was the legal representative of the whole of Germany (*Alleinvertretungsanspruch*), driven by the Hallstein doctrine. The second problem was the relationship with France and Great Britain as well as Western integration. The final one was the issue of transatlantic relations and their associated security issues.³⁵²

Of the above-mentioned issues, the relationship with France was emphasized as one of the main tasks which West German foreign policy needed to pursue. Since the end of WW I, Germany had no longer had colonial possessions. Therefore, the decolonization process after WW II did not have much direct impact on West Germany. Until 1955, West German foreign activities were limited by the allies' control. Nonetheless, the decolonization process had an indirect impact on it due to the triangle relations among West Germany, France and Indochina.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the attitudes of the West German government towards the first Indochina War were clear enough to assert that Adenauer's government supported France when the conflict in Indochina was nearly at an

³⁵² Marc Frey, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Prozeß der Dekolonisierung*, in: (ed.) Eckard Conze, *Die Herausforderung des Globen in der Ära Adenauer*, Rhöndorfer Gespräche Band 24, Bourvier Verlag, Bonn, 2000, S. 180.

end. Regarding the issue of the German minors fighting in the FFL in Indochina, one might suspect the official attitudes of the West German authority as well as Adenauer personally. There was no doubt that the Federal Republic and the Chancellor strongly advocated the EDC project in which a promising West German contribution would be remarkable, and in some certain ways, would restore the German position in terms of military in post-war Europe. More importantly, the “ratification of the EDC Treaty was also existentially important in shaping relations with the U.S. and the Soviet Union.”³⁵³ The fate of the EDC plan now rested in the hands of France, a former enemy but now one of the Western allies with whom West Germany hoped to cooperate. Any strong opposition to the problem of young Germans involved in the French troops in Indochina or elsewhere might appear to undermine West German loyalty to France and other Western allies. Was it right to suppose that one of the hidden reasons behind the Chancellor’s weak reaction to that problem was that he wished to see those young Germans in the French troops in Indochina well-trained as soldiers for a future West German army once the EDC was ratified?

It is necessary to add, however, that not only did West Germany side with France in the first Indochina War itself, but the Korean War was also a strong catalyst in strengthening West Germany’s will in showing its position towards the so-called “anti-communist expansion” campaign or the East-West conflict in Asia. Primary and secondary sources have proved Adenauer and his advisors’ early concerns with France’s overseas conflicts and their potential effects on European security, integration and the destiny of the EDC plan.³⁵⁴ As soon as the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu and with the result of the Geneva Conference, West Germany was aware that the victory would belong to the communists and “the West” was already defeated in Asia. The outcome of the Geneva Conference on Indochina concerned some West German politicians like Gustav

³⁵³ Winfried Becker, *Views of the Foreign Policy Situation Among the CDU leadership 1945-57*, printed in: (ed.) Ennio Nolfo, *Power in Europe? II, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952 – 1957*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1992, p. 355.

³⁵⁴ Marc Frey, *op. cit.*, S. 182.

Heinemann,³⁵⁵ as “he thought that the 1954 Geneva settlement on Indochina, in which the involved parties had agreed to schedule free elections to determine the area’s future, could serve as a model for Germany.”³⁵⁶ Once Germany was unified, the on-going hotly debated problem of West German rearmament would no longer be a question.

The first Indochina War, evidently, also had profound effects on social perception. Divided Germany after WW II, even until the mid-1960s, was not very much interested in what was happening outside Europe. When it did, it was because those happenings played a marginal role in West German social life. But to some extent, some important events in the non-European world in the late 1940s or 1950s, such as the emergence of the PRC (Red China), the first (and then the second) Indochina War, the Suez crisis, and Cuban revolution, etc. attracted lots of West German social concern. Consequently, left-wing (*die linke Öffentlichkeit*) and social movements emerged which took a critical view of the post-colonial problems of the Third World.³⁵⁷

More than ever before, West German public opinion on the decolonization process was intensely concentrated. North-South issues were interpreted as a variation on the all-dominant East-West conflict. The decolonization process through peaceful means was ignored, and the colonized nations had to struggle violently for independence from colonizers. Then violent conflicts were viewed as the result and embodiment of communist expansion prevention around the world. In this context, the first Indochina War served as a symbolic example. This war was originally seen as a colonial war between France and the native rebel forces led by the Vietminh. However, after the outbreak of the Korean War, Indochina

³⁵⁵ Gustav Walter Heinemann (1899-1976), former Minister of the Interior under the premiership of Konrad Adenauer, Minister of Justice till 1969 in the “Grand Coalition” government of CDU and SPD took place in 1966, then President of the FRG from 1969 to 1974. He himself opposed German remilitarization as he feared that it would harm the process of German unification.

³⁵⁶ David Clay Large, *Germans to the front*, The University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p. 229.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

was interpreted as a battlefield in the great struggle between the free world and the communist threat in Asia.

As previously analyzed in Chapter 5, West German public opinion was very much interested in the first Indochina War since it was moderately internationalized from the second half of 1950. The destiny of thousands of Germans in the FFL in Indochina during and after the war was constantly reported in West German newspapers and radio programs. Paradoxically, although most West German newspapers were consensus against the war, France's unfavorable results on the battlefield seemed, to some extent, to satisfy some Germans and/or commentators, as the military victory of the Vietminh in the war helped them regain their prestige while recalling that the German army had to unconditionally surrender to the allies in May 1945.

6.1.2. Impact on foreign policy making

The decolonization process of France in Indochina then spread to Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and this together with other political changes in Europe generated many opportunities for West Germany in formulating its foreign policy towards the newly independent countries. Most of these countries were African, Asian and Latin American colonized countries, then better known as the Third World. Among these newly independent countries, Africa was seen as the top priority for West German foreign policy due to the traditional natural connections between the two continents. In the mind of Adenauer, "whenever he looked at Africa he thought of Europe."³⁵⁸ West German interest in Africa at that time was at first economic. The Chancellor himself saw that without raw materials supplied by Africa, Europe or at least the European economies would collapse. As a state not directly influenced by the process of decolonization, West Germany therefore held a neutral position in establishing trade activities in the continent of Africa. It can be said that the political transformation in Africa from French colonial rule to independence affected internal markets and European and West German development policy (*Entwicklungspolitik*) a great deal. This policy then

³⁵⁸ Marc Frey, *op.cit.*, S. 188.

became a competitive tool for both German states in gaining international recognition. Thanks to the superior development aid given to African countries, mostly in economics, the FRG was far more successful in terms of international relations.

Not only did the process of decolonization and the on-going conflict between East and West have effects on the CDU-led government of Adenauer but it also influenced other West German political parties like the SPD and FDP. All these party leaders shared a common view on the decolonization process. Kurt Schumacher declared in 1951 that the liberation campaigns of those peoples who had been colonized represented a modern model of the liberation cause of all human beings, and once again in 1954 at a SPD Congress the party referred to the end of colonialism.³⁵⁹

West Germany's socio-political life in the post-war period was fundamentally interested in sensitive and basic issues like violence, peace and war. West Germany's first move in foreign policy was to cooperate firmly with the West, notably with the U.S. The most remarkable aspects of the first formative years of the Federal Republic were the Chancellor's determination and loyalty to the Western alliance. The decade that followed was marked by the compromising policy of the government of Willy Brandt commonly known as *Ostpolitik*. This turning point paved the way for shaping West German foreign relations with the Eastern European countries. It should be well noted that West German success in the field of foreign policy was rooted in its outlook on the world outside including the continent's complicated events after WW II and during the Cold War.

After losing WW II, "the strategic bombing, the impact of what was known about war-crimes and the role of the military in Hitler's Third Reich all were still vividly remembered and constituted obstacles to public interest in military matters."³⁶⁰ The first Indochina War and the following Algerian war as

³⁵⁹ Marc Frey, *op.cit.*, S. 186.

³⁶⁰ Manfred Messerschmidt *et al.*, *West Germany's Strategic Position and her Role in Defense Policy as seen by the German military, 1945 – 1949*, in: (ed.), Josef Becker, Franz Knipping

well as the decolonization process in Africa thereafter greatly affected West German representatives' thinking. Withdrawn from the lessons of the decolonization process, West German public and politicians viewed the process as a globally central problem in the 20th century, notably in the context of the East-West conflict. Therefore, West Germany clearly perceived that the world was on its way to becoming not only a multi-polar world but also a flat one.

West German leaders also recognized that the world's economics would be divided into two blocs: the first one would be the economics of non-communism and the other would be the economics of communism backed by nationalists of the Third World.³⁶¹ On reorganizing this, the Federal Republic planned a strategic and very energetic foreign policy fitting the nature and benefits of the state in each period of the Cold War. One of the most impressive and successful results of this time was its diplomatic ties with the newly independent nations of the Third World. It would have been considerably harder to achieve these goals without the West German Chancellor Adenauer's maneuvering with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after 1955, while at the same time they supported the decolonization process and backed France in its attempt to protect its colonial interests. These strategies proved rational and effective during the existence of the two German states until the German unification.

It would be a mistake not to mention the impact of French decolonization in Indochina and in other locations where it took place in the years that followed on the European continent in a broader approach. In the post-war period, both West Germany and France were making every effort to recover from the legacy of WW II. Each country, however, chose a different path to accomplish its own goals. France hoped to regain a leading role in Europe but its will was embodied differently depending on each period, especially on the impacts of the escalation of the Indochina War. In looking for influence and some other goals in the continent, France also fully understood that its most powerful ally, the U.S.,

Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Post-war World 1945 – 1950, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin – New York, 1986, p. 353.

³⁶¹ Marc Frey, *op.cit.*, S. 192.

would not provide security for France in Indochina and/or the whole of Europe without conditions. The EDC plan serves as an example of such a bargaining chip between France and the U.S.³⁶²

The death of the EDC plan several months after the loss of Indochina was interpreted as a significant indication of France losing its national identity. This breakdown was blamed on many factors such as the fact that German rearmament only ten years after its military surrender was unacceptable for France, or on France's fear of a term like "supranational defense system". The absence of Britain in this defense community was also a factor in France's hesitation. However, no one could deny the impact of the French loss in Indochina on the failure of the EDC project.

In any case, moving past its unstable political life and complicated foreign policy, France was sensible enough to shift from an old-fashioned empire to a more modern and effective model of European integration. This process would be sped up by cooperating with West Germany in all fields. Additionally, France would be able to reduce American influence on the European continent. Furthermore, France was convinced by Adenauer that the unsuccessful military adventure of France and Britain in the Suez conflict demonstrated that Europe should be more independent from the Americans. In order to achieve this, Europe had to force itself more intensively along the route of unification. The Rome Treaty signed in 1957 on EURATOM and the EEC were other examples of this process. As for foreign policy the new government of the Fifth Republic led by Charles de Gaulle launched and applied policies of limiting American influence and uniting Europe. Now was the time for France's actively reconciled with its neighboring country of West Germany.

In a word, the impacts of French decolonization on the former colonial powers can be summarized on different levels through which France could

³⁶² Pierre Melandri and Maurice Vaisse, *op.cit.*, p. 467.

recognize its real position in Europe in terms of economics, politics and culture.³⁶³ Also, although not directly affected by the decolonization process, West Germany could still observe and analyze those changes in the balance of power in the continental as well as around the globe. From these perspectives, both France and West Germany agreed to reinforce the process of European integration making Europe a “third force” in order to meet Europe’s demands on productive resources and market expansion, thus approaching a transition to a democratic-socialist system, and finally restoring the decline of European influence.³⁶⁴ Accordingly, in late 1950s, “most Western policy-makers had come to the conclusion that colonialism had to go if they were to preserve any influence outside their own continents.”³⁶⁵

6.2. The French decolonization in Indochina – lessons learnt for the FRG

In diplomatic decision making, sometimes, many activities or tactics are stated publicly, but many others are not. This theory has been applied to West Germany from its formative years until 1955 during which time West Germany could not form independent diplomatic strategies due to the fact of its occupational status. As a very pragmatic, realistic Chancellor and a foreign minister, at the start of the German occupation process, Adenauer fully conceded that the division of Germany was inevitable. He tried his best, particularly in the diplomatic field, to construct a strong West Germany. Subsequently, he was convinced by the magnetic theory that the rest of Germany would collapse and integrate with the Western part of Germany one day.

³⁶³ For more details see also: Corinna R. Unger, *Modernization à la mode: West German and American Development Plans for the Third World*, GHI Bulletin No. 40 (Spring 2007), p. 144 and some others.

³⁶⁴ Wilfried Loth, *German Conceptions of Europe during the Escalation of the East-West Conflict, 1945 – 1949*, in: (ed.) Josef Becker, Franz Knipping, *Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany in a Post war World 1945 – 1950*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin – New York, 1986, p. 518.

³⁶⁵ Jussi M. Hanhimäki *et al.*, (ed.), *The Cold War - A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 209.

Germany's historical development, especially after WW II, has shown that it has acted on the belief that German interests are "best served through the multilateral integration of their country in the transatlantic alliance with the U.S., Canada, and other West European powers."³⁶⁶ More importantly, West Germany would pursue its view of a united Europe. Nevertheless, West German had to choose how to rationally interact with the above-mentioned powers.³⁶⁷ Its pro-Western values sometimes confused West Germany as it decided on its priorities for shaping and developing foreign relations with Western allies: France or the U.S.?

West German foreign policies in the post-war period, argues Timothy D. Showers, were influenced by these principles: *first*, West Germany was an entity within a larger European community; *second*, all international conflicts could be handled peacefully; *third*, West German integration into European institutions could serve and stabilize West German interests and Europe in a broader approach after such a chaotic period as the war.³⁶⁸ All this meant that West German would abandon its own "sonderweg" (special path) to develop itself. In the last 50 years or so, (West) German foreign policy has proved flexible but determined. Although West German foreign affairs until 1990 were still more or less controlled by the allies, West Germany has never been completely mastered by WW II victors. On the contrary, West Germany has constantly sought its own direction in developing relations with its past enemies. On this point, France serves as a very impressive example of a post-war West German strategic partner in the continent and worldwide.

As discussed in previous chapters, French decolonization in Indochina was watched by Adenauer's government, the public and different political groups in the West German territory. They considered France's defeat in Indochina the decline of the French empire, and with broader perspective, European

³⁶⁶ Timothy D. Showers, *France, Germany, and the Development of a European Security and Defense Identity*, MA thesis, Naval Postgraduate School Monterey California, 2000, p. 8.

³⁶⁷ Wilfried Loth, *op.cit.*, p. 517.

³⁶⁸ Timothy D. Showers, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

decolonization continued to progress in Asia as an inevitable tendency. This changed France's position in the European continent as well. Together with what Germany had experienced in the past two world wars, West German leaders acknowledged that a militarily-rooted approach to solve conflicts would no longer to be an option.

Instead, economic and political cooperation and unification must be seen as the most realistic and effective direction for the new world's trend in a new world order. The community of coal and steel jointly governed by West Germany, Italy, France and the Benelux countries represented the starting point of the history of European integration. Last but not least, given the context of the Cold War in Europe since 1946 and its special position and situation in Europe, in stead of joining the arms race, West Germany chose to develop its economy to achieve the so-called "economic miracle" in the 1950s.

The lessons drawn from the impact of the first Indochina War and the decolonization process in Indochina and then in Africa, along with the very special position of West Germany in Europe during that period, helped the West German government to map and exercise successfully its domestic and foreign policies in the 1950s and 1960s. The lessons can be basically summarized in the following issues: the German-Franco reconciliation; West German integration into the West; West German development aid to Third World countries; and the emergence of the New Left in the FRG.

6.2.1. German – Franco reconciliation

One of the main factors leading to the German-Franco reconciliation was the first Indochina War in which France's ambitions of empire were challenged and failed. In my opinion, the achievement of German-Franco reconciliation after a hundred years of conflict was a result of France's German policy in the post-war period. However, France's withdrawal from its traditional colonial possessions in Indochina in some ways forced France to evaluate its main interests against the background of the new world.

Post-war France, like Germany, had to deal with difficulties and embarrassment in defining and solving domestic and foreign policies based on the “formulation of a policy of total independence of both Kremlin and the Americans.”³⁶⁹ Pursuing this goal, as a matter of fact, was not simple for France, particularly after being forced to withdraw from Indochina. France then became more sensitive about its national identity than ever before. The only option for France after its decline as a European colonial power was to participate more intensely in the process of European integration.

At exactly the same time, West Germany was also in the process of pursuing more influence in European and international politics by closely tying itself to the Western countries, and being embraced as a member of multiple supranational organizations. It could be said that France and West Germany shared a common standpoint. Consequently, a German-Franco rapprochement would play a decisive role in the development and modernization of the whole of Western Europe from the late 1950s and early 1960s onwards.

Looking back, the Berlin blockade in 1948 and the establishment of the GDR in 1949 together with the Soviet intention to expand their sphere of influence towards Eastern Europe forced France to gradually relinquish its hostile attitudes towards West Germany. Given other international events in the context of the Cold War, France had to reluctantly accept the idea proposed by its Western allies on West German integration into the Western club and participation in the emerging anti-communist front. These moves were confirmed by the facts that in July 1951, France, Britain and the U.S. proclaimed the end of hostilities with Germany, and by West German membership in NATO in May 1955.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Pierre Melandri and Maurice Vaisse, *op.cit.*, p. 461.

³⁷⁰ For more detailed discussion on the matter, see: Phạm Quang Minh, *Quá trình hòa giải quan hệ Đức-Pháp: Những kinh nghiệm có thể cho quá trình hội nhập khu vực Đông Á (The Franco-German reconciliation: Experiences for the regional integration of East Asia)*, *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 8.2007, tr. 52.

The increase of the Soviet threat and its influences on Asia after the Korean War and the first Indochina War had huge and crucial impacts on French policy-makers in terms of the reconciliation with West Germany, though this proceeded with reluctance at first. Along with the hot war in Asia, the Cold War escalation in Europe was exhibited in the arms race between the two opposing blocs. The Soviet launch of an artificial satellite in 1957 and the emergence of the Berlin Wall in 1961 were evidence of the growing tensions within the Cold War context in Europe. These events to some extent pressured West Germany to seek its own path in a bid to strengthen the Western line of defense against any upcoming Soviet attack on West German soil: e.g., the free city of Berlin. Also, any West German strategies had to be able to adapt to the newly emerged détente tendency in the East-West conflict and to withstand Germany divided long-term.

In contrast, France was able to acknowledge this inevitable trend, although later than other European colonial powers, England for instance. This was done only by accepting the bitter facts of the French imperial decline in 1954 marked by the fall of Dien Bien Phu, and the loss of Algeria in 1962. Under the circumstance of the decolonization process, France realized that it was now merely a medium-sized power that that dramatically lost its traditional influence in Europe. This resulted in France's new understanding that in the ideological and military combat between the two camps of capitalists and socialists, France or any other Western ally ought to put aside any bilateral conflict in order to reach the whole community's common goal in the long run.

The Élysée Treaty signed by French and West German representatives in January 1963 marked the turning point in the history of continental Europe as the two former enemies became reconciled.³⁷¹ The main content of the treaty was to

³⁷¹ About the political background leading to the Élysée Treaty, see more: Henning Türk, *Ein Residuum gescheiterte Pläne: Die Vorgeschichte des Elysée Vertrages*, Dokumente – Zeitschrift für den deutsch-französischen Dialog, vol. 2/2012, S. 43-46. On behalf of a recently overall evaluation on the reconciliation between France and Germany, please see: Reiner Marcowitz, *Überwindung traditioneller Stereotype: Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen 1949-1963*, Dokumente – Zeitschrift für den deutsch-französischen Dialog, vol. 2/2012, S. 37-42.

formalize the meetings between the leaders of the two states at different levels, such as meetings of the Ministers of Defense, to take place every three months, meetings of the Chiefs of Staff every two months, and meetings of the top leaders every six months. The two sides agreed to consult and exchange all mutual concerns in economic, military, and cultural aspects. The treaty also stressed the importance of student exchanges of the two states. It turned the relationship between the two countries from enemies to friends, from confrontation to cooperation.

All in all, the reconciliation between West Germany and France was a major change of European history. The Franco-German rapprochement then played a crucial role in the process of European integration, as Thomas Hoerber states: “Franco-German reconciliation was the driving force. The rapprochement was seen as the healing of an old wound and the foundation of European integration and finally peace in Europe, not least for France.”³⁷² France benefited from the Franco-German reconciliation, too. At present, France is one of the five nuclear powers and a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN.

After realizing the bitter fact that France would soon be replaced by the Americans in Indochina and would be forced to decolonize in Algeria in 1962, France recognized that its era of empire had reached an end. This meant that France’s identity was severely damaged, and France’s future was no longer to be dependent on its Western ally, that is, the U.S. Thus, another way out for France was to escape from the U.S.’s sphere of influence. This could be achieved only by shaping its own independent foreign policy tied closely with its Western European neighbors through a Eurocentric orientation strategy. This resulted in the French ideas and membership in the European supranational organizations, i.e., the EEC, EURATOM and so on. Historically speaking, since the late 1950s France has played a leading role in the process of European unification. Nevertheless, all

³⁷² Thomas Hoerber, *The Foundations of Europe: European Integration ideas in France, Germany, and Britain in the 1950s*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006, p. 54.

France's efforts might have been unsuccessfully without West German cooperation via effective policies implemented by the Paris-Bonn axis.

Franco-German friendship has been promoted recently. Jaques Chirac, former Chancellor of France, declared in 1987 that it would be impossible to launch a war in (West) Germany or in France that would remain separate. If (West) Germany was attacked, France would immediately and whole-heartedly pledge to give any necessary assistance.³⁷³ Stronger pledges in the military field created space for the two states to share their mutual acknowledgement of each other's security and defense measures, and the Franco-German Committee for Security and Defense was founded in January 1988.

However, in the post-Cold War period, France sometimes showed anxiety of a reunited Germany, suggesting that France still did not want to see a really strong German that could threaten France's national security. France's concerns about national security were proved realistic when it feared a growing Germany might leave the existing community to pursue its traditional expansionism. These concerns, however, were solved when former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl gave reassurance on 21 June 1990 at the Bundestag that the Franco-German friendship would forever be important and decisive for German foreign policy.³⁷⁴

From the mid-1950s and the start of the 1960s, the international and regional context changed dramatically. This was marked by the French decolonization wave started in Indochina in 1954, the Korean War and the détente era between the two opposing blocs and so on. The end of the French empire was followed by remarkable transformations on France's political stage such as the collapse of the Fourth Republic and the birth of the Fifth Republic. All of these changes forced France to reconsider itself in its role as a traditional leading country in the European continent. It could be concluded that France, whether reluctantly or not, had to search for cooperation with West Germany in the late

³⁷³ Nguyễn Quang Chiển, *Cộng hòa Pháp: Bức tranh toàn cảnh (The Republic of France – A Panorama)*, The National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1997, tr. 299.

³⁷⁴ *Loc.cit.*

1950s and early 1960s as it had been rapidly gaining economic and political influence inside and outside Europe. What France and West Germany did in the second half of the last century proves the fact that a Franco-German détente and cooperation was inevitable and undisputable. The rapprochement between the two countries also aimed to create a common leadership in a developed and unified Europe as the third force for which the two sought independence from both the SU in the East and the U.S in the West. Despite unavoidable misunderstandings and ups and downs between the two states in the post-war era, particularly on the topic of European integration, Peo Hansen states this: “the preservation of pacific relations between Germany and France is referred to as one of the projects’ prime achievements.”³⁷⁵

6.2.2. West German integration into Western institutions

A dream of a unified Europe has been in the minds of the philosophers for centuries. The idea, however, was again evoked after WW II; it was seen as a possible way to prevent any potential future conflict among the memberstates of the European continent. In 1948, under the coordination of Joseph Retinger, former assistant of General Wladyslaw Sikorski,³⁷⁶ a grand conference was held in Europe. The participants were hundreds of politicians from Western Europe including Spaak, De Gasperi, Churchill, Schumann, Adenauer and Francois Mitterrand.³⁷⁷ Winston Churchill advocated strongly for the idea of a united Europe when on 19 September 1946, at the University of Zürich, Switzerland, he delivered a speech to students in which he called for “a kind of a United States of

³⁷⁵ Peo Hansen, *European Integration, European Identity, and the Colonial Connection*, *Journal of Social Theory* 5 (4) 2002, p. 484.

³⁷⁶ General Władysław Eugeniusz Sikorski (1881-1943), leader of the Polish government-in-exile in London in the war.

³⁷⁷ For detailed research on the history of the European integration, some main literature can be mentioned: Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000; D. Weigall and P. Stirk (editors), *The Origins and Development of the European Community*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992; Thomas Hoerber, *The Foundations of Europe: European Integration ideas in France, Germany, and Britain in the 1950s*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006.

Europe” and said, “France and Germany must take the lead together.”³⁷⁸ The conference called for a united Europe in which politics and economics should be integrated.

The conference went even further, urging the establishment of a European parliament and a European Court of Human Rights. The Council of Europe was thus founded in May 1949 and governed by a Council of Ministers and an Advisory Council. The problems occurred when France and Britain and the U.S. disagreed over the West German role in the European system.³⁷⁹ It is essential to mention here that France had to reluctantly accept many ideas on the incorporation of West Germany because of the fact that the French economy and military were rather fragile compared to others in the continent. In June 1953, the French colonial war in Indochina forced France to be more dependent on American financial assistance; Mendès France, later President of the Council of Ministers, revealed that “the collapse of our economic potential entails that of our military potential... and we must reawaken France.”³⁸⁰

Jean Monnet, standing behind Robert Schumann, instead, proposed a plan which might settle the dispute – the plan of the ECSC. Accordingly, a jointly governed structure on coal and steel in the whole community of the Six including France, West Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries would be created. On 9 May 1950, Schumann declared his ideal of a united Europe which he believed “will not be made at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old

³⁷⁸ See: <http://www.law.tohoku.ac.jp/~schaefer/documents/churchill.pdf>, (online accessed on 8 August 2012).

³⁷⁹ The disputes focussed on the matter of whether or not West Germany would be allowed to develop heavy industry which was at this point prohibited according to the Allies’ agreements on Germany after WW II. As a matter of fact, France always initially opposed such an intention to promote German heavy industry as it might challenge France’s national security.

³⁸⁰ Robert Frank, *The French Alternative: Economic Power through the Empire or through Europe?* in: (ed.), Ennio Nolfo *Power in Europe? II: Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952-1957*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1992, p. 161.

opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries... By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries; this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.”³⁸¹

As for West Germany, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer warmly welcomed all the ideas from which an occupied state could profit. In some cases, any ideas on West German involvement in regional and global projects would be more than enough for a defeated Germany after the severe wars launched by it in the first half of the century. Furthermore, the allies’ invitations would best satisfy Adenauer’s ideas or West German national interests on a united Europe in which West Germany’s say must be heard and thus, West Germany would be treated equally.

6.2.2.1. West German economic integration into the ECSC

Right after WW II Germany and from its formation in 1949, West Germany was always the central point of the continent and the world alike. Reinforced by the situation of the Cold War, West Germany could not be neutralized. Because of this, the Western allied powers tried to bring the federal state to be in a worthy position in regional and international organs again. The top priority in these policies was West Germany’s economic revival, effectively assisted by the Marshall Plan. Its initial purposes were quite simple: to feed the West German population and pay for the occupation. Just a few years after the war, the question of further economic integration into the West was pushed on. West German leaders advocated these policies as they saw that only by being a full member of the Western family could the voice of the country be heard. Therefore, it could return into the international community of respected nations. Evidently, France did not expect to see any German recovery, at least so soon

³⁸¹ Robin W. Winks and John E. Talbott, *Europe 1945 to the present*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 67.

after the war. As a matter of fact, France was under as much pressure as its old rival was to regain its strength.

The ECSC was a great project and a momentous opportunity for West Germany to integrate its economy into the Western family. The ECSC plan was, in fact, not only a symbol of West German involvement in a specific regional institution, but it was also of practical value for the federal state. This is because it “meant the abolition of the International Ruhr Authority, and represented a significant advance toward the restoration of German sovereignty... and promised gains both for the legal aspect of political recovery and the Adenauer’s larger aspiration—a fundamental reconciliation with France in the context of Western European community.”³⁸² The ECSC was considered the first step for West German economic integration into the West, from where West Germany could play an independent role independent of the Marshall Plan. Certainly, being an equal member of the EEC some years later, West Germany profited from utilizing its natural resources like coal to develop its economy.

Before WW II, Germany had been one of the continent’s leading powers. After the war, it had the full potential to regain a leading position once the occupation status came to an end. Moreover, with coal and steel, the principal industrial sectors for modernization, French industry was suffering from the effects of a serious structural handicap due to its lack of coking coal - indispensable for the production of steel - within French territory. As a result, if it had to import, or in other words, if it had to be too dependent on German natural resources, French production costs would actually be much higher than those of the Germans.

Not only could France control Germany’s war industry, it would benefit from doing that. Coal extracted from West German soil could be used to produce

³⁸² Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *West German foreign policy, 1949-1963*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1967, p. 60.

automobiles or trade with the U.S. for their military purposes.³⁸³ Is it true that the more France depended financially on American aid in Indochina, the more inclined its position it became? The ECSC thus might become a future calculation for France's struggle against the American influence. With regard to a bilateral tie between France and West Germany, the ECSC would create a crucial bridge of reconciliation between the two and prevent any future conflicts raised either by France or West Germany. The *Saarfrage* could then be solved as the two countries would behave honestly. By somehow tying West Germany into regional framework, in future it might not become a dominant power on the continent, or at least, not become a communist state.

For West Germany, a state reconstructed from ruins after WW II, economic integration through the ECSC made an enormous amount of sense as it would mean it could again be incorporated with other nations in a European community. Thus, regional and international trust in the German nation would be restored. At the same time, through the ECSC West Germany could reach two goals: *firstly*, it would be guaranteed from being vulnerable to the growing Soviet threat; *secondly*, the ECSC paved the way for the West German economy to access outside markets which later become beneficial for its heavy industries. A poll conducted in June 1950 showed that a majority - 77% - were in favor of West German participation in the ECSC.³⁸⁴ This figure can be understood to show that both West German top leaders and public opinion advocated integration into the West. West German economic interests were then reinforced several years after the launching of the ECSC during the negotiation on the formation of the EEC in

³⁸³ Interview with Professor Philippe Mioche, Director of the Professional Master's Program in European Studies, Université de Provence, Aix en Provence - France was made on 22 December 2010.

³⁸⁴ Walter Lipgens, Wilfried Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration, vol. 4: Transnational Organizations of Political Parties and Pressure Groups in the Struggle for the European Union 1945-1950*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1991, p. 613.

1957.³⁸⁵ By accepting France's requirement of the engagement of its colonial territories within the EEC, West Germany showed that it fully understood it should not longer oppose its neighboring country. Moreover, the federal state saw that, from an economic perspective, this would bring more opportunities than challenges as West German products could be sold in the markets of the French colonial states. Finally, in political terms, this agreement would also allow West Germany to develop its political and social influences over long-term period in the region.

The middle of the 1950s marked a turning point for West German domestic and foreign policy; in particular the issue of European integration became a catalyst for different political parties in the Federal Republic to reach to a consensus in policy making. West German economic integration into the Western world could not have been reached without the special and close relationship between Adenauer and de Gaulle. Both West Germany and France fully acknowledged that the future of the two nations depended on the efforts of the leaders of two states.³⁸⁶

6.2.2.2. *West German military integration into NATO*

From the late 1940s, the entire Western world was in the shadow of the intensified Cold War, through which the world was divided into two opposing ideological blocs. West German rearmament suddenly appeared essential to America's containment policy in Europe. Its special geo-political location in the center of Europe and its historical characteristics made West Germany the main symbolic frontier of the global conflict, or the frontier of the Western world in curbing the communist expansion in Europe.

³⁸⁵ During the long discussion on the creation of the EEC, France proposed that the EEC's sphere of influence would include France's overseas colonies; West Germany did not oppose this idea. See also: Veit Bachmann, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

³⁸⁶ Thomas Hoerber, *op.cit.*, p. 335.

Simultaneously in Asia, under the Eisenhower administration, Vietnam was seen as a frontier for the U.S. who was involved in an effort to prevent the expansion of communism in South-east Asia and Asia. The Americans were convinced that if West Germany was not rearmed promptly, it could result in West Germany being neutralized. It is worth noting here that West German rearmament was more strongly required because of the weak commitment of France to NATO as France, had to bear the military and financial burden of the war in Indochina at the same time. Theoretically, a neutralized West Germany would be seen as a victory for the Soviets. Consequently, the whole of Europe might fall under the Soviet influence which was, of course, unacceptable for the Western world.

West German leaders stated that its rearmament along with an official membership of the NATO would “serve as vehicles for regaining almost full sovereignty from foreign occupation, which made West Germany almost equal to the other West European countries in international affairs.”³⁸⁷ Yet from the outset, German rearmament in any form was not readily accepted by the West German public. A poll conducted in November 1950 found that only 22% of the people asked said “Yes” to the prospect; while 45% said “No”.³⁸⁸

We should look back to the background of the West German rearmament issue in order to see how it developed. West German rearmament emerged as an urgent matter when the Korean War broke out in June 1950. The West feared that the U.S. might reduce the number of its troops in Europe if they thought they might be needed on the Korean battlefield. Threatened by the idea of a potential Soviet attack from the East, the Council of Europe and the Americans thought of a West German defense contribution to the Western front. Obviously, West German direct membership of NATO was never part of France’s plan. France, instead, proposed the European collective defense community, or the Pleven Plan, in which West Germany would be rearmed but not have a national army. Also, the

³⁸⁷ Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace – German Peace Movement since 1945*, The University of Michigan Press, 1999, p. 29.

³⁸⁸ Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 629.

issue of West German remilitarization would satisfy, albeit to a much lesser degree, the Germans who wanted “the extension of European integration to the sphere of European defense”.³⁸⁹

Moreover, one should not forget the initial goal of French leaders was not military integration; it advocated political integration first, then military integration. The will of the French politicians seemed to be in line with French public opinion in 1950 when 50% of French people asked said “No” to German rearmament.³⁹⁰ This was because since 1945, French security policy “had been dictated by the conviction that German aggression was the dominant factor in France’s destiny.”³⁹¹ Only five years after the German army’s capitulation, it was uncomfortable for France to accept a “legal successor to Hitler’s Reich”.

But as time went by the political context in the European continent changed dramatically due to a circumstance, through which the U.S. and West German interests coincided: West Germany should be on an equal footing with other Western powers. Thus, if France did nothing, it would be isolated. West Germany would soon be a dominant power again in Europe which France truly had not expected to see. Furthermore, as the most important Western ally of France, the U.S. strongly supported the EDC plan because, more than ever, the Americans had to placate and wished to see a politically stable France. Otherwise, if French domestic political life was unstable, it would create chance for the re-emergence of the French communists whose presence in the French cabinet had been limited since 1947. Their regeneration might then conflict with the U.S. policy for Europe.

Another factor that forced France to accept German rearmament was the insecurity it felt, being threatened by the SU as well. In this case, France was dealing with a dual anxiety of both Russian and German threatening their security,

³⁸⁹ F. Roy Willis, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

³⁹⁰ Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth, *op.cit.*, p. 615.

³⁹¹ *Loc.cit.*

in what can be called “dialectical relationship”.³⁹² French policy towards European security was sometimes uncertain, complicated, and somehow paradoxical. It could be argued that French European security policies within the context of increasing tension between the SU (and its allies) and the rest of Europe were unrealistic and impossible to apply. This argument can be drawn from the fact that France desired a West German military contribution (if rearmed) to the European defense structure that would be stronger than that of the SU, but had to be smaller than that of France.

Ironically, the balance of military power between France and West Germany was never guaranteed just because of the fact that France wished to be equal with West Germany in military terms. It would hardly be able to be as most of its troops were stationed in Indochina and in North Africa.³⁹³ Many French people believed that France would have difficulty fighting colonial wars while simultaneously retaining superiority over the resurgent Germans. At the same time, some French military elites feared German rearmament because it would pave a way for a vengeful Germany to try to regain its lost territories of the last wars.

How did West Germany react? Seemingly, Dr. Konrad Adenauer viewed the EDC plan “as a way in which the FRG could be accepted as an equal partner in an integrated Europe.”³⁹⁴ As discussed earlier, in the first years of the 1950s, the foreign policy of the FRG was limited and controlled by the allies. To be accepted as a Western member, West Germany attempted to regain the trust both of its neighboring countries, including colonial powers such as France and Britain, and of those outside Europe.

³⁹² Pierre Guillen, *The Role of the Soviet Union as a Factor in the French Debates on the European Defense Community*, in: (ed.), Groupe de liaison des professeurs d’histoire contemporaine auprès de la Commission européenne, *Journal of European Integration History*, 1996, vol. 2, No. 1. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden.

³⁹³ Pierre Milandri, *op.cit.*, p. 276.

³⁹⁴ Timothy D. Showers, *France, Germany, and the development of a European Security and Defense Identity*, MA thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2000, p. 14.

It is quite understandable that in his memoirs, Adenauer shows his deep desire and determination for West Germany to integrate into the Western family both militarily and politically. For him, “the condition for a German contribution to the defense of Europe was the full and equal status of Germany with the other European peoples. Equal responsibilities mean equal rights. In my opinion, German rearmament would have far-reaching consequences for our political position in the world. Rearmament could help us reach our full sovereignty. It was simply the question of our political future.”³⁹⁵ (*Voraussetzung für eine deutsche Beteiligung an der Verteidigung Europas war für mich völlige Gleichberechtigung Deutschlands mit den anderen Völkern Europas. Gleiche Pflichten setzen gleiche Rechte voraus. Die Wiederbewaffnung würde meines Erachtens weitgehende Folgen für die politische Stellung unseres Volkes in der Welt haben. Auf dem Weg über die Wiederbewaffnung konnte die volle Souveränität der Bundesrepublik erreicht werden. Es war die Frage unserer politischen Zukunft schlechthin.*)

The French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in 1951 endorsed this. He wrote, “Germany would either dominate the European army – the flower of the French army was dying in Indochina – or throw it over to pursue a militarist revanchist course.”³⁹⁶ The Pléven Plan, however, encountered some difficulties as it had to give answers to such questions as: the relationship between the new defense community and NATO; the role of West Germany in the European army; financial problems and some others related to the replacement of the Occupation Statute. In September 1951, at the start of the third phase of the negotiations on West German membership and its role in the EDC, three ministers (of the U.S, France and Britain) gathered in Washington. They decided that “the participation of Germany in the common defense must naturally be accompanied by the replacement of the present occupation status by new relationships between the three Governments and the Federal German Republic” - the first formal

³⁹⁵ Gisela Müller, Brandeck, Bocquet *et al.*, *Deutsche Europapolitik von Adenauer bis Merkel*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010, S. 23-24.

³⁹⁶ John Harper, *American Visions of Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 132.

recognition that German participation in EDC would imply the end of the occupation.”³⁹⁷ In a meeting held in Lisbon from 20 to 25 February 1952, the Atlantic Council “officially agreed to the arming of 12 German divisions within a European army, although Germany itself was not to join NATO.”³⁹⁸ Direct access to NATO-membership seemed to be a better solution as this organization would operate as a transatlantic institution, broader than that of the European. It was doubtless the case that by accessing NATO directly the length of West Germany’s integration process into the Western club would be shortened.

The obstruction to West German NATO membership was lifted by Germany after a fierce debate on 27 February 1955. Ten years after the end of WW II and the German army unconditional surrender, Germany was allowed, within the framework of NATO, to reorganize its *Bundeswehr* with 400,000 soldiers, the second largest standing army in Europe after the Soviet Red Army.³⁹⁹ Nonetheless, West Germany would not be allowed to develop atomic, biological and chemical weapons. West German membership within NATO proved a victory for West Germany in its efforts to regain prestige and power after the war. On the other hand, the SPD supposed that German rearmament would prevent Germany from reunification. Konrad Adenauer responded by pointing out that West German politics would always be looking to the West, and when the West was strong, the SU would have talks with Germany.⁴⁰⁰

To conclude, the EDC was a setback, but it opened a new path for alternative solutions based on an Atlantic partnership.⁴⁰¹ Adenauer wisely traded

³⁹⁷ John Harper, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

³⁹⁸ *Loc.cit.*

³⁹⁹ Scott Erb, *German Foreign Policy: Navigating a New Era*, Boulder, Colorado, L. Rienner, 2003, p. 32.

⁴⁰⁰ *Zeiten und Menschen*, Neue Ausgabe B, Band 4, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh Schroedel Schulbuchverlag, 1983, S. 1982.

⁴⁰¹ For a short but convincing discussion on the other impacts of Dien Bien Phu on European integration, see: Philippe Mioche, *If European Integration Had Stumbled at Dien Bien Phu? Europe-Southeast Asia in the Contemporary World: Mutual Images and Reflections 1940s-1960s*,

the occupational status for his goal of military integration into the Western Alliance. The Germans learnt that military means are not and should not be the only effective tools with which to implement foreign policy goals. They soon founded that “by integrating into the West and stressing common values, they could achieve respect and policy success.”⁴⁰² In the first period of the European integration process, together with the establishment of the coal and steel community in 1951 (later transformed into the EEC with the Rome Treaty of 1957), West Germany and France played a crucial role in tandem in starting and speeding up that process. The timely return of the French to Europe after decolonization in Indochina was confirmed as one of the main causes leading to the success of the European integration.

Few can imagine what the European Union would be like today if, in the 1950s, France had continued to focus only on its colonial territories and had refused to play its vital role in Europe. Undoubtedly, West Germany also enjoyed direct or indirect benefits brought by French decolonization. West German remilitarization and membership in the political and economic life of Europe were achieved much earlier than expected. Finally, the Franco-German reconciliation and the dual role of the two states in European unification from the 1950s to the end of the Cold War was undeniably as historians have stated: “the process of West European integration during the Cold War seemed to have succeeded in uniting at least one half of Europe.”⁴⁰³

6.2.3. West German policy towards Third World countries

6.2.3.1. West German development aid to Third World countries

The decolonization process in the 1950s and early 1960s profoundly changed the entire world. A new world order was set in which almost European

International Conference of Historians, Bangkok, 25-27 August 1999, edited by Piyanart Bunnag, Franz Knipping, Sud Chonchirdsin, pp.51-58.

⁴⁰² Scott Erb, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

⁴⁰³ Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *The Cold War – A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 312.

colonial powers had to get rid of their traditional possessions overseas to concentrate on continental development and modernization. From the second half of the 1950s when the European decolonization process began, particularly in the region of sub-Saharan Africa, many Germans started to pay attention to this area. Their interests resulted in a variety of technical assistance projects, road construction, market expansion, etc. German influence in all fields of the area was gradually established.⁴⁰⁴ African decolonization was not only a meaningful victory for the African continent, but also brought many new opportunities to all members of the Europe of Six for accessing raw sources in the region.⁴⁰⁵ Now the game became fairer among the players, showing the role of European states in Africa as well as in newly independent countries all over the world in a broader perspective.

History of West German development aid policy: Before WW I, under the reign of the King Wilhelm II, Germany had possessed its own colonial territories in present-day African countries like Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Namibia, Cameroon, Samoa, Togo, etc. Among these colonial possessions, Middle Africa had been seen as an area containing “raw materials from the resource-rich Katanga-region of the Congo and transportation routes to bring those to ocean-ports were at the focus of resource-oriented motives.”⁴⁰⁶ From the end of the 19th century to the onset of WW I, it was not only Germany that occupied land overseas and controlled them as colonies, but also other European colonial powers such as France, Britain, Belgium, Holland, and so on. The prevailing ideology of the European colonizers was that the greatness of a great power was achieved by having some overseas possessions.⁴⁰⁷ After WW I, Germany’s colonies were

⁴⁰⁴ Marc Frey, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Prozeß der Dekolonisierung*, in: Eckart Conze (Hrsg.), *Die Herausforderung des Globalen in der Ära Adenauer*, Rhöndorfer Gespräche Band 24, Bouvier Verlag, Bonn, 2000, S. 183.

⁴⁰⁵ Thomas Moser, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

⁴⁰⁶ Veit Bachmann, *op.cit.*, p. 15. For more details on the history of the world’s developmental cooperation, see also: Hubertus Büschel and Daniel Speich (Hrsg.), *Entwicklungswelten: Globalgeschichte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2009.

⁴⁰⁷ Veit Bachmann, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

abolished. This move, accompanied by bitter injustices regulated in the Versailles Treaty, meant that German society was not satisfied with the peace agreement. This forced the Germans to regain face by finding a new doctrine of existential space or the so-called “living space”. Originally, this theory was rooted in the *Geopolitik* provided by geo-politicians surrounding Karl Haushofer.⁴⁰⁸

Benefiting from the Marshall Plan from late 1940s, the West German economy reached its peak, its “economic miracle”, during the 1950s and early 1960s. Economic statistics on West German foreign trade in the 1950s and early 1960s show the country’s ability to give development aid to developing countries, for example, “imports jumped from 10.7 billion DM in 1950 to 55 billion DM in 1964, and to 68.9 billion DM in 1966; and exports rose from 8.4 billion DM to 80.4 billion DM over the same sixteen-year period.”⁴⁰⁹ As West Germany gradually integrated into Western economic and political organizations, it started thinking of assisting other less developed countries, notably those newly independent ones in Africa and Asia. Compared to other European powers, West Germany was the most capable of offering development aid. In the 1950s, West Germany was believed to have a “lack of a colonial past and therefore to have easier access to the decolonized nations than the other European powers.”⁴¹⁰

Sure of its economic potential, West Germany did not hide its ambitions to influence the course of international politics.⁴¹¹ Without a colonial past, West Germany could shape and implement its foreign aid policy which was more flexible on aid recipients compared to other Western allies such as Britain, France (still facing its own colonial problems), the Netherlands and Belgium. And largely

⁴⁰⁸ Karl Haushofer (1869-1946), a famous German geo-politician, whose study was influenced by some other scientists such as Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), British geo-politician Halford Mackinder (1861-1947), and the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922). The *Geopolitik* of Karl Haushofer had a great impact on the expansionist plan of the Nazi leadership. See also Veit Bachmann, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

⁴⁰⁹ Karel Holbik and Henry Allen Myers, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

⁴¹⁰ Corinna R. Unger, *Modernization à la mode: West German and American Development Plans for the Third World*, GHI Bulletin No. 40 (Spring 2007), p. 146.

⁴¹¹ *Loc.cit.*

this is because “their lack of a reputation as a colonial power has made their assistance more acceptable to the emerging nations.”⁴¹² It was also believed that by offering development aid to those countries outside Europe and North America, West Germany did not have any difficulties in dealing with the natives’ concerns about their Nazi past.⁴¹³ From the start of West German development aid, political conditions were not attached to any recipients.⁴¹⁴

Basic ideas of West German development aid policy: By the late 1950s, the West German Foreign Office believed that the Federal Republic should increase its development aid to newly independent African countries. This plan of action also aimed to compete with Soviet influence in the same field. It could be said that West German development aid policy aimed to serve its political goals as West Germany hoped that developing countries would turn away from communism and join the West. Therefore, the Federal Republic would have more allies in a new world order. Last but not least, Africa would become a region in which West Germany had the influence to exploit raw materials and export markets, contributing to West Germany’s rapid economic boom.

In contrast, newly independent countries, particularly the ones in Africa were at the starting point of their economic development after being decolonized. They also hoped to rely on the developed European countries’ assistance to overcome initial challenges to construct and modernize their countries. Taking advantage of this, West Germany shaped its development aid policy towards less developed African countries. In comparison with other donors, e.g., the U.S., West Germany’s development assistance policy contained different characteristics as it aimed to be philanthropic and reach its goal of *Helping Themselves (Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe)*. The West German aid policy aimed to achieve sustainable development for recipients; it was considered “not primarily as a means of change

⁴¹² Karel Holbik and Henry Allen Myers, *West German Aid 1956-1966 – its economic and political aspects*, Boston University Press, 1968. p. 41.

⁴¹³ *Loc.cit.*

⁴¹⁴ Karel Holbik and Henry Allen Myers, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

but as a catalyst to initialize change.”⁴¹⁵ Social and not-for-profit organizations also initiated their own ways of distributing aid. Some of them such as *Misereor* and another help organization called “*Brot für die Welt*” (Bread for the world) have played a crucial role in the German development aid agenda.⁴¹⁶

West German internal politics basically came to a consensus on foreign development aid policy in Africa as West Germany would benefit from the matter due to the economic aspects. In 1958, just two years after the launch of its first foreign development aid program, the Federal Economics Minister Erhard was very enthusiastic about this area because of its economic importance (sales and raw material markets).⁴¹⁷ It is perhaps significant that most African countries which received West German foreign aid used to be French or German colonies. From the mid-1950s, European and French decolonization in Asia and Africa offered West Germany many occasions to re-establish relations with former colonies in the continent. As we can see, this benefited West Germany both politically and economically.

Objectively speaking, the European integration process and the modernization of the country also required West Germany to broaden its relations with other countries outside Europe. On the one hand, the general purpose of the West German aid was to “enable the recipients, who still lack the resources to maintain a satisfactory rate of growth without assistance, to take their place in a world “characterized by division of labour and governed by market principles.”⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ Corinna R. Unger, *op.cit.*, p. 149.

⁴¹⁶ *Misereor*, founded in 1958, is a large help agency of the Roman Catholic churches in Germany aiming to assist developing countries in fighting poverty. “*Brot für die Welt*“, established in 1959, is another model of a help program organized by Protestant churches in Germany in order to help under-developed countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and East Europe, focusing on health, education, peace, human rights and HIV/AIDS.

⁴¹⁷ Jürgen Bellers and Stefanie Jachertz, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und die Europäische Entwicklungspolitik 1958-1983*, Universität Siegen, Diskussionspapiere des Faches Politikwissenschaft, Rote Reine, Nr. 80/2002, S. 5.

⁴¹⁸ John White, *German Aid - A Survey of the courses, policy and structure of German Aid*, The Overseas Development Institute Ltd, 1965, p. 64.

On the other hand, one should understand the original label of the West German aid was used as a tool to show the German people the reason for it: “First, by portraying German aid as the promotion of free market economies, the Federal Government gives it a purpose that is more readily comprehensible to the German public. Even in the crudest terms... the growth of free enterprise will somehow make the recipients of aid more pro-Western, the image is not without its domestic political value.”⁴¹⁹ Evidently, this policy aimed at a further goal: to improve the image of West Germany internationally and increase the confidence of the international community in West Germany. Furthermore, it would be able to enlist more allies in the post-colonial era.

However, certain conditions were set for recipients. Firmly tied to the Western culture, West Germany could never give aid to communist countries. As a result, recipients had to be outside the communist bloc, and they had to show a “friendly manner to the Federal Republic” by refraining from formal recognition of East Germany. This meant also a respect for the right to self-determination of West Germany. Nonetheless, the Federal Republic did not attach any political condition to the recipients, as Minister of Economic Co-operation reaffirmed in a broadcast program at the beginning of 1961.⁴²⁰

West Germany’s aid policy has sometimes been adjusted since its launch in order to meet the demands of each time period. Initially, West Germany aid was directed at former colonies or the so-called “orphan” countries like Ghana and Guinea. This targeted to help them to “escape from economic dependence on their former rulers.”⁴²¹ More importantly, the West German development aid policy did not forget to support two African countries which had former colonial links to Germany prior to 1918: Tanganyika (East Africa) and Togo (West Africa). These two countries were the recipients of large West German

⁴¹⁹ John White, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

⁴²⁰ John White, *op.cit.*, pp. 71-72.

⁴²¹ John White, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

commitments, in 1964, for instance, about 25 million DM committed in grants and loans to Tanganyika and about 58 million DM to Togo.⁴²²

It should be added here that until 1964, the government went to noticeable effort to explain its aid policy to the West German public. Beside the economic effect of the policy, one of the most crucial reasons for the West German aid policy was the belief that it would offer “a welcome and unique opportunity to West Germany to play a significant part in international affairs.”⁴²³ By using “soft power” to give aid to former colonies of the Western colonial powers, West Germany gradually gained the confidence of the international community. Recipients then became raw materials suppliers for the West German economy and huge importers of products “made in Germany”.

Results of the West German development aid policy: A few years after the launch of the West German aid program, one can see that the West German assistance policy was being widely applied in South American, Asian and European developing countries as well.

(Unit: in million DM)

| Country | GRANTS | | CREDITS | | TOTAL |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| | Technical Assistance | Other Grants | Long-term Capital Assistance | Other Official Credits | |
| Brazil | 9.6 | - | 106.9 | 36.7 | 153.1 |
| India | 26.3 | - | 1,378.6 | 21.7 | 1,426.6 |
| Turkey | 3.1 | 0.2 | 462.2 | 6.5 | 472.0 |
| Argentina | 1.6 | - | 73.3 | 9.2 | 84.1 |
| Chile | 5.0 | - | 116.3 | 26.9 | 148.2 |
| Liberia | 2.9 | - | 304.8 | - | 307.7 |
| Peru | 1.2 | - | - | 0.8 | 2.0 |

⁴²² *Loc.cit.*

⁴²³ Karel Holbik and Henry Allen Myers, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

| | | | | | |
|----------|-----|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pakistan | 6.1 | 44.6 | 126.3 | 89.2 | 266.2 |
| Iran | 7.9 | 1.2 | 6.3 | - | 15.4 |
| Spain | 1.0 | - | 24.8 | 34.3 | 60.1 |

Table 2: Official grants and credits offered to “Principal Recipients of German Resources among Developing Countries 1960 – 1963.”⁴²⁴

As shown in the table, India was the largest recipient of all. Being a newly independent state in Asia since 1947, India played a vital role in the continent as a neutral country. Additionally, India’s large population gave it a lot of potential as a customer for West German products. Another example of West Germany’s aid policy shows how much West Germany spent in this field in Asia and Africa in the early 1960s.

(Unit: in million DM)

| Continent | Bilateral Capital Assistance Up to 31.12.1963 | Bilateral Technical Assistance Up to 31.12.1963 | Direct investment inc. re-invested earnings 1951 – 1963 | Trade Imports and Exports 1959 – 1963 |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Europe | 29.9 | 9.1 | 10.9 | 16.2 |
| Africa | 7.7 | 33.4 | 13.6 | 18.2 |
| Asia | 56.6 | 46.2 | 7.7 | 32.8 |
| Latin America | 5.8 | 11.3 | 67.8 | 32.6 |
| Oceania | - | - | - | 0.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

⁴²⁴ This table is excerpted from table 7: “Principal Recipients of German Resources among Developing Countries 1960 – 1963” (private sources are not counted here), see: John White, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-----|-------|---------|
| Total Value | 2,278 | 329 | 2,179 | 108,287 |
|--------------------|-------|-----|-------|---------|

Table 3: Comparative Distribution of Principal Categories of German Activity in Developing Countries in percentages.⁴²⁵

India again received a large amount of grants from West Germany from the beginning of the program, for instance, the Federal Republic granted India 1.5 million USD of its 12.5 million USD development fund in 1959-1960 with a change from the idea that “the trade follows the flag” to “trade follows technical help.”⁴²⁶ One should keep in mind that West German assistance policy was guided by multiple and inextricable purposes. They were linked by economic terms from which each partner could benefit and by the enhancement of West Germany’s reputation in the international arena. These policies, formulated within West Germany’s foreign diplomatic strategies, could serve as powerful tool in the competition with East Germany and the SU in the field of development aid. It could also be argued that West German economic superiority in comparison with France in the continent allowed the federal state to some extent to exceed France and Britain in terms of development aid to the freshly independent nations in Asia and Africa.⁴²⁷

From the outset of its development project, the Federal Republic sincerely wished to assist developing nations by sharing its own experiences in reconstructing the country. West German development aid policy, however, would make no sense if we overlook the fact that West Germany was seeking its own dependent countries in the post-war new world order. Instead of setting its

⁴²⁵ John White, *op.cit.*, p. 85. Other statistics on the West German development aid and the competition with the GDR in this field can be also found in “*Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic in the Third World. Intereconomics No.5, 1971*”, pp. 159-160.

⁴²⁶ Corinna R. Unger, *Modernization à la mode: West German and American Development Plans for the Third World, op.cit.*, p. 151.

⁴²⁷ Dirk van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt – Deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005, S. 167.

ambitions for cultural influence on “colonized nations”, as other European colonial powers had done previously, West Germany formed its own “colonization approach” by binding dependent countries with economic benefits. The Federal Republic learnt and hoped that this approach would encourage recipients to become allies with pro-Western value, as well as promoting West Germany in the field of diplomacy and improving its international reputation. More important for post-war Germany were these hidden purposes because West Germany believed that development aid policy in Third World countries would serve “as a means to reinvent a national identity that, after WW II, was so laden with negative associations that a new, constructive relationship to international politics was indispensable” as well as “a means of re-establishing the country’s reputation as a trustworthy, respectable power.”⁴²⁸ It is also crucial to mention here that behind the scenes lay West Germany’s political and diplomatic objectives.

6.2.3.2. *West German diplomatic policy towards Africa and Vietnam*

With its crucial geopolitical location in Europe and the context of the Cold War, evidently West Germany attempted to define its own place in the continent with its own sphere of influence. One of most achievable ways to do this chosen by West German leaders was to affiliate with the newly independent countries of the Third World. The most famous theory applied by West German foreign policy makers was the Hallstein Doctrine.⁴²⁹ As mentioned above, this doctrine aimed to adjust diplomatic relations with newly independent countries. Attached conditions

⁴²⁸ Corinna R. Unger, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

⁴²⁹ This doctrine was named after Mr. Walter Hallstein, a member of a delegation accompanying Dr. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Moscow in 1955. It was a key principle in the foreign policy of the Federal Republic, consisting of breaking off relations with any country that established diplomatic ties with East Germany. It was applied coincidentally with the European decolonization process, specifically in Africa. The mid-1950s also marked a significant point for West Germany as it almost gained full sovereignty; the more countries it set up diplomatic ties with, the faster it would be internationally recognized. The doctrine was consistently applied until the early 1970s.

for the establishment of diplomatic ties with West Germany were also implemented.⁴³⁰

West Germany pursued a further ambition which would allow it to have greater political influence on Africa. By providing technical aid (*technische Hilfe*) to the newly independent countries in Africa, West German experts believed and hoped that technical developments would reduce any political and social tensions and instability in the continent. In other words, Africa in the minds of West German elites was considered top priority for its foreign policy in seeking a new sort of “*living space*” in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

From the mid-1950s when the Hallstein doctrine was introduced, West Germany’s economic interests in Africa became more associated with political and diplomatic strategies. Development aid thus played a crucial role in achieving goals. For instance, in 1951, the first diplomatic mission of West Germany in Africa, the Consulate General, was opened. Then, six embassies in Africa came into operation in 1959. The number of embassies rose to thirty-two in 1963 simultaneously with the decolonization wave in sub-Saharan Africa.⁴³¹

West German intrusion in Africa was explained by many diverse reasons which were often referred to in East German propaganda as “neo-colonialism”. Inspired by German traditions in colonial possession in Africa before WW I, one German geopolitician, Anton Zischka, shared his ideas on Africa in the early 1950s: “Europe either shares Africa together or it is lost to all.”⁴³² (*Entweder wir nutzen Afrika gemeinsam, lassen ganz Europa teilhaben, oder es geht für alle verloren.*) From the beginning of the 1960s when the African countries gained full political independence mostly from France, West Germany found an opportunity

⁴³⁰ Dirk van Laak, *op.cit.*, S. 164.

⁴³¹ Veit Bachmann, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

⁴³² Horst Drechsler, *Zum Eindringen des westdeutschen Neokolonialismus in Afrika*, in: (ed.), Heinz Tillmann und Werner Kowalski, *Westdeutscher Neokolonialismus: Untersuchungen über die wirtschaftliche und politische Expansion des westdeutschen Imperisismus in Afrika und Asien*, Rütten & Loening, Berlin, 1963, S. 13.

to replace France in the continent. Traditionally, French colonies were now open to engagement from all of Europe. West German investment in post-colonial Africa, therefore, would not be seen as competition with France individually in its own colonial possessions, but a contribution of the federal state to the global struggle for the future of the developing countries in Africa.⁴³³ Last but not least, Africa might serve as a new living space for many Germans, as Jason Verber writes in his thesis, “Africa would provide... also the possibility of settlement for some millions who lost their homes in Europe.”⁴³⁴

The emergence of West German “neo-colonialism” at the beginning of the second half of the 20th century coincided with France’s financial exhaustion due to the outcome of the Indochina war and the on-going conflict in Algeria. France realized that it was unable to maintain its presence and rule in the African continent.⁴³⁵ 88% of the West German overseas investment fund was spent in these former French colonies. So what were the real motivations here for West Germany to engage in Africa? They were oil, manganese, copper, chrome, vanadium, cobalt, gold, diamond and bauxite for aluminum production. This investment, together with the opened gate of the EEC, would pave the way for West Germany to exploit raw materials and share interests with France in the region.⁴³⁶ Ironically, using its economic superiority, West Germany gradually eliminated France from its traditional colony. In this case, Madagascar serves as a striking example. Krupp AG financially supported the nationalist movement in this country in exchange for the sole rights to its uranium and graphite.⁴³⁷

⁴³³ Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 21.

⁴³⁴ Jason Verber, *The Conundrum of Colonialism in post-war Germany*, PhD Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2010, pp. 48-49, Iowa Research Online, (<http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/758>), online accessed on 23 April 2012).

⁴³⁵ Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 14-15

⁴³⁶ Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 17.

⁴³⁷ Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 21. For further explanations of West German economic and political calculations in investment and development policy in Africa, see: Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 23-49. For more critical comments on German historical rule in its African colonies, see also: Horst Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft – Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus 1884-1915*, Akademie Verlag Berlin, 1966 und *Südwestafrika*

Furthermore, Africa in the long run would be able to offer strategic war materials such as ores, petroleum and uranium.⁴³⁸

Economics and politics were not the only reasons for West Germany to return to Africa. Being a member of NATO since 1955, the Federal Republic supported France in the Algerian conflict where from 1957 2.5 billion DM was contributed by West Germany. Moreover, 70% of the total French troops fighting on the Algerian battlefield were Germans.⁴³⁹ This military contribution could be seen to explain Dr. Konrad Adenauer's declaration that "there is a strong army in Algeria where soldiers are fighting bravely and successfully."⁴⁴⁰ (*da steht eine riesige Armee, deren Soldaten mutig und erfolgreich in Algerien kämpfen.*) This attitude was nearly the same as when the Chancellor praised those who had fought on the Indochina battlefield some years before. In turn, France would have to allow West German companies to exploit oil in the Sahara and station its military bases on French soil.⁴⁴¹

Thus, the decolonization and European integration process in the 1950s created invaluable opportunities for West Germany to develop its economy and improve its reputation at an international level. Under these circumstances, West Germany closely cooperated with its former enemy - France - in sharing economic, political and military benefits and influence in its former colonies of Africa. The two leading countries have played a vital role in directing the EEC since the early 1960s.

unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft – Die großen Land und Minengesellschaften, Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart, 1996.

⁴³⁸ Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 50.

⁴³⁹ Among 50.000 legionnaires recruited in Algeria from 1954 to 1962, 70% were Germans. See: Thomas Hoerber - Chad Leishman, *Frankreichs Abschied vom Kolonialismus: Französisch-Indochina, Suez, Algerien und Frankreichs Rolle im europäischen Integrationsprozess*, in *Francia-Forschung zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, Bd. 35, 2008, S. 486.

⁴⁴⁰ Horst Drechsler, *op.cit.*, S. 52-53

⁴⁴¹ *Loc.cit.*

West German foreign policy in the Cold War was again challenged by the American war in Vietnam, or the second Indochina War. After 1954, the U.S. gradually replaced France in Vietnam by backing the Diem regime in the southern part of the country. Being one of the closest allies of the U.S. in NATO, West Germany had no alternative but to stand in line with the Americans.⁴⁴² However, it was a reluctant gesture, sometimes even, just lip service.⁴⁴³ One is aware that the Bonn government was seeking diplomatic recognition at the international level. One country wishes to set up diplomatic ties with West German had to accept the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* of the country. Setting up diplomatic relations with the U.S. ally in South-east Asia was essential for the federal state. In fact, a trade delegation was sent to Saigon in 1955, just one year after the Geneva Conference, and of course, a general election for the whole country was still planned on paper (and it would be never held). Although a West German embassy was then opened in 1957, full diplomatic ties with the Republic of Vietnam were not established until 1960.

From this we might interpret that the Bonn government was doubtful about the credit to the Diem regime of people in the South. In his memoir, Dr. Konrad Adenauer reports that soon after the Geneva Conference, he judged that the outcome of the conference was not actually a victory for the Western world, but rather that, to some extent, the communists were the winners.⁴⁴⁴ Therefore, if a general election were held, the victory would go to Ho Chi Minh, the Bonn government believed.⁴⁴⁵ The West German attitude towards the second Indochina War was vastly different from what the young republic had seen in the first Indochina War. It would be easier for the federal state to gain some sort of political influence regionally and internationally only by making use of its

⁴⁴² Joachim Scholtyseck, *Frankreich, Westdeutschland und Vietnam 1945 bis 1969*, in: *Revue d'Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande*, 3/4.1999, S. 427.

⁴⁴³ Joachim Scholtyseck, *op.cit.*, S. 436.

⁴⁴⁴ Konrad Adenauer, *Erinnerungen 1953-1955*, Deutsche Verlag Anstalt Stuttgart 1965, S. 256.

⁴⁴⁵ Joachim Scholtyseck, *op.cit.*, S. 429. See also: Alexander Troche, *Berlin wird am Mekong verteidigt*, Drosler, 2001, S. 218.

absence in the colonial presence in the area. At the same time, it should not make any political comments on any conflicts beyond its territory.⁴⁴⁶

During the second Indochina War, West Germany was put under great pressure many times to define its official attitude towards the requirements of the U.S for a stronger military allegiance in the conflict. Simultaneously, West Germany also had to demonstrate its position on France's view on the American war in Vietnam. With France, any recklessness might harm the on-going European unification process. Despite the confusion, West Germany finally chose not to engage in the conflict, at least, not in a direct way. More than ever, with experience and lessons taught by the previous wars, West German leaders were sensible enough to understand that the West German public would not forgive them if they sent troops to fight on the battlefields of Southern Vietnam.⁴⁴⁷

Nevertheless, West Germany opted to deal with the Americans in the second Indochina War by its own means. Development and technical help were used as the main tool to support the American-backed regime of Diem and his successors. For instance, 1.5 million DM was offered for the construction of the Cao Thang Vocational College in the 1960s, another fund of 1.9 million DM for the establishment of a medical college in Hue where West German experts taught until 1968. In addition to a long-term capital support agreement of 50 million DM for infrastructure, another supplementary loan of 15 million DM for the import of essential commodities was envisaged in November 1962.⁴⁴⁸ In 1963, another deal of 15 million DM was given to the Diem's government in order to stabilize the import and foreign currency situation in Southern Vietnam.⁴⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the

⁴⁴⁶ Gerhard Will, *Zum Verhältnis zwischen Bonn und Saigon zwischen 1950 und 1975*, in: *Deutsch-vietnamesische Beziehungen: Tagungsband zum 35 jährigen Jubiläum der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Sozialistischen Republik Vietnam*, Hanoi, 2010, S. 6.

⁴⁴⁷ Joachim Scholtyseck, *op.cit.*, S. 433.

⁴⁴⁸ Joachim Scholtyseck, *op.cit.*, S. 432-433.

⁴⁴⁹ Gerhard Will, *op.cit.*, S. 7.

West German press revealed that the money offered to the Southern government was mainly used to build strategic hamlets.⁴⁵⁰

After the 1963 *coup d'état* that brought the fall of the Diem regime, and the escalation of the warfare in Vietnam, West Germany again had to re-define its position on the conflict. However, being a divided-country defended by the American troops on its soil, it would be difficult for West Germany to criticize the involvement of the U.S. in Vietnam, said West German Chancellor Kiesinger in a press conference in 1966.⁴⁵¹ Just one year later, West German foreign policy was again challenged when it had to decide whether to continue backing the U.S. or share France's sentiments on the conflict.⁴⁵² Ultimately, West German diplomats in Saigon opted to be "*go-betweens*" as a neutral approach to respond to what both the U.S. and France expected from the federal state.⁴⁵³ Nonetheless, West German elites were to some extent divided in the forming of this policy. Military leaders, for example, started thinking of forming and sending a foreign legion to Vietnam. Furthermore, in an election campaign in Pinneberg in 1965, former defense minister Strauss urged the federal government to send 50,000 soldiers to Vietnam.⁴⁵⁴ As a matter of fact, this proposal would never be carried out due to

⁴⁵⁰ *Der Spiegel*, 24 July 1963. Strategic hamlets were a program launched in 1961 by the government of Ngo Dinh Diem – president of the First Republic (of Southern Vietnam). This type of village aimed to isolate undesirable people with the guerilla forces, or the Viet Cong.

⁴⁵¹ Joachim Scholtyseck, *op.cit.*, S. 435.

⁴⁵² French President Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) gave a famous speech in September 1966 in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) in which he publicly expressed France's disapproval of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Also, he recommended that the U.S. should withdraw from Vietnam to bring peace to the region.

⁴⁵³ Botschaftsrat Hoffmann an das Auswärtige Amt vom 6. Februar 1967, AAPD, 1967, Nr. 378, S. 233f, cited accordingly to Joachim Scholtyseck, *op.cit.*, S. 436, quotation 83.

⁴⁵⁴ *Neues Deutschland*, 24. Oktober 1965.

the rising protests of the West German public against the American war in Vietnam and the so-called “neo-colonialism” of West Germany.⁴⁵⁵

In conclusion, international events in the late 1940s and early 1950s were the most important factors in making Germany re-define its position in Europe. However, the West German government and political parties saw the collapse of France when its colonial ambitions were taken over by the Japanese in 1940. Historical experiences in WW II allowed West German leaders to observe an emerging Asia and the unavoidable decolonization process of the French empire when, in the late 1940s, some other colonized nations in South-east Asia had been granted independence by the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands. Also, West Germany appreciated that: if Europe were not united, a new world order in which newly independent Asian and African countries were emerging as the Third World would be unfavorable for Europe. Therefore, European integration would be the most important solution for Western European nations to balance power within the new order.

In the course of the following Algerian war and the total decolonization of France and some other European empires in the years that followed, the West German political elites and the public’s view on colonization and decolonization changed profoundly. Cooperation with freshly independent countries by offering development aid and investing were key tools for the federal state to promote West Germany’s position in the international arena. Taking advantage of its economic power, up to 1969 the FRG’s development aid policy include 90 countries widely spread from Asian to African countries such as: Morocco and Tunisia, Ghana, Tanzania, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand and Afghanistan.⁴⁵⁶ It is necessary to note here that in most cases, West German development aid policies, whether economical or political, in

⁴⁵⁵ For further research on the protest movements in West Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s, please see: Frank Werkmeister, *Die Protestbewegung gegen den Vietnamkrieg in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1965 bis 1973*, PhD dissertation, 1975.

⁴⁵⁶ *Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic in the Third World, Inter-economics No. 5*, 1971, p. 160.

Africa or Asia, were long-term and sustainable. The West German development aid policy proved the fact that, the federal state always showed its pledges tied to the Western world not only in lifestyle but also in democratic ideology. West German development aid to newly independent countries in Africa and Asia were also evidence of its generosity in sharing its own experiences in the course of the country's reconstruction.

In spite of that, West Germany was pragmatic enough to invest in those countries because it foresaw that it would not have to strongly compete with others for influence. Although West German leaders had dreamed of regaining African colonial possessions, what they had experienced during the Third Reich and the on-going international affairs taught them that pursuing nationalism and colonial ambitions was old-fashioned and unrealistic. They fully understood that former colonies were now UN Trust Territories.⁴⁵⁷ In the second Indochina War, West German foreign policy proved flexible enough to balance its relations with other Western powers. Providing funds while disapproving of sending troops to South Vietnam depicted the way that West German foreign policy corresponded to increasing problems in a new world order.

6.2.4. The emergence of the New Left in the FRG

Looking back at the history of the New Left (*die Neue Linke*) in the FRG after WW II, one can link it to the social and peace movements outside parliament - the extra-parliamentary opposition (*Außenparlamentarische Opposition* - APO) in the 1960s. The peace movement actually emerged in the 1950s and was initially supported by the SPD.⁴⁵⁸ An early purpose of the movement was to protest against

⁴⁵⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, articles 73, 74.

⁴⁵⁸ The German New Left, originally advocated by the SPD, was a broad movement and became a prominent social movement in the 1960s. Its political dimensions were neutral, anti-Western integration, anti-German rearmament; more exactly, it pursued "a third way": non-communism and non-capitalism. After the death of the SPD leader Schumacher in 1952, a younger generation of SPD members realized that it was isolated from the post-war German political mainstream. At the Party Congress in 1959 in Bad Godesberg the SPD renewed its program and decided on: non-Marxism, and to not longer neutral in political dimensions in the new context of the Cold War.

the deployment of nuclear weapon systems in West Germany, followed by remilitarization and West German membership within NATO from 1955 (the *ohne mich Bewegung*). From 1960, a new peace movement, the “Easter March Against Nuclear Arms” (*Ostermarsch der Atomwaffengegner*), another model of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, was formed mainly by Christian pacifists, and participation of the communists was not welcomed. Demonstrations were organized yearly from Good Friday to Easter Monday with an increasing number of participants year on year, for instance, from 1,000 demonstrators in 1960 to 150,000 in 1968.⁴⁵⁹

After 1965, the goals of the movement were expanded from opposing the U.S. deployment of tactical nuclear weapon systems on West German soil to the defense of democracy and peace. West German public opinion was again provoked by the federal government and parliament’s preparation of the draft of the Emergency Laws (*Notstandsgesetze*), and by the Grand Coalition (*Große Koalition*) of the CDU and the SPD in 1966, which, according to public opinion, threatened democracy and peace. The extra-parliamentary opposition thus became important in its social reactions to the policies made by the control of 95% of the

This led to the separation of some dissidents who in accordance with the Christian pacifists formed the German Peace Union (*Deutsche Friedensunion*) in 1960. It aimed to mobilize neutralists, pacifists, reactionary conservatives and communists in a single front but refused to engage in any socio-economic issues. Although the German Peace Union also backed the APO peace movements, it was not seen as a “new Left party” due to its ideological heterogeneity, however. For details of the developments of the German Left after WW II, please see: William David Graf, *The German Left since 1945 – Socialism and Social Democracy in the German Federal Republic*, The Oleander Press, 1976 and some other basic works: Guido Grünewald (Hrsg.), *Nieder die Waffen: Hundert Jahre Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft (1892-1992)*, Donat Verlag Bremen, 1992; Uli Jäger, Michael Schmidt-Vöhninger, *Wir werden nicht Ruhe geben – Die Friedensbewegung in der BRD 1945-1982: Geschichte, Dokumente, Perspektiven*, Verein für Friedenspädagogik Tübingen, 1982; Hans. Pestalozzi, Ralf Schlegel, Adolf Bachmann (Hrsg.), *Frieden in Deutschland – Die Friedensbewegung: wie sie wurde, was sie ist, was sie werden kann*, Wilhelm Godlmann Verlag, 1982; Jürgen Meiermeister, Jochen Staadt (Hrsg u. eingeleitet), *Provokationen: Die Studenten und Jugendrevolte in ihren Flugblättern 1965-1971*, Sammlung Luchterhand, 1980.

⁴⁵⁹ Uli Jäger, Michael Schmidt-Vöhninger, *op.cit.*, S. 26.

coalition in the Bundestag. One of the most crucial components of the APO was the German student movement organized under the organ of the Socialist German Student League (*Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund* - SDS). Together with other social movements of university professors, churches, workers, feminists, and trade unions, the SDS played a leading role in those social movements in the second half of the 1960s.

Rapid post-war changes in economics and culture, and other international occurrences around the world, were viewed as the basis for the New Left (the first stage of the establishment of the APO). They held the older generation responsible for the Nazi regime, and for the decline of the West German economic miracle. The American engagement in the Vietnam War coupled with its intention to deploy nuclear weapon systems on West German soil, as well as the lower living conditions of the newly decolonized countries in the Third World etc. were also seen as reasons for protest. Under these circumstances, the initial goals of the APO were: to alter current society in order to safeguard democracy, which at the time was being threatened by the Emergency Laws; to investigate the extent of the denazification of the country; to reform the curriculum applied at universities; to protest the American imperialistic foreign policy expressed by its engagement in the war in Vietnam.

In accordance with the student peace movement, which was the core actor in the APO, other social movements fueled and led by the German Peace Society⁴⁶⁰ (*Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft*) and War Resisters' International⁴⁶¹ (*Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner*) also performed by their own means. After the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964, those two organizations explicitly declared their support for the Viet Cong and called on the Americans to stop the "illegal, dirty and cruel" war. They went further, demanding that the involved

⁴⁶⁰ The German Peace Society (*Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft* - DFG) was allowed to reform from November 1945 in the British occupational zone. By 1947, there were 35,000 members only in the British and American occupational zones. See more: Guido Grünewald, *op.cit.*, S.139-140.

⁴⁶¹ It was founded in Hamburg in 1947 as a successor of the *Bund der Kriegsdienstgegner*.

partners respect and negotiate on the basis of the Geneva Agreement and stop bombing the North.⁴⁶²

To sum up, the New Left movement's activities were not fruitful. It was unofficially disbanded in 1968⁴⁶³ not just because of severe suppression by the police but mainly due to a variety of reasons, of which the lack of a central doctrine and theoretical unity were blamed as the ones. Historians may argue that pursuing many goals simultaneously caused the limitations of the APO. Activists and their leaders did not know how to choose their main targets among neo-Nazi opposition, protest against capitalism and imperialism, peace maintenance, or environment protection, or individualism liberation and so on.

Despite the decline of the peace movement, it is commonly accepted that the movement itself was a wide social evolution in post-war Germany attracting varied social classes. The ups and downs of the APO in the 1950s and 1960s were evidence of enormous changes in society after the foundation of the federal state and had influences on West German public opinion in the following years. Those changes in the social classes might not have occurred if there were no activities stemming from the political peace movement outside the parliament. In turn, one may say that the peace movement would not have been started and directed by the New Leftists without the politically and economically profound impact of what was happening inside and outside the federal state. Within a global historical context, the second Indochina War may be seen as an extension of the first one.

⁴⁶² On this issue, please refer to the speech given by Rudi Dutschke, the leader and spokesman of the SDS at the International Conference on Vietnam on 17 and 18 February 1968 at the TU Berlin, printed in: Jürgen Miermeister und Jochen Staadt (Hrsg u. eingeleitet), *op.cit.*, S.112.

⁴⁶³ By late 1968, radical students and activists felt that the movement would have been more successful if it had been better organized and equipped by a Leninist vanguard. Many of them joined the German Communist Party (*Deutsche Kommunistische Partei*) – a re-emerged party of the previous communist party called *Kommunistische Partei Deutschland* to form the New Leftists which later joined the youth organization of the SPD (Jungsozialisten). This organization called for the democratization of all parts of the society including economy, school, public service, family, and political parties.

Finally, the decolonization process with its visible consequences greatly affected the West German public understanding at the time and in the following years.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The contemporary world history in the 20th century witnessed a series of great upheavals. Therefore, explaining the entangled histories of the world in general and Europe in particular has become a central topic for scholars. In my thesis, by giving an explanation to postcolonial theory, I have made an attempt to interpret the global entangled histories. The French Indochina War was studied as a case in this perspective to explore the the interconnections between the war and its outcomes and the relation between France and Germany in the second half the 20th century. I have demonstrated that the successful fight for national independence in the colonized world on the one hand and loss of colonial empires and the modernization of the European societies on the other hand are not two different processes, but they are interconnected, and least even the same, with different consequences for the former colonizers and the colonized, of course.

After WW II, a new world order was established. The significant events of the contemporary world history including two world wars and the Cold War were characterized by the competition for world influence between the U.S. and the SU. The emergence of the Cold War, during which the two fierce wars in Indochina and Korea broke out in late the 1940s and early 1950s, profoundly changed the power balance of the world's politics. Also, the threat of Soviet expansionism and the Suez crisis in 1956 demonstrated the fact that France and Great Britain had to reconsider their regional and global role when their imperial powers were on the decline.

This thesis has examined the relations between France and West Germany as well as their intervention in the first Indochina War in the historical context of the contemporary world. These countries have had a significant influence on the global politics on the one hand, and the political relations between themselves on the other. In Europe, a geo-political union has founded the European Union upon numerous treaties and has undergone expansions to include the majority of states in Europe. Its origins date back to the post-WW II era, in particular the foundation

of the ECSC in 1951, following the Schuman declaration, or the Treaties of Rome establishing the EEC and the EURATOM. These issues have been discussed in previous chapters.

With its unconditional surrender in May 1945, Germany reached the end of WW II in great failure. Within the first years after WW II, varied and conflicting policies implemented in the different occupational zones led to the formation of the two German states in 1949. Nevertheless, the FRG did not enjoy full sovereignty until 1955. Consequently, in the formative period of the state, formulation and implementation of domestic and foreign policies were limited.

A ruined Germany in postwar Europe seeking a path of peace and prosperity did not allow West Germany to continue making such reckless and aggressive military policies. Learning from the past and the continuous changes of the political situation all over the world, the Bonn government realized that international conflicts should be resolved peacefully. Dealing with conflicts by violence, as exemplified by France in Indochina and Algeria or elsewhere all over the world, was definitely not the best method. These evaluations were entirely consistent with the legitimate and reasonable aspirations of the West Germans according to how they viewed the first Indochina War and how they portrayed it via the press and other media.

In the meantime, France was still interested in colonial war in Indochina after 1945. With its total defeat at Dien Bien Phu, France's target of recolonizing Vietnam had failed. After the end of WW II, while Germany was still in ruins, many young Germans were forced to leave their homes to join the Foreign Legion and France's war in Vietnam. It was also an adventure and a new home for those who were trying to escape the chaos and rubble of post-war Germany. Many were combat veterans from the army and recruited straight from prisoner of war camps after the defeat of Germany. But many uprooted and disoriented younger men whose homes and families had been lost were also attracted by the chance of a new start as well as good food and pay. Highly regarded by the French for their discipline and bravery, Germans made up over half of the FFL units in Indochina who bore much of the heaviest fighting against the communist Vietminh forces of

Ho Chi Minh. In his book *Hell in a Very Small Place: the Siege of Dien Bien Phu*, Bernard B. Fall portrays a guerrilla force of Viet Minh destroying a technologically superior French army. He opines that there is a myth of Dien Bien Phu as a “German battle” in which the Germans were said to make up “nearly half of the French forces.”⁴⁶⁴

Modern world history has been shaped by decolonization and continues to be so. The 19th and 20th centuries also experienced the process of decolonization. In 1945, WW II was ended. The next thirty years were to see rapid disintegration of the European empires and the creation of many new independent states. The most dramatic wave of decolonization was concentrated in the period from 1918 to the 1960s, notably after WW II when more than fifty countries with over 800 million people gained independence from European rule. Since the 1990s, the breakup of the SU’s “empire” of satellite states has dramatically changed European and wider international relations and left the U.S. as the only global superpower. The reasons why France decolonized and the effects of the decolonization process on former colonizers like France has been the focus of this study.

Regarding the problem of decolonization, there have been a large number of research works and writings. The issue still remains important for scholars and historians nowadays. Not until 1954 did the French colonial empire collapse. Actually, the French empire started to fall during WW II. This was marked by the fact that many colonies of France were occupied by other foreign powers such as the Japanese in Indochina, the British in Syria, Lebanon and Madagascar, the Americans in Morocco and Algeria and so on. However, clarification of the connection between decolonization and European integration is still rare, especially using the case study of the first Indochina War and that process.

In the case of France, the country was heavily involved in Vietnam from the middle of the 19th century. France was another great imperial power who

⁴⁶⁴ Bernard B. Fall, *Hell in a very small place – The Siege of Dien Bien Phu*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1996, p. 451.

decolonized after WW II although its reasons and methods were quite different from those of Britain. Whereas the British realized the colonies were beginning to become a burden, the French believed they had to re-assert their national prestige by keeping control of their colonies. It can be understood that the French experience of decolonization was somewhat the same to Britain's.⁴⁶⁵ The legacy of British colonialism is also not the best; however.⁴⁶⁶ France fought two costly and bloody wars over its colonies.

The first was in Indochina, which had been under French rule since the middle of the 19th century. During WW II, the status of a defeated France meant that it was unable to keep its own colonies. Thus, Indochina, for instance, was invaded and occupied by the Japanese. During this time a group called the Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh fought a guerrilla war against the Japanese. At the end of WW II the French intended to retake control of Indochina but before they could the Vietminh declared independence.

In 1946, the states of French Indochina withdrew from the Union. After many negotiations with the ruler of the DRV, Ho Chi Minh, throughout the year 1946, the first Indochina War broke out as a result and lasted nine years. Dien

⁴⁶⁵ Prior to 1939, major differences between the British and French decolonization were the methods with which they were carried out: indirect versus direct rule. British control over India collapsed during WW II and the British were neither able nor willing to enforce it again. With the loss of India, Britain was deprived of its main colonial resource, the manpower of India. The British Commonwealth was not always successful in gaining its political and economic power by influencing the members; and not all of its former colonies joined the community. During its existence, it has had to adjust strategies to meet its members' interests.

⁴⁶⁶ However, Britain's decolonization did not always create better situations for its former colonies, as Palestine can be seen as one of these cases: Britain was forced to leave Mandatory Palestine in 1948. The future of the place was passed to the UN. Directive 181/II promulgated in November 1947 by the UN marked the end of the British administration there. Due to a lack of well-planned strategies for the region, violence broke out before and after the establishment of the two separate states, one for the Jews and another for the Arabs. Nearly one million Arab refugees had to escape from the conflicts which continue to this day. See more: John Springhall, *op.cit.*, pp. 81-87. Other occurrences in newly-decolonized countries such as in India, Pakistan, large parts of Africa, South Africa, Malaya, Burma, Sri Lanka, Iran and others proved that fact.

Bien Phu was the decisive point of the war with an armistice being signed soon after. From 1954 onwards, the world witnessed a wave of decolonization and the independence of many colonized countries in Asia and Africa. Many countries of the two continents founded a non-alignment bloc, a specific organization of the Third World.⁴⁶⁷

At the same time, the reconstruction of Western Europe after the war required all the continental states' efforts to unify in order to build a common market in which France, Great Britain and West Germany were strongly expected to be key players. Great Britain strongly supported the ideas of European unification. However, it was still reluctant to join in such a move. One of the reasons for this was the French objection to the inclusion of former parts of the empire. Meanwhile, France determined to regain prestige by conquering Indochina, which had been its traditional colony for more than eighty years.

⁴⁶⁷ Non-alignment is an international organization consisting of Asian and African countries. This was established in April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia. Representatives of the Bandung Conference came from newly independent countries of Africa and Asia. The conference's aims were to promote Afro-Asian cooperation in economics and culture. This organization also opposed any kind of colonialism and neocolonialism. For more details on the conference and the non-aligned movement, see also: Jamie Mackie, *Bandung 1955: Non-alignment and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2005.



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Picture 12: Panorama of the opening session of the
Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung 1955

Before the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, France had to manage the Indochina War on its own. In China, the communist takeover by Chiang Kai-shek and the foundation of the Mao Tse-tung-led government proved that the communist threat in Asia was becoming more evident. Under these circumstances, “Indochina nevertheless remained the most vulnerable to Communist attack and the key to the recovery of France and the reintegration of West Germany.”⁴⁶⁸ As time went on after 1950, France gradually had to rely on American financial and military assistance. This dependence suggested that France was conducting a proxy war to prevent the communism expansion in Asia; and that must be counted as the French contribution to the Western protection of the world from the menace of communism.

France recognized that the prevailing mood could not be denied entirely and created a French-associated government in Saigon, the “State of Vietnam”, in

⁴⁶⁸ Andrew J. Rotter, *The path to Vietnam: Origins of the American Commitment to the Southeast Asia*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University, 1987, p. 209.

order to deal with the Vietminh and their comrades. However, the State of Vietnam led by former emperor Bao Dai was in fact no more than a “paper regime”. Unsurprisingly, French arguments coincided with the U.S. policy in the early 1950s. Unfortunately, we may see that the Americans missed a lot of chances in understanding and setting up diplomatic ties with the government of Ho after the foundation of the DRV in 1945.⁴⁶⁹ Being aware of remarkable events in Asia from late 1949, the Eisenhower administration shifted their global strategies when they saw that Indochina must be considered top priority in security policy.

What is more, in some ways, Indochina could be considered more important than Korea because of its strategic geographical and political location in Asia. The Eisenhower administration went further, as they believed “the consequences of loss there could not be localized, but would spread throughout Asia and Europe.”⁴⁷⁰ During the first phase of the conflict, an uneasy peace punctuated by low level fighting continued while negotiations were conducted between the two sides. Those efforts were to try to resolve the issue peacefully before the Vietminh seized the initiative and launched another surprise offensive. The French fought back hard. After that, the story of the first Indochina War was one of ever-escalating and intensifying conflicts. When the Chinese Communists won the Civil War against the Guomintang on the Chinese mainland, they also committed forces to supplement the USSR’s (covert) aid to the Vietminh as they felt the communist bloc should be responsible for the liberation of the remaining colonized nations. Standing beside the Vietminh in combat against French colonialists were several large left-wing nationalist groups (Pathet Lao, Khmer Issarak, United Issarak Front).

⁴⁶⁹ Details on the issue please see more: Archimedes L.A. Patti, *Why Vietnam? Prelude to America’s Albatross*, Danang Publishing House, 2000.

⁴⁷⁰ US Department of State, *FRUS 1952-1954*, Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, vol. 13 – Indochina, John Foster Dulles memorandum of conversation with Eisenhower, March 24, 1953, p. 419.

The nine-year long war of France in Indochina against the Giap's guerrilla forces was ended in 1954 after a decisive battle in the Dien Bien Phu valley where the pride of the French traditional army was bitterly defeated. In this research, the ways in which the first Indochina War affected France, West Germany and Europe in general have been analyzed. Also, the attitudes of the German federal government under the leadership of Dr. Konrad Adenauer and the West German public view on the Indochina War were discussed. The most direct involvement of Germany in the Indochina conflict was German service in the FFL in Indochina (and in Algeria later on).

It can be said that the French colonial war in Indochina sometimes caused the Adenauer government embarrassment, as it forced them to address two main problems: *firstly*, the official attitude proclaimed by the federal government towards the conflict; *secondly*, German military service, especially minors in the FFL in Indochinese jungles. The Adenauer government did not state its official position on the war until the end of April 1954, nearly at the end of the Dien Bien Phu battle. Notwithstanding, Adenauer's statement should not necessarily be understood as a statement of support from the federal state for France's colonial interests in Indochina, but rather for the Western world in general in a bid to prevent the spread of communism at global level. This declaration was wisely given only when the Indochina War became internationalized with the increasing interference of the U.S.

Regarding the issue of German participation in the FFL in Indochina, under great pressure from public opinion via the press and other media, Adenauer was forced to cooperate with the French authority in the occupied zone. Unfortunately, the results of these moves were inadequate. Thus, public concerns seemed not to be fully satisfied. Until now, although much research has been done on the issue, the exact number of young Germans in the FFL in Indochina remains unknown.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ Until 1950, French official statements from Paris estimated the number of enlisted Germans at only 5,000 in total; three years later this rose to 18,000. However, this number has been treated

It can be argued that decolonization occurred for a number of different reasons. These reasons include the fact that the cost of maintaining colonial ties with countries outweighed the benefits of those ties. In Britain this was realized soon after the war but in France not until de Gaulle returned to power in 1958. Another reason for decolonization was the progress of the colonized people in the colonies who were constantly demanding their own independence and self-determination. The outcomes for the former colonies were different from one another. They depended greatly on the way in which they were decolonized. Many were unprepared for independence and suffered from many challenges in country governance from democracy to military dictatorship. However, there were some, and India or Vietnam represents examples, which prospered through independence. As has been mentioned before India prospered from independence whereas Indochina particularly Vietnam spent many years at war with the Americans after they were granted independence.

In this final chapter of the thesis it is also important to mention again the published sources relating to the impacts of the first Indochina War on the FRG. In some documents, the attitudes of the FRG towards the first Indochina War have been published. The Federal Republic was also concerned by the Indochina War because the fate of the European military integration project, the EDC, was to some extent linked with the outcome of that war. Unfortunately, the EDC project was killed by the French just over three months after the fall of Dien Bien Phu. Many factors have been blamed for the death of the plan, among which was the fear of a re-emergent German *Wehrmacht*. But in my own research, I have found that one of the main reasons was the fact that France's pride and identity were totally compromised by the military defeat at Dien Bien Phu. Nevertheless, the failure of the EDC plan did not prevent West Germany from becoming a member of NATO in that same year. The European integration process did not stumble; on the contrary, France's Eurocentric adjustments accelerated this process.

with suspicion by historians so far. See also: Jason Verber, *op.cit.*, p. 87 and Paul Bonnrcarrere, *Frankreichs fremde Söhne*, Motorbuch Verlag Stuttgart, 1974, S. 5.

French decolonization in Indochina along with other significant events in Asia and the Middle East like the Suez crisis afterwards had great impacts on Europe as a whole and West Germany specifically. French withdrawal from Asia signalled the chain collapse of the French colonial system in Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Also, the end of French colonial rule in Indochina in 1954 marked a turning point for the decolonization process of the European powers. More importantly, this process did affect very significantly the West German perspective on colonialism and decolonization alike, especially because the war in Indochina became a huge media event.

Impacts of the first Indochina War and decolonization process together with the Western integration agenda required West Germany to re-define its strategic policies in the new world order, in which the absolute polarization between the two super powers was over. Those policies aimed to speed up the European integration process and to expand diplomatic relations with newly decolonized countries (or Third World countries) in Asia and Africa through vital means of development aid programs. The European unification movement intensified by the Suez crisis convinced the Adenauer government of the fact that Europe must be less dependent on the U.S. Accordingly, the Treaty of Rome in 1957 gave birth to the EEC and EURATOM marking a further integration of Western Europe.

The first Indochina War, the European decolonization, the European integration process, as well as remarkable coincidences in the 1950s and 1960s brought West Germany many valuable lessons. They can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, one lesson learnt was with the need to re-conciliate with France. In Europe, reconciliation with France was one of the most important targets and results of the federal state. The Élysée Treaty of 1963 terminated the long period of hostility and opened up a new stage for long-term cooperation between the two countries. The Franco-German rapprochement marked a very notable point in modern German diplomatic history. Based on the tandem relationship, West Germany defined and developed its strategic foreign policies towards Europe and

the world. The successful model of the present-day EU is definitely an excellent exemplar of such cooperation.

Secondly, it was the West German government which directed the strategy of firm integration into Western institutions. Regional economic integration originally stemming from the formation and operation of the ECSC demonstrated that West German foreign policies in the 1950s and thereafter were basically built on its geo-politics and geo-economics ideals. The successful model of this economic organization reminds us of the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his belief that the signing of the ECSC started a new stage of European history.⁴⁷² Additionally, the establishment of the ECSC, in his mind, would “not only change the economic relations of our continent, but also the whole thinking and political sensibility of European people.”⁴⁷³ However, the most crucial aspect of the ECSC was that it “satisfied German national aspirations for equality of treatment... and helped bind the young republic into the Atlantic alliance.”⁴⁷⁴

West German membership in NATO several months after the failure of a supranational military structure (the EDC) and its military reactions to international conflicts afterwards proved the fact that West Germany only pursued military goals to ensure its national security, not those of aggression. In 1966, in a Peace Note, Germany even suggested not using force to shape a peaceful order in Europe.

The signing of the Rome Treaty two years later to form the EEC and EURATOM confirmed the will and determination of the Bonn government to integrate into Western institutions in both economics and atomic energy. The important changes in foreign relations at this time are also reflected by the West German policy of expanding relations with East European countries via *Ostpolitik*

⁴⁷² Konrad Adenauer, *Erinnerungen 1945-1953*, Deutsche Verlag Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1965, S. 423.

⁴⁷³ Konrad Adenauer, *op.cit.*, S. 426.

⁴⁷⁴ Jonathan Story, *Europe in the global state and market system*, in: Jonathan Story (ed.), *The New Europe – Politics, Governments and Economy since 1945*, Blackwell Publishers, 1993, p. 23.

in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For example, as early as 1967, West Germany established diplomatic relations with Romania and Czechoslovakia at the level of establishing trade representation offices in the capitals of the two countries. Another important event was the German national reconciliation on 21 October 1969, when the FRG officially recognized the GDR as the second German state on German soil. In summary, West German achievements in economic, political and diplomatic fields in the 1950s and 1960s were vital prerequisites for the developments in the decades that followed.

Thirdly, the decolonization process brought the federal state an opportunity to define its foreign policies towards newly independent states in Africa and Asia. One of the central points of the West German strategic policies was to return to Africa, especially to South West Africa. However, these approaches were absolutely different from what the German empire had done prior to WW I. The social challenges of post-war Germany, for example the fact that millions of Germans were expelled from its former Eastern territories, growing numbers of emigrants from the Eastern part of Germany, etc., forced the Federal Republic to seek another kind of “*lebensraum*”. Therefore, its former colonies became the West German leaders’ choice for this. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that under the flexible and practical leadership of Dr. Konrad Adenauer, the West German government acted as if it was really an anti-colonial state.⁴⁷⁵

Like many Asian countries in the late 1940s or 1950s, many African countries were newly independent ones. Also, in the context of the Cold War as well as the diplomatic conflicts between the two German states based on the Ulbricht and Hallstein doctrines, West Germany chose to return to Africa as its first priority in a bid to increase its international prestige and to become an equal member in the world scene. In this way, the federal state hoped to gain international recognition as the unique legal representative for the whole German nation. In some certain ways, there were some similarities between African and Asian countries and West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s. They were all newly

⁴⁷⁵ Jason Verber, *op.cit.*, p. 160.

independent states, and they all sought international recognition and relations. However, the main differences between them were that the African and Asian countries were less developed, and therefore mainly sought to develop their economies. Meanwhile, West Germany was much more prosperous, but sought international political influence. Some researchers might argue (and might be right) that with its economic advantages, West Germany undertook so-called “civilizing missions” in these under-developed countries. They also defended that with development aid policy, a tool employed by West German politicians in Africa, Asia and some other countries, West Germany dreamed of keeping up with American developmental politics and to improve its standing *vis-à-vis* the U.S.⁴⁷⁶

West German economic cooperation and development aid policies in Africa mostly took the form of investing large amounts of capital in order to exploit African raw materials to serve the economic promotion of West Germany on the one hand. Africa would also be a huge market for West German products on the other. In turn, with financial and technical assistance programs, African countries would also have much more favorable conditions for economic development and the improvement of their quality of life.

With regard to Asia and Indochina, the eclipse of the European colonial powers in the continent like France, Great Britain and the Netherlands, continued by the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, had great impacts on Europe in the 1950s and thereafter.⁴⁷⁷ In this context, West Germany had to focus on dealing with regional and national issues such as rearmament and reunification. The issue of rearmament and the strategy of the Western allies’ deployment of tactical weapons on West German soil fueled the most crucial peace movements which

⁴⁷⁶ For further arguments on the matter, see also: Corinna R. Unger, *op.cit.*, pp. 153-154.

⁴⁷⁷ Jean Pierre Lehmann, *Japan and Europe in global perspective*, in: (ed.) Jonathan Story, *op.cit.*, p. 123. For more discussions on the decline and departures of France in Asia and some other European colonial powers like Portugal and Great Britain in Africa, see also: Jussi M. Hanhimäki *et al.*, (ed.), *The Cold War – A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 209.

attracted hundreds of thousands of people during the late 1950s and 1960s. These uprisings also marked the emergence of the New Left movement in West Germany which greatly influenced West German political and social life in that period and even in the years that followed. It was seen as the fourth lesson learnt for the FRG.

At the same time, West Germany had to determine and adjust its diplomatic strategies in Asian countries, especially in Indochina after the retreat of the European colonial empires in the region. However, the involvement of the U.S. in the second Indochina War put Germany into a dilemma again. Sometimes, it caused embarrassing problems of how to balance its relations with major countries in the region and across the Atlantic (Western Europe and the U.S.). Finally, Germany opted to show moderate attitudes and behaviors towards the second Indochina War. In a government declaration on 28 October 1969, federal Chancellor Willy Brandt announced: “We unite with all tormented countries in the hope that the Vietnam War will finally be ended through a political solution that can be approved by all the parties involved. We re-affirm our willingness to participate in the reconstruction of the two ruined sides.”⁴⁷⁸ (*Wir vereinigen uns mit allen Staaten und nicht zuletzt mit den gequälten, betroffenen Menschen in dem Wunsch, daß der Krieg in Vietnam endlich beendet wird durch eine politische Lösung, die von allen Beteiligten gebilligt werden kann. Wir bekräftigen unsere Bereitschaft, am Wiederaufbau beider zerstörter Landesteile mitzuwirken.*)

Lessons drawn from the first Indochina War and rapid political changes in the international system helped West Germany understand that, even under pressure from the U.S., the most reliable ally of West Germany in NATO, direct involvement in the American war would not be a wise strategy for the Bonn government.⁴⁷⁹ West German leaders, in this case, acted according to what the

⁴⁷⁸ Auswärtiges Amt, *Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Dokumente von 1949 bis 1994*, Köln, 1995, S. 332.

⁴⁷⁹ U.S.’s other allies like Australia, Thailand and South Korea sent their troops to side with the Americans in the second Vietnam War.

vast majority of the West German population wanted: 90% of people questioned in a poll objected to the idea of sending West German troops to Vietnam. Furthermore, in an interview in 1966 Konrad Adenauer publicly expressed his opinion that the U.S. should withdraw from Vietnam.⁴⁸⁰ As analyzed in the previous chapters, West German development aid policy for developing countries in Africa and Asia was one of West Germany's diplomatic tools in the years from the mid-1950s onwards.⁴⁸¹ Looking back at the activities of West German development assistance in South Vietnam, we can see that they were purely civilian and humanitarian despite the fact that in the West German press, the real purposes of this aid operation were doubted. The Helgoland hospital ship was an excellent example of West German humanitarian activity in central Vietnam in the 1960s.⁴⁸²

In conclusion, the first Indochina War, European decolonization and the European integration process in the late 1950s had great impacts on West German political and social life. The consequences of those changes in the world order created for West Germany both opportunities and challenges in policy making. The most fundamental problems that West Germany had to deal with were to balance its national interests (national unification) and define its relations with the West (Western integration). West German leaders fully acknowledged that further Western integration would widen the gap between the two German states. However, the federal state opted to accept this reality but set priorities for each period. *Westpolitik* in the 1950s and 1960s, and *Ostpolitik* since the 1970s proved

⁴⁸⁰ Troche Alexander, *op.cit.*, pp. 355-358.

⁴⁸¹ West German development aid to Vietnam was the second largest, after the U.S. See more, Gerhard Will, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

⁴⁸² The Helgoland hospital ship operated by the West German Red Cross was sent to the central province of Danang (South Vietnam) in 1966 in the American war. Its mission was to rescue civilian victims of the war, no matter who they were. In 1972, it was found that the Helgoland hospital ship had rescued many Viet Cong; as a result, the Saigon government decided not to allow the ship to continue its operations in South Vietnam.

the pragmatism and realism of West German foreign policy in the last century.⁴⁸³

Vietnam and Germany in the past shared many common features in their historical partition, warfare and unification. During the Cold War, both Vietnam and Germany were main frontier states and strongly affected by the two opposing ideologies. Although they are fundamentally different from each other in the organization of the state, political system, level of development, etc., those common points in history have attracted researchers of varied disciplines, e.g., history, political science, sociology. The first Indochina War may thus be regarded as my first research on the inter-connections between this theme and the issues of European decolonization as well as the European integration process. Certainly, further and deeper study on this topic should be conducted in future since it would open up more routes or other outlooks on the relations between the conflicts in Asia in the 20th century and the changes in Europe in the modern period of world history. Although colonialism and decolonization are now buried in most parts the world, their ghosts still haunt us in a large number of countries. Although these colonial countries have achieved independence, decolonization and its connections with the history of European unification still remain interesting issues for current and future research.

⁴⁸³ Comments on West German achievements in the field of foreign policy see also: Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *The Foreign policies of West Germany, France and Britain*, Prentice Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| APO | Außenparlamentarische Opposition Extra parliamentary opposition |
| CCG/BE | Conseil de Controle de la France pour l'Allemagne Control Council of France to Germany |
| CDU/CSU | Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union |
| CPV | Communist Party of Vietnam |
| CSSR | Czechoslovak Socialist Republic |
| DRV | Democratic Republic of Vietnam |
| DS | Der Stern |
| DZ | Die Zeit |
| ECSC | European Coal and Steel Community |
| EDC | European Defense Community |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EURATOM | European Atomic Energy Community |
| FAZ | Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung |
| FDP | Freie Demokratische Partei Free Democratic Party |
| FFL | French Foreign Legion |
| FRG | Federal Republic of Germany |
| FRUS | Foreign Relations of the United States |

| | |
|-------|---|
| GDR | German Democratic Republic |
| NAC | North Atlantic Council |
| KPD | Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands Communist Party of Germany |
| OMGUS | Office of Military Government U.S. zone |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| SED | Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands Socialist Unity Party of Germany |
| SMAD | Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland Soviet Military Administration in Germany |
| SPD | Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands Social Democratic Party of Germany |
| SS | Schutzstaffel Protection Squadron |
| SU | Soviet Union |
| SZ | Süddeutsche Zeitung |
| UN | United Nations |
| U.S. | United States |
| WEU | Western European Union |
| WW I | World War I |
| WW II | World War II |

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+ *Prime Minister Secretariat*: Dossier codes: 1715, 1735, 1750, 1773, 1840, and 1846.

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- Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung

+ *Der Stern*: 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954.

+ *Die Zeit*: 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954.

+ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*: 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954.

+ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954.

- Auswärtiges Amt

+ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, B 11, Bd 780, 781, 783, 784, 786, 1431, 1432, 1433.

+ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Abteilung 2, Bd 367.

- Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv (Frankfurt am Main)

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Dao Duc Thuan.