

Statement by Vassili Sokolovsky (20 March 1948)

Caption: On 20 March 1948, in London, Vassili Sokolovsky, Soviet Marshal, announces the breakdown in relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies on the issue of Germany and confirms his refusal to attend future meetings of the Allied Control Council.

Source: United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446). p. 142.

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Statement by Marshal Sokolovsky Marking the Soviet Withdrawal From the Allied Control Council for Germany, March 20, 1948

[...]

At the London conference official representatives of the United States, Britain and France discussed and decided such questions regarding Germany which come directly within the competence of the Control Council and can be decided only on the basis of agreement among the Four Powers occupying Germany. The American, British and French occupation authorities, however, do not wish to inform the Control Council of the decisions prepared in London nor to give an account of the instructions they received in connection with the unilateral London decisions on the German question.

Why do the American and British representatives refuse to give an account to the Control Council of the above questions involving Germany as a whole discussed by the London conference? Firstly, because while discussing these questions the Control Council might disclose to the world public the deal struck by the United States, Britain and France in London directed against the Potsdam agreement and the other Four-Power decisions, a deal whose aims are incompatible with publicity and with the policy of peace and democratization of Germany. Secondly, because the representatives of these countries are bent on discarding all restrictions which could hinder their policy with regard to Germany, a policy contradicting the Four-Power decisions and the purposes of the occupation of Germany.

A situation has arisen in which only the Soviet side has to give an account to the Control Council whereas the American and British sides refuse to give an account to the Control Council of the actions in the zones of Germany they occupy. Thus, these delegations merely prove that they are tearing up the agreement on the Control Machinery in Germany and are assuming responsibility for breaking up this agreement. By their actions these three delegations once again confirm that the Control Council virtually no longer exists as the supreme body of authority in Germany exercising quadripartite administration of that country. This is also clear from the position taken by the afore-mentioned three delegations at all recent meetings of the Control Council and its agencies.

This means that these delegations are destroying the Control Council and burying it, are destroying the agreements reached regarding the Allied Control Council in Germany. Undoubtedly this constitutes one of the most serious violations of the obligations undertaken by the British, American and French occupation authorities in Germany by virtue of the Four-Power agreements on the administration of Germany during the occupation period.

But it is hence clear that the actions taken now or which will be taken in the future in the Western zones of occupation in Germany in implementation of the unilateral decisions of the London conference cannot be recognized as lawful.

[...]