



Meeting at Moscow

EARLY in the morning of March 5, 1947, Marshall and his personal staff left Washington by plane for Paris. After refueling stops in Bermuda and the Azores, the plane touched down at Orly just after noon on the following day. The group was met by the U.S. Ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, who had invited the Secretary to stay at the official residence, along with Colonel Marshall Carter, Charles Bohlen, and orderly Richard Wing, on his last trip with Marshall before leaving the Army.¹

Others of the United States delegation were en route by other planes to Moscow. The delegation included: Benjamin Cohen, counselor of the State Department, who would have the daily task of coordinating American views for each meeting, and H. Freeman Matthews, director of the Office of European Affairs. Not long before leaving for Europe, Marshall had added a man of whom he had heard much but whom he had not previously met. Senator Vandenberg had declined Marshall's invitation to go with the delegation to Moscow because of the pressure of his duties at the time. When Marshall asked if he would like to suggest someone else to represent him, Vandenberg said it was not necessary to appoint anyone to represent the Republican majority in the Senate, but if the Secretary thought it proper, John Foster Dulles of New York would be a good man. Marshall talked with Dulles at the State Department and suggested he fly ahead to Paris and Berlin.²

Dulles was well equipped to represent his party and his country. Grandson of President Benjamin Harrison's Secretary of State, John W. Foster, and nephew of Wilson's Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, Dulles had been counsel to the American Commission to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and a member of the Reparations Commission. Later, he attended the 1933 conference that

dealt with the German war debt. In 1945, he was a member of the U.S. delegation at the San Francisco meeting that established the United Nations organization. He was an adviser to Secretary Byrnes at the Conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London after the war and served as U.S. representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations as early as 1946. Son of a Presbyterian minister, he had strong convictions on right and wrong which led him to favor a high moral tone in foreign policy.³

Particularly important to Marshall at Moscow and at later conferences was Charles Bohlen. Born in New York State in 1904, Bohlen was a grandson of James B. Eustis, one-time Senator from Louisiana and the first Ambassador to France after the post had been elevated from a ministry to an ambassadorship. Bohlen had decided on a career in the Foreign Service three years after completing his A.B. at Harvard, in 1927. After two years in Prague as vice consul, Bohlen went to Paris to study Russian for two and a half years. Once the United States had recognized the Soviet Union, U.S. Ambassador William Bullitt selected Bohlen as an Embassy staff member. He served at the Embassy in Moscow under First Secretary Loy Henderson, along with two other third secretaries, George Kennan and Ertel Kuniholm.

After fifteen months in Moscow, Bohlen returned to Washington and was assigned to the Eastern European section of the State Department until 1938, when he was sent back to Moscow as Second Secretary. He was there during the final round of purge trials, in which many former Soviet leaders were led to confess crimes against the state and executed. He followed the maneuvers that led to the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939; was there when the Soviets helped Germany crush Poland, when Russia invaded Finland, and when the Soviet Union took over Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Bessarabia.

Transferred to Tokyo near the end of 1940 to advise on Russo-Japanese relations, he was in the Japanese capital at the time of Pearl Harbor and was interned with the Ambassador and others of the Embassy staff. Returning to Washington on diplomatic exchange in 1942, Bohlen became assistant chief of the Russian section of the State Department, serving under Loy Henderson, whom he succeeded in the summer of 1943.

He went with Secretary Hull to Moscow in the fall of 1943 to help prepare for the conference near the end of that year between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at Tehran, and was then assigned temporarily to Roosevelt's party for the Tehran meeting. After he came back to Washington, he was tapped repeatedly by Harry Hop-

kings for information on the Soviets. Near the end of 1944, the new Secretary of State, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., named Bohlen as special liaison officer with the White House. In January 1945, he accompanied Hopkins on a tour of European capitals in preparation for the Yalta Conference the following month. At that conference he served as Roosevelt's interpreter and kept notes of high-level talks between the President and Stalin.

Although he had not met Truman before he became President, Bohlen was at the White House conference on April 23 when Truman said he would take a firm line with the Russians, and Bohlen subsequently interpreted for the President in his early talks with Foreign Minister Molotov. He served as the President's interpreter at Potsdam, and as Byrnes's special assistant he went with him to Moscow later in the year to discuss reparations problems not fully settled at Potsdam. He was present with Byrnes at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris in the latter part of the same year.

When Marshall succeeded Byrnes in January, 1947, he kept Bohlen as special assistant and listened carefully to his advice because of his familiarity with high-level discussions carried on with Soviet leaders since 1943. Critics of State Department hard-line advisers often put Bohlen in that group, but concede that he showed some evidence of Roosevelt's Yalta orientation. A careful examination of his memoranda to Marshall indicates that Bohlen did not follow any rigid ideological bias in his advice to the Secretary.⁴

Marshall was invited to dinner by the President of France on his first evening in Paris. He arranged to talk with President Vincent Auriol and Prime Minister Paul Ramadier before the meal. Although the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, had already left for Moscow, Marshall thought it both politic and important to get a better understanding of France's problems before the conference in Moscow.

The French question was of particular concern to the United States and Great Britain. Division in France created by the German occupation and quarrels between the Gaullists and remnants of prewar parties had given to the Communist Party considerable power in the postwar government. Now opposed to the Gaullists, their allies during the Resistance days, the Communists were nevertheless prepared to join with them again to bring down the government if it failed to demand strong measures against the defeated enemy.

The French dread that Germany would be reconstructed more rapidly than France or other victims of German aggression sparked

friction between the French and British and American occupation chiefs in the German occupation zones. President Auriol voiced the fear that the Germans would be allowed a centralized army and that the Ruhr would be left in control of German industrial magnates. This fear often caused the French to line up with the Russians in debates in the Allied Control Council in Berlin, to the fury of General Lucius Clay, who declared he had more trouble with the French than with the Russians.

Marshall was reluctant to go into detail as to the American position until he had talked with Bevin. He fell back on expressing his warm personal feelings about France's problems, which he had acquired from cooperating with the French in two world wars. Recalling his two and a half years in France in 1917-18 and his visits to France in 1944, the Secretary felt without boasting that he knew as much of the sufferings of that country as any non-Frenchman could understand. But he added that he had a responsibility for the plight of defeated peoples as well as that of liberated countries. There must be a balance between the import needs of Germany and those of France. He was reiterating the arguments of British and American occupation commanders, who said that their forces should not have to keep on and on contributing to the welfare of the occupied zones, that the zones must be helped to stand on their own.

Marshall ended his talk at the meeting with Auriol and Ramadier with a theme he had mentioned earlier to Ramadier: the importance of a system of security to keep the peace of Europe. Byrnes had proposed a twenty-five-year disarmament treaty, and Marshall meant to work for it. Seeking to convince Auriol that this was not a maneuver to gain greater concessions, Marshall declared: "I am not a diplomat. I mean exactly what I say and there is no use trying to read between the lines because there is nothing to read there."⁵

After the usual wreath-laying at the Arc de Triomphe the next day, Marshall left for Berlin. Colonel Carter, his liaison officer, noted that before leaving Washington Marshall had seemed optimistic that the conference could be made to work. But on the way to Berlin, Carter wrote his wife:

Still no sign of how long it will last but there is not too much optimism of our really getting complete results, as it may be cut shorter than we originally expected. I have not talked to General Marshall about it, but from watching him operate in the past, he will not, in my opinion, hang around without results.⁶

Marshall was going to Moscow as he had to China. He knew that the odds were against him, but he must try. He had admitted to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that there was little possibility of getting a final treaty with Germany at this conference, but he hoped to get an acceptance "of the principles that would guide the representatives in drafting such a treaty." He thought that they might get a treaty with Austria, and he would try to persuade the other powers to place that on the agenda. He assured his staff that he was not giving up in advance, but some State Department experts were pessimistic, saying that the conference would last five or six weeks without doing more than clarifying and reducing issues.⁷

From Paris, Marshall flew on to Berlin for two days, to talk with General Clay, who was soon to take command of U.S. troops in the European Theater and to discuss with Dulles (who joined him there) what he had found out in France and Germany. He went on to Moscow on the 9th, arriving at the General Airport at 3:30 P.M., where he was met by Ambassador Bedell Smith, Deputy Foreign Minister Vishinski, and representatives of major diplomatic delegations.⁸

Smith found that his former boss was unimpressed by the "bowler hat" he had recently picked up in Paris. For the Ambassador it was a reunion with a revered chief. Reminiscing about Marshall in a book he later wrote on his Moscow days, Smith said that some of the foreign diplomats had wondered how Marshall would fare in his dealings with "a group of tough, Middle Eastern bazaar traders." He had no misgivings.

I had seen General Marshall under all conditions of stress and strain, and I had never seen him fail eventually to dominate every gathering by sheer force of his integrity, honesty, and dignified simplicity. Moreover, his whole service had been a preparatory course for high-level negotiations. I knew that he would say little until he had the situation and all the facts well in hand and that he would make no mistakes. . . .⁹

Although he had been away from service with Marshall for a number of months, Smith soon felt at home. He recalled that the General began to say, " 'I want you to do this and this,' and I said, 'Yes, sir,' and thought, 'Here we go again.' "

The Ambassador's residence, Spaso House, where Marshall and his small personal staff were to stay, had been built before World

War I by a wealthy Russian dealer in sugar and had become the U.S. Embassy residence after the United States recognized the Soviet Union. Rooms were at a premium in the city, so the ballroom housed the stenographic pool and mimeograph machines. Halls, the billiard room, and parlors became offices, and the dining room became a cafeteria ready to serve meals at any hour. Morning briefings and discussions were held in this building. Marshall was given the Ambassador's bedroom and adjoining reception room, and here he carried on most of his work. Others of the delegation were assigned to the Hotel Moscow, the best hotel in the city, just across the square from the Chancery, which had been refurbished for the conference. The meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers were held in the Aviation Industry House near the hotel ¹⁰

Bohlen and Carter shared a bedroom next to Marshall. Although Marshall's reception room had an electric heater, it was chilly enough that he often worked in a floor-length blue lounging robe, high-necked and quilted, which Carter said made him look like Chiang Kai-shek. On a typical day, the Secretary first considered messages that Carter relayed to him between nine and eleven-thirty each morning. At ten-thirty he moved to the main reception room, where he met with members of the delegation and tried to work out the line to be followed in the afternoon deliberations. After lunch, Marshall and Carter tried to get some exercise, but they found their walks included a crowd of Russian security men. When they left Spaso House, a Russian car with six men would swing out in front of the car carrying the Secretary, and another car with six men would fall in behind. Marshall and Carter often drove to the park area; a favorite spot there was at the edge of the city, where Napoleon supposedly had his first look at Moscow. As they left the car and walked along, they were always conscious that their escorts had left *their* cars and were walking along at a visible distance

At three-thirty each afternoon, Marshall and members of the delegation went by automobile to the conference site. Here again was a set routine. As their car left Spaso House, the Russians sent ahead a signal. By the time Marshall's car reached the main street, all traffic was cleared and no one was allowed to cross the street. Sessions began at 4:00 P.M., continuing until seven or eight. Then the advisers had a quick meal and went back to rework papers or draw up new ones to put before Marshall the next morning. Ben Cohen had to reconcile opposing views, or, if he could not, to put all sides of various opinions before his chief. The ideas of delegation members were not all that was involved; there were proposals

from the Ambassador and Embassy staff, from General Mark Clark and his advisers from Vienna, and from General Clay and his staff from Berlin.¹¹

About to take over full control of the U.S. command in Germany from General Joseph McNarney, Clay would have liked to skip the Moscow meeting. However able he was as an administrator, Clay had been ground down into touchiness from constant, abrasive crises brought on by the French and the Russians. He was ill at ease with Marshall, in contrast to the easy rapport he had with Byrnes, and he delayed response to the invitation to Moscow until Marshall had to insist. In Moscow, Clay had troubles from the first with John Foster Dulles, who was inclined to lecture others on their duties. Clay decided Dulles was pro-French and their early relations were not pleasant. Dulles also rubbed Mark Clark the wrong way by attempting to speak for Austria, which Clark considered his own bailiwick.¹²

Dulles's main problems at the conference flowed from his wish to internationalize the Ruhr, in order to aid European recovery and provide a guard against a Germany that might again menace Europe. The U.S. delegation wondered if this approach would encourage the French to act more closely with the Soviets. Ronald K. Pruessen's analysis of Dulles's role at Moscow shows that Dulles's colleagues were not impressed by his views on the Ruhr. Despite Dulles's early-March insistence on a firm stand on the Ruhr, Marshall did not bring up the issue until April 10, and then defined it so broadly that it ended the discussion. However keen his disappointment, Dulles "never offered sharp criticism and never allowed incomplete success on the one matter to cancel out his overall support for American policy on Germany. He had retained some qualms about what Truman administration policy makers were doing, but he shared enough of their beliefs to give them loyal support, especially in public."¹³

Dulles was at the meeting to represent the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Vandenberg), but he sometimes acted as though he were in charge of the delegation.

The Moscow conference opened on March 10 at the Aviation Industry House, in a huge, ornate room that had a table seating twenty delegates. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault, and Marshall were placed across from one another, one to each side and at the ends of the table. Four delegation members sat by each chief. Behind each delegation head were other small tables where other advisers sat with supporting papers and inciden-

tal information that might be wanted. Marshall did not like to be whispered to during meetings, so his advisers were aware they must have memoranda to pass to him when needed.¹⁴

There was a certain amount of shuffling about in each delegation as members were summoned to give information on subjects pertaining to their special assignments. The ability to sit through long harangues became highly prized. "Old iron bottom" Molotov gave every indication that he could sit out the debates if they took all summer.

Each talk was translated at least twice, and those delegates not interested in listening used the time this took for personal correspondence or for jotting down arguments. During one of the meetings, Colonel Carter described the chief delegates for his wife:

Molotov is in his usual pose. Hand covering chin, elbow on table, slowly nodding his head. Completely poker-faced. Bevin looking like a cross between Santa Claus and a Welsh coalman, tortoise shell glasses, cigarette hanging loosely from his mouth, glancing with raised brows through papers and books. Bidault trying to look bigger than he is, smoothy type, trying to give the impression that he is bored and thinking above the lot.¹⁵

Marshall was to work more closely with Bevin than with any of the other delegates. This British leader was in no way the American image of the tall, lean Oxbridge Foreign Secretary so perfectly realized in Anthony Eden. He was "fat and unwieldy," according to one observer, and his mannerisms and speech failed to mitigate this impression. As a young man he had driven a horse-drawn delivery wagon in Bristol. Later, he was caught up in the rough-and-tumble of labor unions. He never went to a public school, yet his workingman's accent could be formidable in debate. He became a lay preacher whose gruff eloquence always impressed opponents and moved crowds. He could never remember how to pronounce foreign names—his pronunciation of Bidault as "Bidet" was completely innocent, as was "Biddle," which was not so much noticed. He was perceptive and stubborn in considering issues before the conference. He was indeed overweight, and he had a heart problem, and his choler rose easily, even with friends, if he felt they were slighting the British or engaged in under-the-table activity. His temper subsided as quickly as it rose.¹⁶

The Americans had assumed that Bevin would follow a strong Labour Party line, with considerable sympathy for some Soviet views. They discovered that he, like trade-unionists elsewhere, was

wary of Russian attempts to control labor movements in other countries. They also found out that he would not bargain away British Empire positions. Marshall consulted him frequently throughout the conference, and each often supported the other in attempts to get action on certain measures during delays by Molotov and Bidault.

Marshall pitied Bidault. Harassed by Gaullists and Communists in the National Assembly who constantly threatened to bring down the government, he was always trying to assure Marshall and Bevin that he was on their side, but he dared not seem to follow an Anglo-American line. Though Marshall was sympathetic with his problems, he at length tired of Bidault's continual pleas not to be pressed too hard to take a firm stand. Bidault had been an effective Resistance leader during the war and had once been close to de Gaulle. Later he accused de Gaulle of throwing him over. His memoirs do not make pleasant reading, although he gives his highest praise to Marshall.¹⁷

Marshall had dealt with Molotov as early as 1942, when the Russian Foreign Minister was in Washington trying to secure the opening of a second front. He did not like Molotov's doctrinaire pronouncements, or his tendency to insist that Rooseveltian suggestions of possible intent were solid promises. Molotov had succeeded Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov in the spring of 1939 and represented his country in negotiating the Nazi-Soviet pact of that year. Second to Stalin in power during the war, he continually badgered the Allies for a second front and for increased military aid. To Marshall and others who dealt with him, he was a negotiator who never gave up. Agreeing to compromises one day, he returned the next day to argue precisely the same points. Marshall had respect for his adroitness in discussions, but decided that he was afraid to reach any agreement on his own; the only solution was to take arguments to Stalin.

As host to the conference, Molotov took the chair at the opening meeting. The delegates soon agreed that the post of chairman would rotate daily, but other procedural questions ran into trouble. From the beginning, Marshall and Bevin let it be understood that they would raise difficult questions to counter those brought up by Molotov. The Russian soon proved that he intended to use the conference as a sounding board to demand greater speed in de-Nazification and disarmament of Germany, greater control over the economy of Germany, plus a demand for compliance with the \$10 billion in reparations that the Soviets insisted had been agreed on at Potsdam and which the Allies felt to have been merely mentioned

as a figure to be discussed but not to be specifically determined until later. These matters had been debated through several meetings since Potsdam, by many of the same officials, but since Marshall was now sitting in for Byrnes they had to hear them again.

Having sat through every major Allied conference in World War II from 1942 to 1945, Marshall knew well the need for patience in negotiation. A year of postwar discussions with the Nationalists and the Communists in China had prepared him for sessions that went on and on. In the forty-three meetings with the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and the Soviet Union from March 10 until near the end of April, he found the routine dreadfully familiar. Particularly trying, he told Truman, was the tendency of delegations, especially the Russian and the French, to use the discussions solely as chances to create propaganda for the people at home. In retaliation, he and Bevin made increasing use of their publicity opportunities.

In China, Marshall had had no allied delegations to support him, but neither did he have to persuade other allies to agree. In Moscow, he and Bevin usually agreed closely, but repeatedly he found France intransigently supporting Soviet demands on Germany. Early in the conference he determined to settle a number of questions that Bidault brought up, and to give him moral support to stiffen his spine.

He had heard some of the French arguments during his stopover in Paris on his way to Moscow. On March 13, he got them in great detail from Bidault. In bringing up control of the Ruhr, the French Minister suggested that French and American technicians be placed in operating positions there. Marshall disagreed. He was willing to have British, French, and Americans supervise German managers at the top but said that actual operations should be left in German hands. When Marshall added that France could ease her problem of getting German coal by cooperating with British and American bizonal arrangements, Bidault smilingly referred to his "special problems," which Marshall translated to mean "Communist participation in the French Government and their reluctance to permit the French to join in bizonal arrangements." Marshall remarked that it was sometimes difficult to see the forest for the trees. Bidault, aware of the Gaullists' anti-American stance on Germany, said that he had once worked for de Gaulle and that the General could only see the forest and this was equally bad.

During the wartime conferences, Marshall often spoke for the Army and Air Force and sometimes for the Navy. His words usually had the support of the President and, particularly in later conferences, had behind them the power that could supply men and

munitions for victory. In those conferences, he had always tried to use tact and reasonableness, but he could force the issue. Now he found it necessary to change his approach in negotiations. In dealing with the Russians, he decided to be very firm, to match Soviet obstructionism and delays with his own brand of the same. With the British, he sought frequent discussions to smooth out disagreements. France required something more. It was necessary to convince Bidault that he was a friend of France, that he understood the special problems of France, and that it would not help France to divide the Western Allies.

In his meeting with Bidault on March 13, Marshall chose to be the blunt old soldier. As a newcomer to diplomacy, he said he was having trouble in adapting to the practices of the Council of Foreign Ministers. As a soldier, he had found that conducting a war was a simple profession, "because one understands clearly the objective to be attained." Making peace seemed much more complicated. "It is my experience that I form certain opinions when, suddenly, a new element is introduced which is misleading. It is difficult for me to decide on the best methods to adopt." He expressed admiration for the way in which Bidault had recently presented the problem of demilitarization so "as to avoid giving a too provocative aspect to your proposals." Bidault did not eagerly accept this blandishment. He said he had been disappointed that his effort to separate demilitarization from other issues had not been better received.¹⁸

Marshall recalled that he had twice fought the Germans, but had no fear that Germany would again become powerful if the four victors could remain united. The danger was that the conquered country would ally itself with one of its former enemies. Twice in the past the Germans had evaded obligations imposed by conquerors. "If we are not careful, they will start all over again. And we should recall that her motto is, 'Divide in order to rule.'"

Alluding to the earlier proposal of Secretary Byrnes for a Four Power Pact, Marshall thought such an agreement the best guarantee for peace. As Chief of Staff during the war, he had concluded that the war could have been avoided if the United States had made a prewar commitment to the Allies, and if "American military preparation had been more advanced."

Sensing the latent thrust of Marshall's remarks, Bidault admitted that he had disappointed Byrnes with his lack of enthusiasm for the proposal. He had never doubted the importance of an American presence in Europe, especially in Germany, but he feared that the proposed treaty would be considered a substitute for other guaran-

tees. “. . . we firmly believe that a whole series of measures are indispensable to guarantee peace: demilitarization, control, Four Power Pact and alliances, occupation.” France remembered the treaty of 1919. “In a troubled world where the United States and the Soviet Union can affront each other, it seems necessary to us to superimpose on the treaties guarantees of a territorial and industrial character.”

Bidault spoke of the need for global solutions. Marshall agreed that everything possible should be done to enhance the prestige of the United Nations, but that body was still young, without tradition, and untested. At the moment, the Four Power Pact was essential. He reminded the Foreign Minister that such a treaty would demonstrate to Europe and especially to France that the United States intended to accept responsibilities in Europe, and would forcibly remind Americans of their promises. It would, in fact, require the country to be prepared to carry out its responsibilities. With his obligations defined in advance by treaty, a future President would not face the difficulties Roosevelt had to deal with in combating isolationists in Congress. It was because France did not seem to realize that, in offering such a treaty, the United States was making a “revolutionary” change in its policy that Byrnes “may have seemed disappointed.”

Only a little persuaded, Bidault demanded that “the French economy not be destroyed by the German economy.” Marshall agreed and said they could soon proceed to talk about coal. Sensing some progress, Marshall went on to recall that after the first war he had heard Foch and Weygand discuss the Ruhr. Foch had said that force was the only solution. Did not Bidault agree that there was force in a Four Power Pact, and an element of continuity? Marshall said that the problem was not so much what was going to happen the next four or five years in Germany, but “the situation in which we will find ourselves within 10 years.”

His arguments did not fully satisfy Bidault but at least they indicated that he was sympathetic to French problems. The importance of seeking French support was soon evident when Molotov, on the 13th, attacked the Western powers for failing to disarm German forces and non-German nationals. The Russian wanted to order the Allied Control Council to speed up the process. Marshall countered with a request that the council be asked to report on present progress and to continue along similar lines. Bevin strongly defended the council. He and Molotov clashed on several issues; the British Foreign Secretary insisted that the Soviets report on the destruction of captured German capital ships and declared

that Britain could not agree on much more destruction of war-potential plants in Germany unless there were agreement on a unified German economy¹⁹

By March 14 the pattern of conflict had become more pronounced and the debates, which had been mostly between Bevin and Molotov, had become more general. In a challenge to Soviet practices, Marshall emphasized the need for uniform regulations on human rights for postwar Germany. He thought it essential to have effective and uniform guarantees of (1) civil rights, (2) rights of free trade unions, (3) rights of political parties, (4) freedom of press and radio, (5) freedom of movement for persons and goods. Molotov retorted that the Soviets were not concerned with "the generalities of democracy, but only those facts which bore on Allied responsibilities in Germany." Freedom of press and radio did not include the right to propagandize for the restoration of a Hitlerian regime. Freedom of trade unions and land reforms were rights requiring prompt decision by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

Seeing small chance for a meeting of minds on the guarantees that he sought, Marshall decided to use the meeting as a sounding board for a public statement of what democracy meant to his country. Ambassador Bedell Smith declared Marshall's words "constituted what was probably the most forthright statement of the rights of man ever made in Russia." The Secretary said that the American people understood that there were certain inalienable rights that could not be taken or given away. These included "the right of every individual to develop his own soul in the ways of his choice, free of fear or coercion—only that he does not interfere with the rights of others."

He probably had no hope of reaching the Russian people, but perhaps the thought of former followers or victims of Hitler impelled him to say:

To us, society is most democratic if men who respect the rights of their fellow men are free to express their own beliefs and convictions without fear that they may be snatched away from their homes and family. To us a society is not free if law-abiding citizens live in fear of being denied the right to work or of being deprived of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.²⁰

The issue of German economic unity, more controversial since the creation of Bizonia by Britain and the United States in 1946, again came up for debate on March 17. Molotov fiercely objected to the arrangement as a violation of early quadripartite control of

occupation laws. In an argument later repeated in a number of accounts by revisionist historians, he castigated the arrangement as an “opportunity for British and American industrialists to penetrate the area and establish economic empires. . . .” He deplored the “cock-sureness” of monopolistic industrialists in the British-American zones, and their attempts to revive cartels, trusts, and other forms of capitalistic monopoly.

Marshall calmly denied Molotov’s assertions, observing that charges and countercharges only complicated the problems the foreign ministers were trying to solve. The American people were mindful of Russian losses in the war, but they believed German economic unity essential to a successful occupation and the peace of the world. With an eye on Molotov’s ideas about economic unity, he emphasized the point that he and Bevin never ceased to reiterate: “We cannot accept a unified Germany under a procedure which in effect would mean that [our own] people would pay reparations to an ally.” He defended the bizonal merger of the British and Americans and invited the Russians and the French to join on the same terms.

Marshall read his remarks from a lengthy paper. Earlier, he had tried to get an agreement that such papers be distributed before the meetings as a means of shortening the sessions. When that failed, he grimly determined to try a reverse approach. He wrote Truman:

Reading last and struggling through two laborious translations, I held the meeting until even Molotov was restless. I then took occasion to apologize for my time-consuming procedure and referred to the failure of the Council to accept my previous recommendation. . . .²¹

Marshall got what satisfaction he could from anticipating Molotov’s attacks and being prepared with irrefutable rebuttals. On the 18th, after a wearisome debate on reparations, Molotov charged that Britain and the United States had waived payments because they had already received more than \$10 billion in assets by seizing all gold found in their zones, all German assets except those in the eastern zone, the German commercial fleet, and German patents, plus reparations from current production such as coal and lumber.

Bevin laughed at this litany of British-American sins and said it was based solely on Russian press reports, that his government was prepared to reveal what it had received in reparations and hoped that others would do the same. Molotov then walked into the trap by declaring that J. C. Green, Executive Secretary of the Bureau of

Publications, U.S. Department of Commerce, had recently commented on the immense value to the United States of seized German patents. To Marshall's amused satisfaction, one of his staff had prepared for this question and handed him a memorandum from Green, asking if General Marshall could inquire whether the Russians had taken scientific and technical information out of their zone, and if the United States could have "access to it on similar terms to which they are acquiring the mass of material released by this office." Marshall added that AMTORG, the Soviet purchasing agency in the United States, had been "the largest single purchaser of pamphlets concerning information on patents and processes."²²

Molotov's deputy, Vishinski, guffawed loudly, but became abruptly silent as Molotov gave him a baleful glare. Marshall then explained that the gold was not being kept by the United States but was held for disposition by the Reparations Agency. Not only had the United States taken no money from exports from its zone, plowing back all receipts, but it had actually contributed large sums from appropriated funds for German relief.

Again they were back to the problem of reparations. This issue was tied to the economic unity of Germany, payments from current production, and industry levels to be permitted in Germany. The overall economic problem worried Bevin, who reminded Molotov that Britain could not give priority for reparations over payment for imports in the British zone because of the necessity of reducing the cost of occupation to the Allies. Marshall strongly supported this stand.

Molotov grew a bit milder, promising that the Soviet Union would account for every kopek's worth of assets it had taken from its zone. He favored setting the level of industry for Germany high enough so that country could meet internal needs and pay for imports and reparations.

Marshall saw Molotov's last remark as illustrative of the danger of planning to pay reparations out of current production. After World War I, the Allies had insisted on increased production to pay for reparations and for foreign loans, resulting in a German economy geared for future war. Marshall did not want to repeat this mistake. "At the same time," he insisted, "under no conditions should we set her economy so low that a democratic way of life could not hope to survive in Germany."²³

Molotov's slightly softer approach seemed to spark a tougher French line. Bidault asked for an international agency to control the use of all German coal, and he opposed an increase in the German level of industry. He talked of special control of the Ruhr

France would not accept an increase in the German level of industry until French views on security had been honored. He declined to accept any of the points being urged by the Western Allies until France's coal requirements were met. Steel production for Germany should be limited to 7,500,000 tons annually, one-fourth less the figure suggested by the United States and Britain.²⁴

This cold shower of French obduracy chilled both Marshall and Bevin as they compared notes during lunch on March 22. Bevin recalled that twice before the current meeting French representatives had asked that exports of coal from the British zone continue because of the "critical French election situation." Bevin finally had to tell Bidault that massive repairs were needed to increase coal production. When the Frenchman replied that he could not support Britain on other points unless he got what he wanted on coal, Bevin declared that he would not submit to such a procedure, a statement intended for Molotov's ears as much as for those of Bidault.²⁵

Near the end of March, Marshall led an effort to concentrate on the Austrian and German peace treaties, which Senators Vandenberg and Connolly wanted signed before the conference adjourned. The inability of the various representatives to agree as to who should be involved in the treaties added to the delays. The three Western powers urged that China be brought in on the German treaty, but the Soviets were opposed. Bevin suggested that the Dominions be involved. Marshall thought Canada's contributions to the war were important and insisted that Mexico and other Latin American countries should also be consulted.²⁶

The points of disagreement about Germany were so overwhelming that the Western powers suggested a focus on Austria, but they immediately disagreed over which Austrian assets were to be considered. The three Western countries were not willing to list as assets subject to reparations claims properties that had been seized after 1938 by the German-controlled government in Austria from victims of aggression. Marshall's proposal for the arbitration of Austrian claims was strongly opposed by the Soviet Foreign Minister.

Months before, during the war, Marshall had learned that Molotov was unyielding in asserting Russian claims and views. He saw Molotov as a tough old negotiator who always chose to rehash previous arguments rather than seek any compromise. After the shift from working toward a German settlement to getting an Austrian treaty, Marshall concluded there was no Soviet enthusiasm for either. Since continual chaos in occupied countries was likely to

play into Soviet hands, Molotov had no incentive to be gracious. To salvage something from the conference, Marshall decided to return to the problem of Germany. This required that he and Bevin pay further attention to France

In his perceptive *The Origins of the Marshall Plan*, John Gimbel shows the difficulties Marshall and Bevin faced. Alert to opponents from right and left in the French Assembly, Bidault expounded on the export of German coal and the control of the Saar as the German problems France wanted settled first. Payment of reparations from current production had to be decided on the basis of its possible effect on German coal for export, German war potential, and the German balance of payments.²⁷

Bevin's reply to Molotov and Bidault reflected Marshall's views. He said that full economic unity of Germany depended on: freedom of movement throughout the occupation zones of Germany of persons, ideas, and trade; the priority was to be given the payment of imports cost from proceeds gained from German exports from current production and stocks; the sharing of four-power occupation costs; and the establishment of a central German administration with German executive powers. To Molotov's earlier objections he said that payment of reparations out of current production was not possible at the moment, a four-power agency for the Ruhr could not be established as long as a unified economic German system was lacking, and the bizonal U.S.-British system, which arose from delays in implementing the Potsdam decision on economic unity, would be changed when economic unity for Germany was a fact.

Bevin would support French claims as to the Saar, provided agreement was reached on the area to be included and the readjustment in reparations after the transfer. He hoped that the French would not block the settlement of major German problems because of the demand for coal and suggested that the United States and Britain try to help France in this respect. He insisted that the level of industry be raised to improve the German standard of living, asked for imposition of a time limit, and stressed the need to arrive at a simpler plan for evaluating and allocating plants to be removed. He reiterated the basic questions of the conference—the level to be set for German industry and the amount and distribution should be settled at the Moscow meeting so that the Germans would know what to expect.

Molotov replied that he thought he could facilitate the Allied problems in Germany. He believed that increase of food supply there could be accomplished by land reforms such as those carried

out in the Soviet zone. No German territory now controlled by Poland could be included in economic plans, however. He was willing to raise the German level of industry but insisted that the destruction of Germany's war potential be hastened.

Discussion then turned from economic to political settlements. In considering a possible German constitution on April 2, the delegates soon revealed how they viewed the role of a revived Germany. Molotov proposed that a provisional political organization be set up first. Bidault suggested that representatives of the *Länder* (state) governments prepare a provisional constitution and that this be approved by the Allied Control Council and then submitted to the German people. Marshall thought that the Council of Foreign Ministers should establish a provisional government representing the *Länder*, initiate the framing of a permanent constitution, and recommend a pattern for permanent territorial organization. He said that the council should ensure basic human rights, guarantee the autonomy of state and local governments, and define relationships between the council and the provisional government and between zone commanders and the provisional government.

Molotov objected to Marshall's plan as one that would federalize Germany. He wanted a democratic Germany resting on free elections with an executive of limited powers. He asked that central administrative departments be instituted on the basis of the Potsdam agreement as a first step toward a provisional government. At this point, Bevin suggested a series of steps to achieve a provisional government leading to a permanent constitution. Marshall agreed in part, adding that a provisional government might not prove necessary. He thought that the Allied Control Council could issue a charter to the German people that would permit the Germans to consider a permanent constitution.²⁸

The issue was still under discussion near the end of the day when Molotov added that any advisory council should include representatives of democratic parties, trade unions, and other anti-Nazi organizations. Fearing that such loosely defined groups could be a means of packing the council, Marshall and Bevin objected, though agreeing that such organizations could be consulted.

Searching for ways to get action from the conference, Marshall and Bevin mapped plans over lunch three days later. Bevin proposed that 10 million tons of steel be considered for German production. He admitted that this figure would require a re-examination of transfers of plants and compensation for plants allocated but not transferred. He thought that the Soviets might be willing to consider this approach because some of the plants had

not been profitable and in other cases it had been necessary to build sites for which they lacked money and were out of pocket for transportation costs. There were reports of plants on railway cars sitting in open yards. Marshall was willing for the British and the Americans to work out recommendations, but he warned Bevin that at the moment the United States was not prepared to discuss a fixed figure. He also doubted that they should put forth a program for a German political organization, because this would give the Russians an opportunity to charge that the British and the Americans were seeking a definite partition of Germany. Both men tacitly agreed that although they would prefer a united Germany they were resigned, at least temporarily, to a division if unity meant Soviet influence in all zones. State Department discussions before the delegation left for Moscow had indicated a growing belief that keeping the zones united meant strengthening the Soviet presence in the whole of Germany.

The earlier arguments over central versus limited government for Germany filled the meeting on April 7, until Marshall finally proposed that they go on to the next question. When Molotov opposed this motion, Bevin fulminated that they had been in Moscow for four weeks and had done nothing and he "didn't care what the Council discussed next."²⁹

On April 8, Marshall and Bevin again huddled over strategy during lunch. Marshall proposed that they hold comments to a minimum in later meetings and pass over matters on which they could not agree. Some comments, of course, should be made on all issues, to help the delegates in their further studies. He later informed Truman that it was "very important to reach some understanding which would permit the prompt reduction of military forces, otherwise, these expenditures would dwarf the obligations for direct appropriations to meet the deficiency in the standard of living of the German people." No matter what arguments the Truman Doctrine advanced for American toughness in Europe, Marshall seemed set on reducing armed forces in Germany.³⁰

The negotiators found few areas of agreement at the conference. Marshall wanted a special boundary commission to decide on Poland's boundaries. Bevin preferred a study of boundary questions as a whole. Bidault believed that the provisional agreements at Potsdam had been accepted as permanent. Molotov, according to Marshall, proved to his own satisfaction that the existing western boundary of Poland had been agreed upon. Marshall cited quotations from the Potsdam minutes indicating that boundaries were provisional. Molotov found Stalinist statements proving the oppo-

site. Bidault said it was unfortunate that the French had not been invited to Potsdam so that "a disinterested, unbiased, and correct interpretation [would be] available."³¹

Shades of post-World War I settlements were evoked by Bidault's next demand, that the Rhineland should be separated from Germany and troops should be stationed permanently on the left bank of the river, and that the Ruhr should be internationalized and its basic industries transferred to the Allied countries. These proposals concerning an area mostly in the British occupation zone led Bevin to insist that, until economic unity of Germany was a fact, there be no special arrangement for the Ruhr. He favored giving the Saar to France but not the separation of the Rhineland from Germany.³¹

Marshall pointed out that the United States was interested in preventing German military use of Ruhr resources but wanted to ensure that they be made available for European states, including Germany. As a country that had twice been forced to send troops to Europe, the United States wanted a settlement that the people of Europe would maintain willingly. He hoped that claims to permanency of frontiers would be based on more than force. Molotov agreed with the American view that the Ruhr and the Rhineland should not be separated from Germany, and that the Ruhr resources should be open to all, but disagreed with the American notion that quadripartite control was not necessary. He lectured Britain and the United States for improperly severing western Germany from the rest of the former Reich and for taking control of the Ruhr without the agreement of Soviet Russia and France.

Bevin and Marshall promptly retorted that failure to restore economic unity had blocked quadripartite control, Bizonia had been necessary because of the lack of economic unity. If such unity were attained, there would be four-power control of the Ruhr.

Both Marshall and Bevin again attacked Molotov's arguments on April 15. To Bevin's complaint that five weeks had gone by with nothing accomplished, Marshall added that the Soviet desire to bring all committee disagreements into the council for debate had resulted in no action on the Four Power Pact. "If we cannot agree on this basic first step of keeping Germany disarmed and unable to wage war," he said, "we have indicated to the world a complete lack of unity of purpose in our approach to the German settlement." Most of the delay and disagreements came from Soviet insistence that reparations should be drawn from current production. After Molotov insisted that his amendments were intended to meet the Western Allies halfway, he then launched into what Marshall called

“a long perversion of our draft treaty which nullified his previous remark.” Terming Molotov’s amendments largely a redraft of previous disagreements, Marshall concluded that, since they could not agree on the Four Power Pact, they should move on to other matters. Thus was abandoned one of the two hoped-for results of the conference.³²

In later years, Marshall said that he had decided that Molotov’s only policy was delay and propaganda, so he determined to go to the source of power in the Soviet Union—Stalin himself.

At Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam, Marshall had sized up Stalin as a tough customer, a bank robber for the Soviet cause before the Revolution, who should be spoken to—as Marshall wrote Eisenhower—in tough Abilene language. The important thing, he believed, was to make certain that the Russian leader had agreed to a certain course of action. He recalled that Stalin had said that three months after V-E Day he would enter the war against Japan, and had kept his promise to the day. In a message to Roosevelt in the spring of 1945, Stalin had implied that Marshall had given him incorrect information based on intercepts. Marshall had drafted the sharp reply that Roosevelt had sent shortly before he died. Later, Stalin had asked Eisenhower to express his regrets to Marshall and to emphasize that he had great respect for him. Still later, he told Byrnes that if anyone could solve the Chinese stalemate it was Marshall. Perhaps these words were mere flattery, but they made Marshall believe that he had more chance to wrest some degree of accord from Stalin than from Molotov, who he felt lacked the authority to make decisions.

Unlike the other heads of delegations, Marshall had postponed his courtesy call on the Russian leader until he had “real subjects to discuss.” He now set up a meeting at the Kremlin for April 15, through Bedell Smith. With Stalin were Molotov, Ambassador Kirill V. Novikov, and interpreter V. N. Pavlov. Smith and Bohlen accompanied Marshall.

The Secretary decided to use the direct approach that he had found effective with the Chinese. He described his depression and concern over the misunderstandings and disagreements that had arisen. At the end of the recent war, no country “had enjoyed such public esteem and even admiration in the United States as the Soviet Union.” This sentiment had later deteriorated because of Soviet actions or failure to act, which had created unfortunate impressions. The difficulty of getting answers to correspondence had led to other difficulties. The Soviet Union was the only country

to make no effort to reach a settlement on nonmilitary material furnished under Lend-Lease.³³

Marshall reviewed his differences with Molotov. The United States had not opposed economic unity for Germany, but it did oppose a centralized government that might become dangerous. Britain and the United States had not broken the Potsdam agreement by establishing Bizonia but had been forced to act because of the lack of economic unity. He had concluded that there was no Soviet desire for a Four Power Pact and would so inform the President. Perhaps to ease the effects of the President's Truman Doctrine speech, Marshall said that the United States and the Soviet Union had two different forms of government and the United States had no desire to convert the Soviet people to American democracy.

Marshall mentioned larger issues, questions obscured by the innumerable details of plans, drafts, and resolutions in which the Moscow talks were mired. "The Government of the United States," he declared, "was frankly determined to do what we can to assist those countries which are suffering from economic deterioration which, if unchecked, might lead to economic collapse and the consequent elimination of any chance of democratic survival." He said that it was the American intention to help, as much as possible, to reform the economy of such countries. "The United States had no intention of dominating or trying to dominate any country in the world."

He concluded by saying that he desired to restore the cooperation that had existed during the war and that he had come to Stalin with the hope that some of the suspicion could be cleared away as a first step toward regaining the former spirit of understanding.

Stalin sat doodling during the talk, receiving the plain words calmly and affably. When he spoke, it was to suggest, disarmingly, that the Soviet delay was due to sloppiness or to great losses suffered by his country during the war. Then he recalled that a Russian request for additional Lend-Lease had remained unanswered for two years and suggested that perhaps there was sloppiness in American procedures. When Ambassador Smith passed to the Russians a written reminder that he had presented a reply to this request when he had reported the previous year, Stalin nodded, but said that even a year's delay seemed a little excessive.

As for Germany, the Soviet Union did not want a strong central administration, but it was not right that the *Lander* be above the central government. He did not love Germans, but he opposed

dismemberment. He wanted to avoid Napoleon's mistake. The Emperor had gained a temporary advantage by setting up a number of small German states, but ultimately he had come to the idea of a united Germany. Stalin argued that if the Allies could not agree on this point, the German people should settle it by a plebiscite. He favored economic unity as much as the Americans and British, but there could be no economic arrangement without political unity first.

He had been leading up to reparations and his words were blunt. If reparations were to be limited to what had been removed from Germany, then the Russians were being deprived of payments. What had been removed from Germany by the Russians was only \$2 billion, an insignificant sum. In a statement that was later to be heatedly debated, he insisted that at Yalta Roosevelt and his advisers had said that \$10 billion was very little. Now the Americans had changed their minds.

The United States and England might be willing to give up reparations, the Soviet Union could not. Ten billions in reparations might not be popular in Britain and the United States, ten billions were very popular in the Soviet Union.

Marshall had expected this argument, and it was something that could be negotiated, but Stalin's next statement dismayed him. Just when he was hoping that by appealing directly to Stalin he could get action, he heard Stalin say "he did not think the situation was so tragic, and he was more optimistic than Mr. Marshall." Apparently unconcerned that the conference was at the point of breaking up with nothing accomplished, he showed no worry and no evidence of a wish to hurry. Bohlen, Marshall's translator and the author of the official record of the conversation, conveyed to Marshall the chilling impression that Stalin was quite content to allow the eternal rehashing of arguments to continue. Instead of the contrariness of Molotov, Marshall was dealing with the deliberate policy of Stalin. His report to Truman on the conversation shows an unctuous Stalin:

"After all," Stalin said, "these were only the first skirmishes and brushes of reconnaissance forces on the question. Differences had existed before on other questions, and as a rule after people had exhausted themselves in dispute they recognized the necessity of compromise. It is possible that no great success could be achieved at this session, but they should not cause anyone to be desperate."

He thought that compromises were possible on all main questions including demilitarization, political structure of Germany, reparations and economic unity. It was necessary to have patience and not become depressed.

The appeal to Stalin had no effect on Soviet tactics at the conference. In the council meeting on April 16, efforts to win agreement on the production and allocation of coal in the Ruhr led to the usual deadlock. When the draft treaty for Austria was taken up, Molotov insisted the preamble should note Austria's war responsibility. Marshall pointed out that Austria had been annexed by Germany before the war began and could not be responsible as a separate state. "War guilt clauses," he said, "are easy to write, but, as history shows, they poison the atmosphere." Bevin agreed about Austria but Molotov did not, and the matter was left in suspense.³⁴

Marshall did not give up. Reporting to Truman on April 17 as to the number of items postponed, he thought it might still be possible to get an Austrian settlement, unless the Russians were determined to block it. He thought that action on German assets in the Soviet zone would show decisively what the outcome was going to be. He initially hoped that the Soviets would compromise sufficiently to allow a Four Power Pact, but concluded they did not want one and had tried to kill it with amendments. He believed, however, in spite of Bohlen's opinions, that they were seeing some favorable results of his conference with Stalin. Therefore he insisted that there be no leak of his report in Washington, since publication of his frank statements might "stiffen his [Stalin's] backbone in resentment. Later on we might find it desirable to release his statement, but I doubt it." As in China, Marshall's hope that something might be salvaged was so great that it obscured realism. His miscalculation was in continuing his stubborn belief that Stalin was more reasonable than Molotov. In a day or so he concluded that Molotov's policy of delay was ordered by Stalin.

Any hope Marshall had for any agreement had faded by April 22. Trying to save something that afternoon, he proposed that the council meet in restricted session. They were still debating German assets in Austria. Molotov had asked for a delay on two issues but now said he was not ready to discuss them. Marshall radioed Truman: "In our opinion, he is merely prolonging the meeting in an effort either to force us to a compromise or to put us in a position of initiating the conclusion of the conference." He had avoided any statement that would enable Molotov to claim that the United States had terminated the conference, "because it had been alleged

in Soviet propaganda that I am determined the conference shall not succeed." He did propose to stand firm on positions that had been taken on the Austrian treaty, even if that meant the end of the meeting. He wanted to make one more effort to bring up the Four Power Pact, but the Soviets would probably block this agreement, because they did not want to bring the United States "officially or formally into the military picture of Europe in such a manner."³⁵

At the forty-second meeting, on April 23, it was obvious that the conference was near its end. The Foreign Ministers decided to refer all agreed or unaccepted points on the future political organization of Germany to the Allied Control Council for information.

Marshall was disturbed and discouraged by the Soviet Union's virtual rejection of the Four Power Pact. Still dilatory, Molotov insisted that the Soviet Union agreed with the aim of the treaty but found the draft unsatisfactory. Marshall's refusal to discuss Soviet amendments barred a discussion of the substance of the treaty.

Carefully stating that the main problem on the Austrian pact was handing over German assets in Austria, Marshall asked the council to decide if any action could be taken on the treaty. Britain, France, and the United States had basically agreed on the terms, and they could not accept the Soviet position. Unless the Soviet delegation could make clear that non-German assets in Austria could be restored to non-Germans, they had to accept the fact that no treaty could be reached at the conference. If this were the case, they should refer it to the General Assembly of the United Nations for recommendations. The council agreed to consider the matter the following day. At Marshall's request, they also agreed to discuss his proposal for the reduction of occupation forces.³⁶

The forty-third and final meeting, on the 24th, was mostly a matter of referring disagreements to various bodies for further study or reports and discussing the next meeting of the council, which was set for London in November 1947. Molotov used the last meeting to attack the United States' position on the Four Power Pact, declaring the United States had tried to force its will on the council by refusing to discuss Soviet amendments. He argued that the American definition of German assets would deny the Soviet Union reparations promised at Potsdam. He rejected Marshall's proposal to refer the matter to the General Assembly, because the United Nations had no jurisdiction over the treaty. The council thus ended with its main accomplishment the firm establishment in the minds of Marshall and Bevin that the Soviets had no desire for an early restoration of order in Germany.³⁷

Marshall now found little to reassure him in the attitude of the

head of the Soviet Union. Despite the lack of accomplishment and all the squabbling and ugly language, manners required a final dinner by Stalin. Ambassador Smith described the banquet in the great hall of Catherine the Great in the Kremlin. Members of the various delegations gathered in an anteroom outside the hall. Marshall, Cohen, Bohlen, Dulles, and Smith made up the American group. The guests were met in the anteroom by the entire Politburo, except Stalin and Molotov, the chief dignitaries of the Foreign Office, and several Soviet marshals. After the group was complete, Stalin and Molotov entered and went up and down the line shaking hands; then Stalin led the way to the dining area. Contrary to tales of lavish banquets, Smith found the dinner excellent but not pretentious. The atmosphere seemed friendly, with Stalin drinking toasts to Truman and Attlee, and Molotov drinking to Bevin and Marshall. Smith thought the omission of Bidault in the first round was deliberate, but the French Minister was added as if by afterthought. Smith believed Bidault was furious but too cautious to show offense.³⁸

After completion of the toasts at the end of the meal, the group went downstairs, where they were shown a recently released color movie, *The Snow Flower*, based on a Russian folk story, which had recently won prizes in Europe for excellence. At the end, Smith had a sober thought: "Many present, I am sure, wondered if this would not be the last conference of Foreign Ministers."

Some critics of American policy accept the argument made by the Soviets that the Western powers went to Moscow with the intention of getting all they wanted or nothing. Even a less critical writer has suggested that German resources could have paid the \$10 billion in reparations that Stalin wanted and believed Roosevelt had promised. If granting this sum would have avoided the future costs of troops and armaments and air lifts, the concession would not have been excessive even if the United States itself ultimately had to pay the German contribution. But Marshall and Bevin had had enough. They recognized that Byrnes's earlier attempts to compromise with Stalin had not been fruitful and had led to criticisms by President Truman.³⁹

Marshall had been briefed repeatedly on the need for firmness at Moscow, but memories of a more reasonable Stalin at earlier meetings gave him hope that, despite the weeks of numbing discussion with Molotov, if he could just reach Stalin there might be a chance. He left Moscow with little reassurance about the attitude of the Russian leader.

As the impossibility of reaching any agreement with the Soviets

became clear, Marshall sought final talks with the French and British leaders before he returned home. Both France and Britain were desperate for economic assistance from the United States. Even if Marshall had seen no reports on Europe's economic condition and had not received careful studies on the state of Europe, he got the dire picture from Bidault and Bevin at Moscow.

Recognizing that the failure of the conference had left many serious matters in the air, Bevin wanted to settle certain key points with the United States. He suggested that the level of the steel industry for the bizonal area be set at 10 million tons, and Marshall hoped that the final total would be around that amount. They agreed that plants still available for reparations should be allocated on a quadripartite basis and made available to the U.S.S.R. and Allied countries with claims against Germany. To avoid a Russian charge that by proposing a bizonal arrangement on reparations, Britain and the United States had been insincere in their demands for economic unity, Marshall urged that the announcement concerning reparations be postponed for six weeks. He also suggested that any statement on bizonal government be worded so as to try to avoid the implication that the two countries were trying to set up a provisional government for western Germany.⁴⁰

Bidault talked to Marshall on April 20, emphasizing how completely France was pressed against the wall. France had very limited means to pay for construction, for wheat, coal, or other necessities. The country had applied for \$500 millions from the World Bank, but the bank had reduced this figure by half and placed conditions on the loan that a sovereign country could not accept. France was trying to replace German prisoners of war with German volunteer workers but lacked dollars to pay these men, who needed money to send their families. Though France wanted to behave properly toward the German workers, it could not find dollars to pay them. He hoped that the commander of the American zone could be given liberal instructions on handling these payments.⁴¹

Bidault said some Americans wondered if they could depend on France. They could, of course, but France had "to have time and avoid a civil war." He was also worried about the Saar. The French Communists were annoyed. It was necessary that positions be taken soon concerning Saar frontiers. He expressed appreciation for Marshall's understanding.

Marshall was sympathetic. He was not familiar with the World Bank loan policy but would speak personally to John J. McCloy, head of the bank, on his return. Though he was not aware of all the problems concerned with financial transactions involving the

American zone, he was disposed to do his best to relieve the French of any harsh demands from American zonal control. He would talk to Clay on his way home. "I wanted him to know that there is every disposition by the United States to help the French Government in its present dilemmas. . . . I am impelled and motivated by a desire to help the French Government. . . . I said that I had a general comprehension of the delicate political situation in France and take it into account in my reactions to the problems which arise." He added that he was aware of the urgency of the Saar situation.

Having proved his understanding, Marshall noted that there was a great difference in the way Americans looked upon Europe and the way the French or the Russians, who had suffered terribly, looked at matters. But he was fearful of the effect of these horrible experiences, which might lead the Allies to solutions that appealed for the moment but might "be fatal for the future. The struggle in my mind on the conference issues," he added, "concerned the danger that we may now make commitments under the impact of present feelings which would not be logical for an enduring peace."

Bidault interrupted to say that he understood, "but that France needs time." It would take a little time before Germany could be integrated into Western Europe, but, he concluded, "there is no question that Germany is a part of Europe."

The French Foreign Minister was deeply impressed with the genuineness of Marshall's friendship. Eight years later, he wrote in his memoirs that of all the Americans he ever met,

I put General Marshall in a category all by himself. No other man since 1945 approaches him in uprightness and stature. Compared to Truman's Foreign Secretary, the most brilliant reputations seem shabby. He was not vain, he spoke with great simplicity and humor about his career. . . . He was unaffected and did not pretend to be infallible. He would ask others for advice and could be unsure, even hesitant. But once he made up his mind, nothing could have made him change it. . . . He was quite cautious and sure enough of himself not to strike up rash poses or to speak off the cuff in public.⁴²

The great significance of the meeting at Moscow was that it signaled the stifling of one more hope for cooperation between the West and the Soviets. Writing of this period, Robert Murphy, Clay's State Department adviser, said that he and others had left Moscow with very somber thoughts. They had not expected a final treaty for Germany, but neither had they imagined such total lack of agreement. They felt certain that henceforth their economic

plans for Germany would meet relentless opposition. "It was the Moscow conference, I believe, that really rang down the Iron Curtain."⁴³

Marshall confirmed that view in 1956

We recognized that the Russians had a formidable setup. We thought they could be negotiated with. Harriman came back and said they could not be. I decided finally at Moscow, after the war, that they could not be. I always thought we had to make a try to negotiate with them, and I think the American people thought that.⁴⁴

Flying back to Washington with Marshall, Bohlen found the Secretary still focused on the long and almost fruitless stay in Moscow. Writing in 1973, Marshall's adviser and translator thought back to the Secretary's reaction:

Stalin's seeming indifference to what was happening in Germany made a deep impression on Marshall. He came to the conclusion that Stalin, looking over Europe, saw the best way to advance Soviet interests was to let matters drift. Economic conditions were bad. Europe was recovering slowly from the war. Little had been done to rebuild damaged highways, railroads, and canals. Business alliances severed by years of hostilities were still shattered. Unemployment was widespread. Millions of people were on short rations. There was a danger of epidemics. This was the kind of crisis that Communism thrived on. All the way back to Washington, Marshall talked of the importance of finding some initiative to prevent the complete breakdown of Western Europe.⁴⁵