



**Ralph Dietl.** *Emanzipation und Kontrolle: Europa in der westlichen Sicherheitspolitik 1948-1963: Eine Innenansicht des westlichen BÄ¼ndnisses, Vol. 2: Europa 1958-1963: Ordnungsfaktor oder Akteur.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007. 430 pp. EUR 76.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-515-09034-6.



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**Published on** H-German (June, 2008)

## Europe as a Threat to the Cold War Order

The first volume in Ralph Dietl's study of Europe's place in international relations after World War II examined the decade when the continent transformed itself from the site of endless national warfare into the frozen center of an East-West standoff. This second volume follows the course of (western) European diplomacy between the Rome Treaties of 1958, which created the European Economic Community and the Atomic Energy Community, and the achievement of an informal but lasting settlement of the German question in 1963, a year that Marc Trachtenberg and others have described as a watershed in the Cold War.[1] During this five-year period, Dietl argues, Europe became an independent actor greater than the sum of its parts, behaving in a more integrated fashion than its national units realized, while exercising more autonomy than expected by the superpowers that each sought to control half of it. (As the second part of the subtitle makes clear, Dietl's work tells the story only of the western half of Europe.) In a kind of "dialectic" (p. 383), movement towards European unity could take place under the protection of a bipolar system even as European cooperation helped overcome that bipolarity.

Trachtenberg argued that the increased stability of the Cold War relationship resulted from settling the "open wound" that lay at its center: the unresolved future of Germany and the precarious status of a divided Berlin. Dietl faults Trachtenberg for neglecting Europe as a source of its own history in this period, arguing that European ambitions rather than Berlin crises caused instability. The freezing in place of the Cold War order after 1963 was the successful "massive intervention of the superpowers with the goal of thwarting the development of an independent European power bloc" (p. 397). Europeans could more easily assert their hegemony because of changes in leadership, as Harold Wilson in London and Ludwig Erhard in Bonn chose to "bandwagon" behind the United States rather than pursue an independent European path.

Other studies have labeled this era the time of "the Gaullist challenge." [2] Dietl, who writes in the language of formal international relations theory and draws upon an impressive array of archival records in five countries, seeks to call into question both those accounts that are focused on the role of single nations, and those that over-

draw the international system as a pair of blocs. Instead, he argues, an incipient third force developed in Europe, more coherent than even its own proponents understood, even if its growth was halting and its aims inconsistent. Rather than springing fully-formed from the forehead of Charles de Gaulle, a relatively independent Europe was the result of structural changes propelled by every stage of the construction of postwar European unity. American administrations tried to contain European events within the framework of an Atlantic alliance led by the United States, but recurrent crises showed that such a system was not stable.

The author joins those scholars who have pointed out that de Gaulle's foreign policy represented continuity with the Fourth Republic rather than a radical departure. Those who have not recognized this fact, Dietl writes, incorrectly overpersonalized French policy as coming from the "atavistic thinking" of the French president rather than constituting the "logical consequence of the restoration of the Anglo-American special relationship" (p. 145). Focusing on de Gaulle without considering what came before him makes certain events explicable only as the unfortunate product of personality traits. De Gaulle's demand for a directorate of three powers that would place France on an equal footing with the United States and United Kingdom on nuclear matters, Dietl finds, was not a grandstander's ploy to obtain for France the unearned role of a great power, but consistent with France's policy since Pierre Mendès-France of promoting European integration while seeking to prevent that integration from diminishing France's own autonomy.

Dietl argues that West Germany, France, and Great Britain sought to "give Europe a voice" (p. 17) to overcome the bipolar structure of the Cold War by making the evolving community into a new European order with the ability to act independently of either side. Therefore, he says, all three European powers worked to establish a common security and defense policy. They were motivated by an acute awareness that they would otherwise

be at the mercy of the two superpowers. Any grand strategy emerging from Washington would assume U.S. leadership. The concessions Americans made to European desires for a greater share of decision-making and American support for increasing European military strength should not be misunderstood as support for an independent third force, but as an American effort to supplement U.S. power. In the end, the European unity of purpose Dietl sees lasted only until the superpowers were able to reestablish a bipolar order. By 1963, "the Cold War had transformed itself from an East-West conflict into an East-West regime" (p. 374) that suppressed European independence.

This is an interesting argument to make, and it may not be possible to dispute it on its own terms. For under those terms, it makes no difference, for instance, that while the French government tried to design a Europe that would be led by France, successive German governments sought to achieve their goals of reintegration and eventual reunification by trying not to alienate any NATO ally, and the British tried to prevent a forcefully independent continental Europe from coming into being by favoring their ties to both the United States and the Commonwealth. Even when we remain within an idiom that describes states as unitary actors, it is hard to detect such single-mindedness of purpose. European leaders of different nationalities may well all have wished to give Europe a voice, but they were hardly prepared to sing in harmony.

#### Notes

[1]. Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[2]. Eckart Conze, *Die gaullistische Herausforderung: Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen in der amerikanischen Europapolitik, 1958-1963* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1995).

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**Citation:** Max Paul Friedman. Review of Dietl, Ralph, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle: Europa in der westlichen Sicherheitspolitik 1948-1963: Eine Innenansicht des westlichen Bewusstseins*, Vol. 2: *Europa 1958-1963: Ordnungsfaktor oder Akteur*. H-German, H-Net Reviews. June, 2008.

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