

# PEACE NEWS LETTER

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Once more a crisis has arisen over the city of Berlin. The decisions out of which this crisis arises were made so long ago that we have scarcely remembered what they were and just who was responsible for their making. The following are excerpts from a longer paper, "Background and Analysis of the Berlin Crisis" by Dr. John M. Swomley, Jr., Associate Professor of Social Ethics at the Methodist Theological School in Kansas City, Mo. (Additional material will be printed in the September issue of PNL.)

## Berlin: Longer-Term Background

At the Moscow Conference in October, 1943, Britain, Russia, and the United States agreed on joint occupation of Germany and set up a joint European Advisory Commission. This Commission agreed in November, 1944, on a system of zones proposed by the Soviets, and on a system of control machinery for Germany with each Commander in Chief in charge of his zone.

At this time the State Department position was one of wanting guaranteed access to Berlin by land. The military, however, did the actual deciding and had a veto over the State Department. The U. S. military felt its superiority over the Russians and did not believe a signed written agreement was necessary. So the military planners insisted that the problem of access be left for settlement at the military level. It was thus the American military which was responsible for the first serious problems over Berlin, resulting in no legal agreement for assured access to Berlin by land. The U. S., however, did insist on a written guarantee from the British for free access from the North German ports in the British zone to the American zone of occupation!

At this time Russia apparently had no intention to incorporate Berlin into the Soviet Union's control since it rejected a U. S. request to feed Berlin and thus put it under Russia's economic control.

The U. S. was not prepared to press for constructive agreements on social and economic matters because the War Department supported the vengeful Morgenthau plan against a more moderate line advocated by the State Department. President Roosevelt, apparently as a result of this controversy, issued a directive which forbade any policy settlements over Germany in the end of 1944. Thus when Germany surrendered in May, 1945, there was uncertainty among the great powers as to their policy.

It was at Yalta in 1944 that Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agreed at a top level on the zones of occupation of Germany with an Allied Control Commission in Berlin to govern all of Germany as an economic and political unity. Stalin later agreed to have the French become a part of this Control Commission and have a zone taken from the original American zone. Berlin was to be occupied by all four powers and divided into four sectors.

At Yalta it was agreed to let Russia have a part of eastern Poland and eastern Prussia (Germany) with Poland being compensated for its loss to Russia by getting what was left of Germany east of the Oder-Neisse rivers.

In addition to Roosevelt's yielding of German territory to Russia and Poland, American military leaders acted so as to give Russia further control. General Eisenhower, instead of pushing on to Berlin, moved south to let the Russians take Berlin, all of this against Churchill's advice, as was the decision to let the Russians liberate Prague and thus get a major foothold in Czechoslovakia.

The next series of moves that complicated the Berlin and German picture were made by the French, who wanted some of West Germany if the Russians were to get some of East Germany. Since at Potsdam it was agreed that the Allied Control Council should operate on a basis of unanimous decisions, France was able petulantly to veto the setting up of all German political parties, nation-wide labor unions, and other items which would have made it difficult if not impossible later for East and West Germany to have developed as sep-

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Another major Western post-war mistake was made when the three Western nations decided to combine their zones into what became later a West German Republic. "The West," according to one authority, "had come to fear that a unified Germany would permit the Soviets to extend their control over all of Germany. The Soviets, at that time, were still genuinely interested in Germany unity..." (Carter, Ranney, Herz, Major Foreign Powers, p. 646). The West wanted to establish in Germany a western type of democracy in a decentralized loose federal system, whereas the Soviet Union wanted a centralized government with a central police force along the lines of the system later developed in East Germany.

This Western action resulted in the creation of an East German puppet regime and eventually an attempt by the Russians to put the West out of Berlin on the ground that Germany was no longer one unit and four-power government had in fact ceased to exist. The Berlin blockade and airlift in 1948-1949 followed and in 1949 was resolved by another agreement.

The decision to create West Germany was an outgrowth of Russian rejection of the Marshall Plan, forcing it to become a West European rather than an all-European recovery program. But it also needs to be said that the Marshall Plan was never wholly the idealistic measure some publicists claimed. It had some military overtones, as one columnist indicated: 'It had been feared by our foreign policy makers that the Western Europeans would seek to declare their countries neutral in event of war between the world's two giants... By helping those countries to build up their economy, health, trade, and business and improve their living conditions, our policy makers believe a fighting spirit can be regained.' (Cecil Dickson, Albany, N. Y. Knickerbocker News, May 1, 1948).

Following the formation of West and East Germany, the Russians set up some paramilitary groups in East Germany and in September, 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson demanded that West Germany be rearmed. The decision to rearm was made and later, after West Germany became an independent republic in 1955, it became a member of NATO.

One reason for Russian urgency in demanding a solution to the German problem is the rearmament of Germany by the United States. Russia fears that an armed West Germany, especially if armed with nuclear weapons as has been proposed in some quarters, might some day precipitate a war in order to regain former German territory now in the hands of Russia and Poland.

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**MORE NUCLEAR TESTS?** "The world hopes that exaggerated fears of clandestine testing or other arguments of advantage and disadvantage based on wholly undependable material will not lead the American Government to resume tests. The world hopes that the moratorium will be kept up whatever be the difficulties in the way of reaching an agreed test ban...

"I write this short letter with an earnest prayer that under no circumstances should a hasty decision for resumption be made by America, by which the world, which does not entirely belong to the two belligerent nuclear powers, will surely be rendered less safe and less healthy. The millions living on it in their own right have a claim for the preservation of the status quo."

-- C. Rajagopalachari  
former Governor General of India.  
Letter in New York Times, Aug. 3, 1961

**BIZERTA** Mary Hornaday, writing in the Christian Science Monitor, July 24, 1961, says:  
and "The United Nations has again shown its ability to stop a small war when East-West issues are not involved.

"Its success was evidenced in the French-Tunisian cease-fire at Bizerta following a 10-0 vote in the Security Council July 22. Hostilities were stopped through the force of world public opinion after six days of fighting had resulted in approximately 700 fatalities."

The inference which may be drawn from Miss Hornaday's first sentence is that when East-West issues are involved, that is, when Russian and American interests are at the fore, the United Nations is not only less successful, but has no real opportunity to operate. Note that the U.N. is not actively involved in attempting some solution to the difficult problems of Berlin and German unity!

**STRONGER UNITED NATIONS URGED** Prime Minister Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria recently addressed a sparsely attended session of the House of Representatives. In that address he called for strengthening the power of the United Nations so as "to make it impossible for any nation to ignore its authority."

He also stressed that U.N. decisions would not be fully effective until the newly independent African states were given greater voice in shaping its policy, this to be done by giving Africans more seats on the Security Council.

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Happily, Sir Abubaker praised "the gallant effort" being made in the United States to end prejudice. "We congratulate your government for its courage in facing up to its responsibilities in this sphere and we can assure you that as long as your administration continues its efforts it will always have our sympathy and understanding."

-- New York Times, July 27, 1961

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