

THE CITY BECOMES A SYMBOL

THE U.S. ARMY IN THE OCCUPATION OF BERLIN, 1945–1949

*William Stivers
Donald A. Carter*

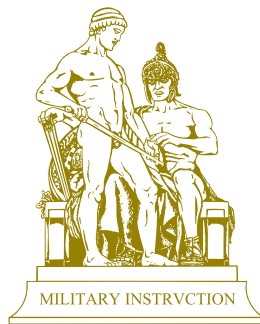


U.S. Army in the Cold War

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by
William Stivers
and
Donald A. Carter



*Center of Military History
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FOREWORD

In early July 1945, two months after the German surrender in World War II, American troops entered Berlin to take over their assigned sector as part of the occupation forces of the defeated German capital. That action concluded a long and complex negotiation among the victorious Allies and led to a series of confrontations that would turn the conquered city into a symbol of the emerging Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West.

The decision of American and British leaders not to make a final push for Berlin during the waning days of the war was, itself, a source of friction. Although British Prime Minister Winston Churchill strongly advocated for a final U.S.-British offensive to seize the city ahead of the Red Army, the Supreme Allied Commander, U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, refused to risk the additional casualties. As a result, the Red Army single-handedly captured Berlin in early May.

During the next several years, Berlin became the focal point for tensions between the Soviet Union and its former wartime allies: the United States, Britain, and France. Occupied by four-power agreement among the major wartime Allies, the city became an island deep within Soviet-controlled territory.

Although the four powers established the structure and procedures for joint control over the city, differences soon emerged over the policies and goals of the occupation. Moreover, the Western Allies grew concerned as the Soviets tightened their grip on Eastern Europe, bringing most of it under Communist control. By 1948, the United States, Britain, and France struggled to maintain their positions and rights of access as the Soviets cut off road and rail routes into the city. Confronted with a blockade of the city, American soldiers and leaders found themselves embroiled in a military-political situation of great complexity and grave risk.

Ultimately, the citizens of Berlin played a major role in determining the fate and political orientation of their city. As both East and West waged intense campaigns to win the loyalties of Berlin's citizenry, key political leaders in what had become known as West Berlin cast their lot with the West and the Americans. An alliance between German politicians, led by Ernst Reuter, and the officers and civilians who made up the American military government in Berlin ensured that the sectors of West Berlin would become firmly aligned with the West and made the city a symbol of resistance against the spread of Soviet communism.

The City Becomes a Symbol tells the story of the first four tumultuous years of the U.S. Army's occupation, explaining how Berlin became the epicenter of superpower confrontation in Europe. It is an important volume in the Center of Military History's U.S. Army in the Cold War series, setting the stage for the decades-long face-off with the Soviets in Germany.

Washington, D.C.
10 July 2017

JON T. HOFFMAN
Chief Historian

THE AUTHORS

William Stivers earned a Ph.D. in international relations history from the Johns Hopkins University. He has held teaching posts at the University of California at Santa Cruz, Colorado College, the University of Southern California's international relations graduate program in Germany, and Martin Luther University in Halle. From 1986 to 1990, he worked as historian, G-3, U.S. Command, Berlin. He came to the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) in 1998 and was later posted for three years at the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany. He returned to CMH as an Army historian until his retirement in 2013. He has published books and articles dealing with Anglo-American relations in the 1920s, U.S. Middle East policy, and postwar German history.

Donald A. Carter was born in Albany, New York, and grew up in Oneida, New York. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1977 and served as a Field Artillery Officer until 1992. During that time, he received a Ph.D. in history from the Ohio State University in 1985 and served as a military history instructor, both at West Point and at the U.S. Army Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. After leaving the Army he joined the U.S. Army Center of Military History as an archivist. In 1995 he left the Center to serve with the Gulf War Declassification Project and the U.S. Army Declassification Activity. He returned to CMH in 2003 as a historian. His publications include "Eisenhower Versus the Generals," in *Journal of Military History* (October 2007); "The U.S. Military Response to the 1960–1962 Berlin Crisis," for a National Archives pamphlet commemorating the release of Cold War records; "Wargames in Europe: The U.S. Army Experiments with Atomic Doctrine," in *Blueprints for Battle* (University Press of Kentucky, 2012); and *Forging the Shield: The U.S. Army in Europe, 1951–1962* (U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2015). He is married with two children and lives in Dale City, Virginia.

PREFACE

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the Cold War standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated international relations and world affairs. In no small measure, this conflict can be reduced to one particular issue and confrontation—Berlin. The four victorious Allies; the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France—jointly occupied the conquered city by formal agreement. Yet, almost from the signing of the German surrender documents, the alliance began to splinter. Each nation began the occupation with its own unique goals and expectations, but the increasingly aggressive nature of Soviet policy toward its occupied territories, in Berlin and elsewhere, alarmed the Western Allies. As the conflict escalated, it was clear that the city of Berlin, the only point where all four members of the former alliance interacted on a daily basis, would be a breeding ground for Cold War animosities.

The initial section of this volume describes the conflict among the Western Allies over whether or not to mount one final offensive to reach the German capital city before the Russians. The British, and particularly their prime minister, Winston Churchill, believed that capturing and controlling Berlin would be of enormous political and strategic value in the immediate postwar world. The Americans, especially Supreme Allied Commander, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, were loath to risk the additional casualties such an undertaking would entail, for an objective of such limited military value. That Eisenhower's view prevailed set the stage for a joint occupation of the city that was deep within territory administered by the Red Army.

As a result of the Soviet capture of Berlin, the American occupation forces entered a city that was already controlled by the Russians. Despite the potential for early conflict, the transition went remarkably well, and demonstrated the potential for the four allies to continue their cooperation. The military governments of the four occupying powers established the *Kommandatura*, a joint board for the administration of the occupation. However, conflicts over such issues as reparations, currency, and control over public services in Berlin soon produced the schisms that would destroy the wartime alliance. Personal conflicts between U.S. and Soviet military government officials, as well as policy differences soon led to the Soviet cadre walking out of the *Kommandatura*, never to return.

The emerging conflict over Berlin elicited a vigorous dispute among senior U.S. officials over whether or not Berlin was worth fighting for. Many Army officers, led by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Omar N. Bradley, opposed staking American policy on the defense of what they considered to be an indefensible island in a sea of Soviet military might. The U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, former Eisenhower chief of staff General Walter Bedell Smith, openly wondered why the Americans should contest a city they were so desperately trying to destroy only a few years ago. General Lucius Clay, the U.S. military governor of occupied Germany, emerged as Berlin's champion. Clay envisioned the city as a beacon of freedom deep within the Soviet stronghold. He did not believe that the United States could, in good conscience, abandon the city to Communist control.

In a remarkably short time after the end of the war, Berlin found its own political voice and took an active part in the struggle between East and West. The United States and the Soviet Union each developed patrons within the city and in greater Germany to engage in the proxy war over Berlin's political future. General Clay found a kindred spirit in Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter, and the two developed a formidable partnership in the fight to keep the city firmly within the Western orbit. That relationship faced its ultimate test as the Soviets established restrictions on transport into and out of Berlin, the so-called Berlin Blockade. The steadfastness of the people of West Berlin, as much as the remarkable achievements of the airlift into the city, consummated the split between East and West Berlin and established a legend of resistance to Soviet oppression.

This book covers the period between the closing days of World War II in Europe in 1945 and the culmination of the Berlin airlift in 1949. It is based on the records of the U.S. military government in Berlin, the official records of many of the U.S. Army elements involved in the occupation, and the military and diplomatic correspondence of senior leaders in the United States, Britain, and France. Although much of it is focused upon the U.S. Army units involved in the occupation, the nature of events in Berlin require a different perspective. This is also a story of soldier-diplomats, whose actions during the first five years of the occupation laid the groundwork for U.S.-Soviet relations for the rest of the twentieth century. And finally, it is also the story of the citizens of West Berlin, whose activism during the early postwar years rejected the overtures of Communist emissaries and firmly oriented their portion of the city toward the West.

William Stivers did most of the initial research for this volume and developed its first drafts. After its initial panel review, Stivers retired and returned with his wife to Germany. The review panel consisted of Thomas Boghardt, a senior historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History; Jonathan House, Professor and Chair of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; and noted historian and biographer, Jean Edward Smith. After some discussion, the panel recommended substantial revisions to the original manuscript. The Chief of Military History at that time, Richard

Stewart, assigned the volume to the undersigned. I conducted additional research, substantially revised portions of the original text, and shepherded the manuscript through the final editorial process.

Many individuals and organizations have helped bring this book to publication. Although I cannot mention all of them here, many deserve special mention. As Chiefs of Military History, Jeffrey Clarke, Richard Stewart, and Charles Bowery have provided material and moral support throughout the book writing process. The Chief Historian, Jon Hoffman, assisted greatly in moving the book through the final phases of publication. In the Histories Directorate at CMH, William Hammond, Dave Hogan, and James McNaughton read numerous chapters, provided essential guidance and advice, and gently helped to nudge the work forward to completion. Finally, my colleagues within the Histories Directorate, Thomas Boghardt, Mark Bradley, David Goldman, Kathy Nawyn, and Julie Prieto shared research and provided feedback and encouragement on a daily basis.

Throughout the research and writing process, the authors received help from numerous historians, archivists, and librarians. During his initial research, Stivers worked closely with the archivists at the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, Germany; the Landesarchiv in Berlin; and the British Public Records Office in London. The exhaustive list of sources throughout the book is the product of their efforts. During subsequent research trips, archivists at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, helped to fill in gaps in the narrative. As always, the archivists and librarians at CMH rose to the occasion in supporting our research. Carrie Sullivan and James Tobias deserve special mention for their help throughout the project. Here again I must also thank reviewers Thomas Boghardt, Jonathan House, Jean Smith, and Richard Stewart for their thorough reading of the original manuscript and their thoughtful feedback. This is a far better book for their contributions.

The CMH editorial staff did its customary superb job in translating our sometimes meandering prose into copy suitable for publication. Diane Arms and Cheryl Bratten are consummate professionals who made us better writers in spite of ourselves. Dale Perrigo did yeoman work organizing and verifying footnotes. Cartographer Sherry Dowdy developed a fine set of maps while Gene Snyder pulled the whole book together in the final layout process.

The final work is the product of the efforts, guidance, and advice of all those noted above. As always, the authors alone are responsible for whatever errors or inadequacies remain.

10 July 2017

DONALD A. CARTER

The City Becomes a Symbol

The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Berlin, 1945–1949

1

INTRODUCTION

Founded on wartime rights of conquest, the U.S. military occupation of its sector of Berlin, began on 4 July 1945. Unlike the rest of Germany, the city remained under four-power military occupation until 3 October 1990, the day of Germany's reunification. American soldiers continued as guests in the city until September 1994. By the time the last units had departed, the period of America's military presence in Germany's capital encompassed nearly fifty years.

Berlin in May 1945 was the capital city of a defeated and devastated Germany. After five years of Allied bombing and the bloody house-to-house fighting against the Russians in the climactic battle of the war, little was left standing. The civic, commercial, and cultural center of the Third Reich was almost completely destroyed, leaving a traumatized population to face the consequences of the war they had initiated.

Over the course of the next half century, the occupation passed through numerous phases. The first phase—the subject of this book—lasted little more than four years. Its defining feature was the administration of Germany and Berlin through the military governments of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France. This time was unique in the history of the U.S. Army due not only to the international circumstances surrounding its mission, but to the intimate involvement of military personnel in the domestic affairs of an advanced European state.

Few periods were more momentous than those four years, when the events of an epoch were compressed into a short historical interval. The subjection of Adolf Hitler's shattered Third Reich by the Allied powers, the disintegration of the wartime coalition, the reconstruction of Western Europe with American aid, the Soviet blockade of Berlin, the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, and the founding of two German states with Europe divided along their border, all occurred during the period of military rule in Germany and Berlin. As a result, at no time other than the war itself did American soldiers stand so squarely in the center of global affairs. In Berlin, where the powers came together in direct physical proximity, they lived on the "seam" of global politics. Every action taken, however localized, had pervasive effects, both objective and subjective, on Germany, Europe, and the United States.

Those first four years in Berlin were marked by rapid changes. When the victor nations entered a shattered Berlin in 1945, they envisioned a unified metropolis serving as the permanent seat of four-power rule over Germany as

a whole and planned to govern the city's internal life through a single, interlarded "Kommandatura." Despite a hopeful start—capped by the drafting of a new municipal constitution and the holding of citywide elections in October 1946—the vision failed. In the Kommandatura, differences over monetary reform escalated an already emerging breach between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. German party conflicts, rooted in the divisions of the interwar republic, drew the occupiers into a political vortex, while failure to unify Germany's economy put the entire country on the path to partition. Tensions climaxed in the spring of 1948 when the Soviets blockaded West Berlin's land communications with the Western Zones of Germany, forcing the West to supply Berlin by air. By the autumn of 1948, Berlin, like Germany, had split in two, and the line dividing East and West Berlin had become, both physically and symbolically, the front line of East-West conflict. After the lifting of the blockade on 12 May 1949, the city remained divided, and with no *modus vivendi* to bridge the separation, the split deepened.

Over the course of these years, the relationship of the United States with the leaders and people of West Berlin changed drastically. What began as an encounter between victors and vanquished ended as an association of friends and allies. The punitive features of the occupation first receded and finally disappeared; distance and distrust yielded to partnership and mutual acclaim. In Berliners' eyes, the blockade confirmed the worst fears of Soviet intentions while the airlift manifested America's technological prowess. For the people of Berlin's Western sectors, the United States was no longer an occupier but an invincible "protective power," the ultimate guarantor of Berlin's security and freedom, and the underpinning of its economic life. On 21 September 1949, consistent with this change in role, the Americans disbanded the office of military government in the U.S. Sector of Berlin. Although West Berlin remained under tripartite occupation until 1990, the term "occupation" described the city's international status and the continued presence of Western garrisons rather than American or Allied direction of its internal affairs.¹

On their side, Americans quickly absolved Berliners of their complicity with the Third Reich and extolled them for their steadfast courage in resisting a new totalitarian menace. The common people of Berlin, asserted *Time* magazine, had won the battle of the blockade—"the people who met in huge rallies to hurl their defiance from the shadow of the Red-flag-topped Brandenburger Tor. . . . Without them, the West, for all its bold determination and its roaring C-54s, would have lost Berlin." West Berlin's social democratic mayor, Ernst Reuter, became an unlikely American hero. Hailed as "one of the few authentically big figures in Western Europe, a fearless foe of Communism who meets the enemy without flinching or compromise," he made the cover of *Time*.

¹ A typical example of this verbiage is found in the public relations pamphlet *Outlook Berlin* (West Berlin: Berlin Information Center, 1988), pp. 32, 59. See also Robert B. Grathwol and Donna Moorhus, *American Forces in Berlin: Cold War Outpost* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 72.

The *Saturday Evening Post* honored him with the title, “The Mayor Russia Hates,” while the *New York Times* called him “the symbol of humanity’s struggle to achieve dignity.” In the words of one German historian, Americans had begun to see Berlin not only as Europe’s most important “outpost of freedom” but as America’s Cold War “‘City on the Hill,’ a place of almost mythical quality and visionary projections.”²

Many American military leaders had initially questioned whether the city held any real strategic value. As World War II had drawn to a close, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower refused to divert military resources toward the capture of the German capital city. Other senior officers questioned the military value in trying to defend a position surrounded by an increasingly hostile “ally.” They argued that the withdrawal of American forces from Berlin would, in fact, stabilize the dividing line between East and West. Their views contrasted sharply with those who had come to view the city as a symbol of Western resolve against Soviet encroachment.

Little in the initial circumstances of the occupation would have predicted these developments. In the first years of the U.S. presence in Berlin, relations with the Soviets retained the marks of wartime comradery. General Eisenhower and his deputy for military government, Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay, were dedicated to preserving a cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union. “[Y]ou can take great pride that while you are here you are participating in one of the great experiments of all time,” Clay declared in a speech to his officers in late August 1945. “You occupy the testing ground of international cooperation. Every act that you do and every decision you make influences the international undertaking to govern Germany. If we are to have understanding and accord throughout the world in the years to come, the experiment in Germany cannot be permitted to fail.” The early work of the four-power control agencies matched Clay’s hopefulness. As a military government economist recalled, in those days “[A] certain fraternal air surrounded the commanding generals who alike were commanders of military forces and chiefs of military government” while on the lower levels “negotiators frequently could respond primarily to professional arguments, to *esprit de corps*, or even to the sheer spirit of conviviality.”³

At the same time, the relationship between Americans and Berliners was initially quite tenuous. U.S. Army units entered Berlin in July 1945 to occupy the capital city of a vanquished enemy state. The aim of the occupation was

² “Victory at Berlin,” *Time*, 16 May 1949; “Last Call for Europe,” *Time*, 18 Sep 1950; James P. O’Donnell, “The Mayor Russia Hates,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 5 Feb 1949; Leo Cherne, “Mayor Reuter of Beleaguered Berlin,” *New York Times Magazine*, 15 Mar 1953; Andreas W. Daum, “America’s Berlin 1945–2000: Between Myths and Visions,” in *Berlin: The New Capital in the East. A Transatlantic Appraisal*, ed. Frank Trommler (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Contemporary Germany Studies, 2000), p. 49.

³ Quote from Carolyn Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944–1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 168, fn. 4; Manuel Gottlieb, *The German Peace Settlement and the Berlin Crisis* (New York: Paine-Whitman Publishers, 1960), p. 86.



Curious German citizens of Berlin gather around a U.S. tank of the 2d Armored Division in July 1945.

neither liberation nor reconstruction but control of that enemy in order to prevent Germany's resurgence as a threat to world peace. Well into 1946, U.S. officers kept German officials at arm's length, even refusing to shake hands. "I am definitely on record as being on the 'treat the Germans rough side,'" declared the director of the U.S. military government in Berlin, Col. Frank L. Howley. Germans, he felt, were never "good," only "bad" or "less bad."⁴

Yet, in the eyes of countless Berliners, many of whom fancied themselves victims rather than perpetrators, resentment against the American occupiers was justified. For them, the American occupation signified not only protection from brutality at the hands of Soviet troops but also arbitrary confiscation of property, eviction from dwelling space, and physical and verbal abuse by U.S. personnel. The complaints, though useful in projecting a spurious victimhood, were also grounded in some degree of fact. Freed from the deadly seriousness of war, and with no mission aside from waiting to be sent home, many soldiers, despite the attempts of their commanders to maintain discipline, sought gratification in acts ranging from currency fraud, black marketeering, and theft

⁴ Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, pp. 19–22, box 2, Frank L. Howley Papers, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

of requisitioned goods to violent drunkenness, rape, assault, and robbery. The early days of the occupation were not without their dark side.

But by any measure, the relatively rapid transformation of relations in Berlin represented a singular achievement of the military government and U.S. foreign policy. That the United States dissolved its military administration so quickly after the end of hostilities attests not only to its success in restoring civilian government in the Western Zones of Germany and West Berlin but also to having won the population of those areas to a self-conscious association with American policies and aims. To this day, over sixty years after the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, surprising numbers of Germans regard the postwar democratic order as a creation of the Anglo-American occupation rather than as a German achievement. Indeed, three years before the opening of the Berlin Wall, Fritz Klein Jr., an eminent East German historian and member of the Socialist Unity Party since his youth, stated in a conversation with several American visitors that democracy in West Germany would have been “unthinkable” without the influence of the American and British military governments.⁵

Success was never inevitable. The administrative division of Berlin in 1948 led to a widening split of its economic, social, and cultural life—and to diminished contact between relatives, friends, and professional colleagues. Later in 1949, the German Democratic Republic placed its capital in Berlin while the Federal Republic of Germany moved its capital to the small city of Bonn in the Rhineland. Against the warnings of military leaders such as Generals Omar N. Bradley and Walter Bedell Smith, the United States became committed to the defense of a militarily untenable enclave that could quickly turn into a flash point. America’s German allies in West Berlin—the “fearless foes of Communism”—saw their city not as a place to be protected but as a base for action against the enemy. They stoked tensions and disdained rapprochement. In the process, they exposed the Western powers to incalculable risks.

The wider problem, however, was less the prospect of the flash point actually igniting than the effects of mutual mistrust and misunderstanding. Conventional wisdom depicts Berlin’s division as a defensive action by the West to thwart Moscow’s plans to absorb the entire city into the Soviet sphere. Faced with Soviet aggressive designs, the three Allied powers drew the Western sectors together into a separate enclave of democracy—West Berlin—closely tied to the West German state. In the words of Clay’s biographer, Jean Edward Smith, “An easy recipe . . . evolved in which all Soviet actions were interpreted as a master plan of aggression.” The cooperative beginnings of the quadripartite regime were forgotten and its breakup ascribed solely to Soviet ambitions. Like the Munich crisis of 1938, Berlin became an all-purpose

⁵ Klein was the first East German guest professor in the United States. For his impressions of the United States, see Fritz Klein, *Drinnen und Draussen: Ein Historiker in der DDR* (Inside and Outside: A Historian in the German Democratic Republic) (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 2001), pp. 274–85.

rationale for demonizing the “enemy,” eschewing negotiations, and exalting “resolution” over practical compromise.⁶

Germany and its former capital were not blank slates upon which the United States inscribed its writ. Thus, even if the American forces of occupation were the strongest single actor in postwar West Berlin, they were scarcely alone on the stage. Berlin’s class formations and political movements had taken shape during the previous century, and their identities had sharpened during the Weimar era. The city was a renowned center of science, theater, architecture, and creative art; the juncture of railroad and waterway connections to all parts of Europe; and—alongside New York—the leading city of the electro-mechanical revolution. “Men make their own history,” wrote Karl Marx, “but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.” True to Marx’s dictum, the military government made history, but only through the people, organizations, and social forces it encountered in Berlin. The story of “America’s Berlin”—a democracy founded anew—often omits the role of Germans and of German institutions, and makes the occupiers appear as sole creators of reality. Nonetheless, the story is pervasive and has never lost its seductive influence over American public thought.⁷

That such presumptions remain prevalent is no accident. Although a voluminous literature exists on Berlin in the 1940s, the U.S. Army’s role in the occupation has never been examined in its entirety. Countless works have been written on the Berlin airlift, mainly to retell a Cold War saga with a familiar cast of heroes and villains. German scholars have published monographs on subjects such as currency reform in Berlin, the Berlin school reform, political party conflict, and the drafting of the Berlin constitution. But no work has focused on the U.S. Army in the early, formative years of the occupation itself; none has sought to integrate the partial histories into a whole; and most have reduced the shift of German-American relations in the city to a heartstring litany about “enemies becoming friends.”⁸

The purpose of this book is to return to the scene of events immediately after World War II in order to seek a more accurate understanding of the Army’s role in that occupation. In doing so, the authors hope to bring a more balanced and objective focus on the critical events of the early Cold War and the Army’s role, and that of key Army leaders, in them. The ultimate aim is to impart to readers a more nuanced approach to those early days. An appreciation

⁶ Jean E. Smith, “The View from USFET: General Clay’s and Washington’s Interpretation of Soviet Intentions in Germany, 1945–1948,” in *U.S. Occupation in Europe After World War II*, ed. Hans A. Schmitt (Lawrence, Kans.: Regent’s Press, 1978), pp. 77–78.

⁷ Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), p. 15.

⁸ For an entire book devoted to this theme, see Edward N. Peterson, *The American Occupation of Germany: Retreat to Victory* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1977). See also *Outlook Berlin*, p. 32.

of the complications of the occupation of Berlin may help today's U.S. military confront the complexities of the post-Cold War world, where, as then in Berlin, military missions are inherently political, internal and external issues are so intermixed as to be indistinguishable, and success hangs as much on judgment and circumstance as strength and technical skill.

2

THE DIVISION OF GERMANY AND BERLIN

On 14 November 1944, while the war still raged, American, British, and Soviet representatives signed an agreement to divide Germany into three zones of occupation, each governed by the commander in chief of the respective power. In the same accord, they agreed to split Berlin, the German capital, into three sectors. Despite the sector lines, however, the powers contemplated no administrative division of the city. Instead, they resolved to treat it as a single area under combined rule. Thus, unlike the zones of Germany, which marked off spheres of political control, Berlin's sectors defined merely the physical location of the occupying forces.

At the time, the contradiction between the principle of joint rule and the establishment of sectors was scarcely noticed. In the absence of sectors, the powers might have created an intermingled force of occupation with offices, guard posts, and quarters throughout the city, and with common facilities for communications and supplies. But the formation of sectors was the founding act of Cold War Berlin. Instead of mixed forces, cohesive national garrisons took shape in the assigned districts, and the Western areas soon became enclaves inside the Soviet sphere.

The arrangements for joint rule reflected the degree of camaraderie and common cause that the wartime alliance had forged by 1945. For most leaders, whether civilian or military, the prospect of East-West conflict had scant effect on their conduct of the war or on their planning for the aftermath. At General Dwight D. Eisenhower's insistence, U.S. commanders in Europe resisted the politicization of decision making, declined to make a race for territory, and left the capture of Berlin to the Soviets. Their goal in war was victory over Adolf Hitler's military machine, and their aim in peace was to control Germany, not the Soviet Union. These Americans had witnessed the devastation brought on by German aggression in Europe; knew the Soviets as generally reliable, if rather secretive, military allies; and believed cooperation might continue in the war's aftermath. Aside from some bickering between Washington and London, the Allies concluded decisions on Germany with relative ease. Despite ongoing suspicions and tensions over Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe, most Anglo-American leaders saw no reason to assume that wartime cooperation, nourished in the comradeship of common struggle, must abruptly cease.

Zones in Germany

Months before Allied diplomats began discussing the division of Germany and Berlin, it became an issue for Anglo-American military planners. Without political sanction—not to speak of Soviet participation—their considerations were only tentative. Nonetheless, as an impulse to diplomacy, their contribution was critical.

The process began in April 1943 when an Anglo-American joint staff in London initiated planning for the cross-channel invasion known as Operation OVERLORD. Heading this staff was British Lt. Gen. Frederick E. Morgan, whose title, chief of staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC), understated his de facto role as the acting supreme commander prior to the arrival of General Eisenhower in January 1944.¹

In addition to OVERLORD, General Morgan had instructions to draft a parallel plan, code-named RANKIN, to prepare Allied forces for an earlier-than-expected return to the continent in the event German resistance suddenly dissolved. On 3 August 1943, the Joint Intelligence Subcommittee of the British War Cabinet submitted an assessment that impelled COSSAC planners to rush the proposal to completion. Pointing to Germany's reverses on the Russian front, events in Italy and the Balkans, the Allied antisubmarine campaign, and the intensifying air offensive, the committee concluded that the enemy's situation was "verging on desperate." To meet Allied threats to Italy and the Balkans, the committee felt the Germans might transfer forces from Norway, Denmark, the Low Countries, and France; and if faced with imminent disaster on the Eastern Front, the Germans might abandon the whole of western and southern Europe in order to concentrate against the Soviets. In response to this estimate, Morgan submitted the first iteration of RANKIN to the British War Cabinet on 13 August. His staff posited three cases: Case A denoted such a weakening of German strength as to permit an assault prior to the OVERLORD target date of 1 May 1944; Case B postulated a German withdrawal from the occupied territories; and Case C envisioned Germany's unconditional surrender.²

The last case—Germany's surrender—entailed the prompt deployment of Allied troops inside the Reich. The COSSAC plan drew out a rough assignment of territorial responsibilities: eleven U.S. divisions would occupy the Rhine Valley from Germany's border with Switzerland northward to Düsseldorf;

¹ For the best summary, see Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, The United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1954), pp. 23, 103–04.

² Memo, Lt Gen Frederick E. Morgan, Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC), for Sec, Chs of Staff Committee, Ofcs of War Cabinet, COSSAC (43) 40, 13 Aug 1943, sub: Operation RANKIN, Entry 27 A, Folder Chs of Staff Committee, Post-Hostilities Planning sec., G-3 Div, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), box 100, Record Group (RG) 331, National Archives, College Park, Md. (NACP), Encl to an., COSSAC (43) 41, 14 Aug 1943, sub: Digest of Operation RANKIN, Entry 27 A, Folder Chs of Staff Committee, Post-Hostilities Planning sec., G-3 Div, SHAEF, box 100, RG 331, NACP.

thirteen British divisions would occupy the northwestern part of the country including the Ruhr Valley and the Hansa port cities eastward to Lübeck. The planners did not specify an Eastern Zone of Germany, nor did they mention Berlin. Recognizing that such matters were beyond his purview, General Morgan stressed the “urgent desirability” of collaboration with the Soviet Union. If RANKIN proved possible, he noted, Western and Soviet forces would come into contact at an early stage, and it seemed inappropriate to leave such an important juncture to happenstance.³

Morgan cabled the plan to the Combined Chiefs of Staff who were meeting in Quebec for the Quadrant Conference, one of the seven wartime summits they conducted with the president and prime minister. In their meeting on 23 August, the chiefs approved the RANKIN outline “in principle,” while specifying that it remain under continuous review, especially to determine whether airpower could substitute for ground forces; the American representatives expressed no view on the proposed zones of occupation. Several hours later, the chiefs met with the political leaders. President Franklin D. Roosevelt led off his remarks by asking whether a study was underway regarding “an emergency entrance to the continent.” In the first apparent mention of Berlin in connection with RANKIN, the president stated that he desired United Nations troops to be ready to get to Berlin as soon as the Russians. After General Sir Alan F. Brooke briefly summarized the three RANKIN contingencies, the discussion proceeded to the main business, OVERLORD.⁴

In the immediate aftermath of the Quebec summit, General Morgan, in London, received a draft paper on the division of Germany. Prepared in the Post-Hostilities Planning Subcommittee of the British War Cabinet under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Clement R. Attlee, it reflected a careful integration of diplomatic, political, and military viewpoints. The British officials envisioned carving Germany into three zones—approximately equal in population—coinciding with the boundaries of existing German *länder* (provinces and states). British forces would occupy northwest Germany (Schleswig-Holstein, Hannover, Brunswick, Westphalia, Hessen-Nassau, and the Rhine Province); American forces the southwest (Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, Hessen-Darmstadt, and the Saarland), and Soviet forces the territory in the east. Berlin, inside the Soviet Zone, would become a separate area occupied by a mixed force of all three powers. The COSSAC staff integrated these ideas into a revised plan for RANKIN C. General Morgan delivered it personally to U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall in October. The recommendations, however,

³ Ibid.; Memo, Morgan for Sec, Chs of Staff Committee, Ofcs of War Cabinet, COSSAC (43) 40, 13 Aug 1943.

⁴ Min, Combined Chs of Staff 115th Mtg, Ofc of U.S. Sec to the Combined Chs of Staff, Quadrant Conf, 23 Aug 1943, Papers and Min, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) Library, Washington, D.C.; Min, Second Mtg of President and Prime Minister with the Combined Chs of Staff, 23 Aug 1943, Quadrant Conf, Papers and Min, CMH Library.

involved plans and decisions beyond the scope of purely military considerations. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff requested guidance from the president.⁵

On 19 November, while en route to Cairo and Tehran, Roosevelt delivered his answer. Meeting with the Joint Chiefs in the admiral's cabin of the USS *Iowa*, the president discussed splitting Germany into three states, roughly defined by religion—a Catholic southwestern state, a Protestant northwestern state, and a northeastern state whose religion was Prussianism. He opposed the American occupation of a southwestern state because the United States would get involved with “reconstituting France,” a “British baby.” “The United States should take northwest Germany,” he declared. “We can get our ships into such ports as Bremen and Hamburg and . . . should go as far as Berlin.” General Marshall explained to him that the British paper fit logically with invasion planning. Given that British forces were to operate in the north and American forces in the south, the proposed division of territory would correspond to deployments on the front. “There would be less entanglement in forces, supply lines would be shorter and more direct.” To comply with the president's intentions, however, U.S. forces would have to redeploy across British lines of communications. Roosevelt was unconvinced. He wanted the northwestern zone with its port facilities and reemphasized his desire to take Germany's capital. “There would definitely be a race for Berlin,” he said, “We may have to put United States divisions into Berlin as soon as possible.”⁶

At the end of the meeting, Roosevelt committed his ideas to paper. Using a National Geographic map of Germany provided by his naval adviser, R. Adm. Wilson Brown Jr., Roosevelt casually penciled in the zonal boundaries. The president's demarcation cut across administrative and geographical boundaries. He included not only Berlin, but also Leipzig and Stettin in the U.S. Zone, ambitious claims that the British and the Soviets were unlikely to accept.⁷

In advance of their 4 December meeting in Cairo with the British Chiefs of Staff, the U.S. Joint Chiefs reworked the ideas of Roosevelt's sketch into a formal memorandum. Their proposal on the zones was three sparse sentences. Inexplicably, they dropped the president's demand for Berlin. Instead, Berlin would form part of the eastern boundary of the U.S. Zone. At the same time, they claimed not only Leipzig and Stettin, but extended the American area farther east to take in the city of Cottbus, site of an important railroad junction. Like Roosevelt's map, the Joint Chiefs' proposed boundaries ignored

⁵ Ofc of Ch of Mil History, History of the Civil Affairs Div, vol. VI, ch. 1, pp. 6–10, CMH Library; and ch. 5, pp. 4–6, CMH Library. See also Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, Army Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1975), p. 6.

⁶ Min, President's Mtg with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), 19 Nov 1943, in *Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS], 1943*, 6 vols., *The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961), 1:253–56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 261; Copy of map printed in Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, p. 116.

administrative and geographical realities. The British objected, although not on account of the boundaries. Rather, they found the “crossing of lines of communication” militarily impossible. The two sides agreed to refer the matter to the COSSAC for further study. In early January, General Morgan rejected the U.S. proposals. Not only would the transport difficulties of a crossover prove insurmountable, particularly if it occurred after the invasion was well under way, but the diversion of staff to revising RANKIN would severely impede preparations for OVERLORD.⁸

Within a week, however, the discussions had moved to a new tripartite forum, the European Advisory Commission. Diplomats and chiefs of state would now resolve the debate that military planners had initiated.

European Advisory Commission

In October 1943, the American, British, and Soviet foreign ministers—Cordell Hull, Anthony Eden, and Vyacheslav M. Molotov—met in Moscow to prepare an agenda for the upcoming talks between the three heads of government in Tehran. In the course of these deliberations they signed a protocol establishing a standing committee to meet in London. The mission of that body—the European Advisory Commission—would be to formulate recommendations for postwar policy, particularly in regard to Germany.⁹

The commission took up work in January 1944. The U.S. and Soviet ambassadors to Britain, John G. Winant and Feodor T. Gousev, and the British Foreign Office’s Assistant Undersecretary of State Sir William Strang, headed their nation’s delegations. Although the men worked well together and demonstrated a pragmatic approach to resolving issues, the American and Soviet delegates were on short leashes. Despite British desires to grant the commission wide authority to examine issues and make recommendations, Winant and Gousev could neither submit proposals nor respond to the proposals of others without instruction from Washington or Moscow. The difficulties soon became apparent.¹⁰

On 15 January 1944, only one day after the first formal meeting of the commission, Strang presented a detailed proposal for the zoning of Germany. It started by positing two methods of occupation. The first was to establish a

⁸ Memo, JCS for Combined Chs of Staff, 4 Dec 1943, in *FRUS, 1944*, 7 vols., *The Conference at Quebec* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965–1967), 1:196; Min, Mtg of the Combined Chs of Staff, 4 Dec 1943, in *FRUS, 1943*, vol. 1, *The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, pp. 688–89; Memorandum for the Record (MFR), George M. Eley, Asst to President’s Naval Aide, n.d., sub: Zones of Occupation in Europe, in *FRUS, 1944*, vol. 1, *The Conference at Quebec*, pp. 145–58; MFR, Eley, n.d.

⁹ MFR, Charles E. Bohlen, 25 Oct 1943, sub: Summary of the Proceedings of the Seventh Session of the Tripartite Conf; Conf Document, U.S. Proposal with Regard to the Treatment of Germany, no. 20, n.d.; Protocol, European Advisory Committee, Moscow, an. 2 to Protocol, 1 Nov 1943. All in *FRUS, 1943*, vol. 1, *The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, pp. 629–34, 720–23, 756–57, respectively; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 37–38.

¹⁰ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), p. 166.

mixed occupation in which the Allies would occupy each district of Germany with a “polyglot force” consisting of small units from each nation. The second was to divide Germany into zones in which one power would predominate, albeit with contingents of the other allies—including smaller states like Poland—present as “guests.” After a brief discussion, the group determined that the first method would prove unworkable. Therefore, the conclusion called for Germany’s division into zones. Following the plan already known to Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the British proposed to divide Germany into three approximately equal zones while making Berlin an area of combined occupation. As before, they assigned the northwestern zone to themselves, the eastern area to the Soviets, and the southern to the United States. The American and Soviet delegations submitted the proposal to their home governments for reply.¹¹

In Moscow, the Preparations Commission for the Armistice—a subordinate body of the Foreign Affairs Commissariat—had just completed its own planning paper. It set out two “variants” of an East-West division of Germany. One divided the country along the Elbe River. The second drew a line from the Baltic city of Wismar to the Czechoslovakian border, using the Elde, Elbe, Saale, and Elster Rivers to define the boundary of the Eastern Zone. Although the British plan divided Germany by states and provinces, it resembled the commission’s second variant. The chief difference was that the British use of political-administrative boundaries yielded a substantially larger zone of Soviet control—adding parts of Mecklenburg and Saxony-Anhalt along with all of Thuringia—than the Soviet method of following the course of rivers. The Soviets could scarcely resist their ally’s generosity. At the same time, they had given no thought to sharing control of Berlin. Nor had they considered admitting contingents from other states into their areas of control; in particular, they abhorred the idea of any Polish presence in the Soviet sphere of occupation.¹²

The commission sent its draft reply to Joseph V. Stalin on 8 February. It incorporated the main parts of the British plan, including the joint occupation of Berlin. As a quid pro quo, the commission suggested a similar arrangement for the international maritime centers of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein. Stalin, however, struck this from the text. In the eyes of a German expert, the Soviet leader put such great store in the principle of occupation by a single power that he was unwilling to complicate discussions with a demand to co-occupy the

¹¹ Memo, Sir William Strang, British Foreign Office’s Assistant Undersecretary of State, for European Advisory Commission, 15 Jan 1944, sub: The Military Occupation of Germany, in *FRUS, 1944*, vol. 1, *The Conference at Quebec*, pp. 140–59.

¹² Jochen Laufer, *Pax Sovietica: Stalin, die Westmächte und die deutsche Frage, 1941–1945* (Pax Sovietica: Stalin, the Western Powers and the German Question, 1941–1945) (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2009), pp. 403–19; Draft Protocol, Preparations Commission for the Armistice, Kapitulationsbedingungen (Conditions of Capitulation), 3 Feb 1944, in *Die UdSSR und die deutsche Frage 1941–1948: Dokumente aus dem Archiv für Außenpolitik der Russischen Föderation* (The USSR and the German Question 1941–1948: Documents from the Archiv of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation), 4 vols. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2004–2012), 1:305–11, 421–26.

two maritime areas. By accepting the British scheme nearly in total, he would make it easy for them to drop the one objectionable part of it—the presence of guest contingents.¹³

When the Soviets sent their response to London on 16 February, Ambassador Winant saw it as virtually identical to the British proposals and “encouragingly close to our own ideas.” Still awaiting word from Washington, the U.S. delegates could offer no response. Privately, they would have readily closed the bargain. Indeed, as U.S. diplomat Philip E. Mosely later wrote, U.S. Embassy officials considered the Soviet acceptance as evidence of “a moderate and conciliatory approach” to the German problem, because “in terms of war effort and war-inflicted sufferings the Soviets might have claimed a larger share.”¹⁴

When instructions finally came on 8 March, the delegation was stunned by what embassy counselor George F. Kennan termed “a most curious communication.” Instead of responding to the Anglo-Soviet plan, Acting Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius Jr. sent Ambassador Winant the 4 December memorandum submitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to their British counterparts in Cairo. For Winant and his colleagues, the paper was unpresentable. It offered no explanation for why the Anglo-Soviet boundary lines were unacceptable and laid an indefensible claim to territory. As Kennan recalled the calculations, the proposed U.S. Zone would include “51 percent of the population and 46 percent of the territory of Germany,” pushing the Soviet Zone boundary considerably to the east. Only the strongest of arguments, coupled with tangible pressure, could have persuaded the Soviets to accept such an arrangement, and the U.S. delegation had neither.¹⁵

Winant sent Kennan to Washington to seek reconsideration; the counselor met with Roosevelt on 3 April. At the start of their discussion, Kennan found the president heavily fixated on his argument with the British over who should get the northwestern zone, and it took some effort to get Roosevelt to realize that the immediate issue was the Eastern Zone boundary as delineated by the Joint Chiefs. After Roosevelt finally understood the question, Kennan remarked, “He laughed gaily and said, just as I expected him to say, ‘Why that’s just something I once drew out on the back of an envelope.’” Roosevelt declared himself to be favorably inclined toward accepting British and Soviet proposals concerning

¹³ Draft Protocol, Preparations Commission for the Armistice, 8 Feb 1944, in *The USSR and the German Question 1941–1948*, 1:316–21; Laufer, *Pax Sovietica*, pp. 25–26.

¹⁴ Telg, Ambassador John G. Winant to Cordell Hull, Sec of State, 16 Feb 1944, in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:172–73. Winant was referring to the delegation’s first assessment of the text in Russian. Feodor T. Gousev presented the English version in Memo, Gousev for European Advisory Commission, 18 Feb 1944, sub: Terms of Surrender for Germany, in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:173–79; Philip E. Mosely, *The Kremlin and World Politics* (New York: Vintage, 1960), pp. 169–71.

¹⁵ Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950*, p. 168; Memo, JCS for Combined Chs of Staff, 4 Dec 1943, Encl to Ltr, Edward R. Stettinius Jr. to John G. Winant, 8 Mar 1944, in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:195–96; Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950*, pp. 167–69. For summary, see MFR, Elsey, n.d.

Soviet Zone borders and promised to straighten out the “mix-up.” Without saying so, Roosevelt had also abandoned his notion of controlling Berlin.¹⁶

Accordingly, on 1 May 1944, the State Department instructed the ambassador to accept the Anglo-Soviet zonal boundary map and to allocate the Eastern Zone to the Soviet Union. Although the U.K.-U.S. quarrel was still unsettled, the commission delegates began to shape the Anglo-Soviet proposals into a draft protocol, which they completed at the end of June. As described by Winant in a 1 July cable, “This protocol defined the boundaries of the zones of occupation in Germany proper on the basis of the lines suggested by the British and Soviets and approved by ourselves—the respective countries occupying the northwestern and southwestern zones being left blank.”¹⁷

At that point, the commission turned its attention to the arrangement for Berlin. In a paper submitted on 1 July, the Soviets proposed to divide the city into eastern, northwestern, and southwestern sectors, with the eastern sector under their control. They defined sector boundaries on the basis of the twenty *Bezirke* (administrative districts) of Berlin. The Soviet Sector would consist of the districts Mitte, Friedrichshain, Pankow, Prenzlauer Berg, Weissensee, Lichtenberg, Treptow and Köpenick. The northwestern sector contained Reinickendorf, Wedding, Tiergarten, Charlottenburg, Spandau, and Wilmersdorf; the southwestern sector comprised Zehlendorf, Steglitz, Schöneberg, Kreuzberg, Tempelhof, and Neukölln. They left blank spaces for the names of the powers that would occupy the western districts, leaving it to the Americans and British to decide.

Under the Soviet plan, the Allies would quarter their forces in Berlin in their respective sectors, where they would maintain public order while also helping to safeguard Allied agencies throughout the city. Political power over the city would reside in the Kommandatura, an inter-Allied governing authority consisting of the three Allied commandants and a joint staff. The commandants would rotate into the job of chief commandant at regular intervals. They would establish technical agencies in the city corresponding to municipal departments in Berlin and would communicate to German authorities either directly or through these agencies. Because the Kommandatura would also supervise the daily work of city government, its mandate would encompass the whole of city affairs.¹⁸

Winant at once sought commentary on this proposal from both the State Department and military authorities at the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), then located at Bushy Park near London.

¹⁶ Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950*, p. 171. See also Memo, George F. Kennan for Dept of State, 4 Apr 1944, Encl to Ltr, James C. Dunn, Director of the Ofc of European Affairs, to John H. Hilldring, Director of Civil Affairs Div, War Dept, 5 Apr 1944, in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:207–09; MFR, Elsey, n.d., pp. 155–56.

¹⁷ Telgs, Hull to Winant, 1 May 1944, 1:211; Winant to Hull, 1 Jul 1944, 1:237. Both in *FRUS, 1944*.

¹⁸ Telg, Winant to Hull, 1 Jul 1944, in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:237–39.

The State Department needed only five days to return a cable disparaging the Soviet plan for Berlin. Although the scheme was “acceptable in principle”—as long as Berlin’s administration remained a combined function and the sectors were for billeting and police purposes only—it was rejected on details. First, the department regarded the disposition of troops within the city as a military issue, to be determined by military commanders at the appropriate time, rather than as a matter for immediate consideration by the commission. Second, it felt the consideration of final sector boundaries to be premature because it saw no way to gauge future destruction, which might make some sectors inadequate for an occupying force.¹⁹

SHAEF Planning and Berlin

By 1 July, when Winant queried SHAEF for its opinion, Allied successes in France appeared to presage an early German collapse. Although movement through the hedgerow country was painfully slow, the Allies’ lodgment on the continent was substantial and secure. Germany’s situation deteriorated as the month progressed. The 20 July attempt on Hitler’s life revealed sharp divisions within the ruling elite. On 26 July, U.S. tanks punctured the German defenses outside St. Lô, fanned out, and disorganized the German resistance. With the breakthrough finally achieved, the liberation of Paris was only four weeks away. Meanwhile, on the Eastern Front, the Soviets had surged to the Vistula, and their attack into Romania drove its government to defect at the very moment the Western Allies were entering the French capital.²⁰

As a result of the cascading changes in circumstance, a new posthostilities plan appeared more as current need than as a scheme for the future. Thus, in July and August, SHAEF’s planning staff wrote a successor to RANKIN, bearing the code name TALISMAN. Directing the preparation was SHAEF’s Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, who served as Eisenhower’s plenipotentiary for political-military affairs.

For Smith and his planners, the recent agreement on the zones of occupation provided welcome certainty in respect to the western boundaries of the Soviet Zone. The Soviet proposal on Berlin, forwarded by Ambassador Winant, was equally well-received. Indeed, the planners not only embraced the Soviet plan but inserted its wording, virtually unchanged, into the text of TALISMAN. The only difference between the Western and Soviet wording was that Smith’s planners filled in the blanks for the powers occupying the Western sectors. The northwestern sector (Reinickendorf, Wedding, Tiergarten, Charlottenburg,

¹⁹ Telgs, Winant to Hull, 1 Jul 1944, 1:237–39; Hull to Winant, 6 Jul 44, 1:240; and 1:240–41. All in *FRUS, 1944*. See also Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 170–71.

²⁰ See Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1961), pp. 3–50, 185–282, 559–628. For the definitive treatment, see John Erickson, *The Road to Berlin: Continuing the History of Stalin’s War with Germany* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 191–411.

Spandau, and Wilmersdorf) would go to Britain, the southwestern (Zehlendorf, Steglitz, Schöneberg, Kreuzberg, Tempelhof, and Neukölln) to the United States. Thus, the American Sector of Berlin reflected the adoption by Smith's staff of a Soviet proposal.²¹

At the same time, the argument over the Western Zones of occupation remained unsettled. How could the TALISMAN planners assign forces to territories still in dispute? Eager for a practical solution, Eisenhower improvised an escape from the impasse. Instead of discussing whose flags would be pinned to a particular location, he directed Smith's staff to avoid any mention of zones of responsibility or any allocation of areas on national lines. Both tasks and resources would be allocated without regard to nationality on a purely military basis. Because the American armies constituted the southern wing of the advance, and British armies the northern, the phrase "purely military basis" meant that American forces would occupy the south and British forces the north—the British position from the outset. Given that Eisenhower himself was loathe to cross fronts in the midst of the campaign, and regarded the northern area as Britain's natural sphere, he was exercising his own military judgment as well as circumventing the politicians.²²

Completed in late August, TALISMAN covered the immediate period from the cessation of fighting until the assumption of control by the tripartite authorities. Accordingly, it addressed no wider issues of military government, focusing instead on the occupation of strategic areas, the disarmament of German forces, the enforcement of terms of surrender, the preservation of law and order, and the relief and repatriation of Allied prisoners and displaced persons. Avoiding references to nationality, it laid out the lines of advance of the northern, central, and southern groups of armies after Germany's surrender. The plan declared it desirable to occupy Berlin as early as possible to seize counterintelligence targets, take control of German information services, freeze the central machinery of government, and make contact with the Russian High Command. The phrases "desirable" and "as early as possible" were vague, and the instruction to make contact with the Soviets implied no rush to get to Berlin first.²³

²¹ SHAEF Planning Staff, Definition of the International Zone Berlin, app. B to Opn TALISMAN Outline Plan, 28 Aug 1944, Opn TALISMAN Outline Plan, box 35, Walter Bedell Smith Collection of WWII Documents, 1941–1949, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kans.

²² Memo, SHAEF Planning Staff for All Staffs, 28 Aug 1944, sub: Operation TALISMAN—Revised Outline Plan, Opn TALISMAN Outline Plan, box 35, Smith Collection, Eisenhower Library. See also MFR, Elsey, n.d.; Ltr, General Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, 15 Feb 1944, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, eds. Alfred D. Chandler, Louis Galambos and Daun Van Ee, 21 vols. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970–2001), 3:1726.

²³ SHAEF Planning Staff, Opn TALISMAN Outline Plan, PS-SHAEF (44) 19, 28 Aug 1944, Opn TALISMAN Outline Plan, box 35, Smith Collection, Eisenhower Library.

Final Drawing of Lines

On 12 September, the chiefs of delegation of the European Advisory Commission convened at the organization's seat in Lancaster House—a magnificent neoclassical mansion, bequeathed to the state by the soap magnate Sir William Lever—to sign the protocol on zones of occupation. Although over four months had passed since they had first agreed to its basic points, the document remained incomplete, with blank spaces for the names of the occupying powers in the Western Zones. It included the Soviet proposal to divide Berlin—notwithstanding the fact that the U.S. State Department had never concurred. Winant, however, would not delay matters any longer on account of an apparent quibble. Ignoring his last instructions on the matter, he signed the protocol with no murmur of protest on Berlin.²⁴

Four days later, meeting for a second time in Quebec, President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sealed a bargain over the Western Zones. The president agreed to accept the southern zone; in return, the prime minister conceded U.S. control over the ports of Bremen and Bremerhaven, including rights of transit. Roosevelt's other concern, reconstituting France, had proved a chimera. Making ready use of an intact civil service, the provisional government under Maj. Gen. Charles de Gaulle had taken de facto control of rear areas in France from the very start of the campaign, and on 25 August, Eisenhower and French General Marie-Pierre Koenig signed a formal agreement, recognizing the provisional government's authority. The Soviets, who had shown impatience over the Allies' quarreling, promptly approved the compromise.²⁵ (*See Map 1.*)

Only one obstacle remained: the dispute between Winant and Secretary of State Cordell Hull over sectors for Berlin. In contrast to the paper prepared by General Smith's planning group, the protocol of 12 September had not yet specified the American and British sectors in western Berlin. In a 29 September message to the State Department, Winant proposed to remedy the deficiency, noting curtly and without the slightest hint of asking permission that the "names of the United Kingdom and United States would be inserted at the conclusion of the descriptions of the northwestern and southern parts of Berlin." In a sure sign of strained relations between Winant and his superiors, the ambassador

²⁴ Protocol, Zone of Occupation in Germany and Administration of the Greater Berlin area, 12 Sep 1944, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985), pp. 1–3.

²⁵ Min, Mtg of the Combined Chs of Staff, 12 Sep 1944, sub: Zones of Occupation in Germany; Mtg, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 15 Sep 1944; Conversation between Henry Morgenthau Jr. and William D. Leahy, 15 Sep 44; Mtg of the JCS, 16 Sep 1944. All in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:308–09, 365–67, 369–70, 373–76, respectively. Ltrs, Eisenhower to General Alphonse P. Juin, 25 Sep 1944, 4:2189–91; Eisenhower to Juin, 13 Oct 1944, 4:2225–27. Both in Chandler, Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*.

left them fully in the dark as to the fact that he had gotten this from Smith, and that it expressed the views of an Anglo-American combined staff.²⁶

Secretary Hull replied in a cable on 3 October, resurrecting the department's objections to dividing Berlin. He chose, however, not to press the issue at such a late date. Instead, the secretary suggested that Winant dispatch the commission's military adviser to SHAEF to consult with General Eisenhower and let him decide. These consultations, which took place on 17 October, yielded quick assent to the amended text when Smith, acting on Eisenhower's authority, accepted immediately all of the commission's recommendations, including the proposed sectors in Berlin. In respect to Berlin, Smith's approval was preordained, because his own staff had adopted the very provisions he was being asked to endorse.²⁷

On 14 November 1944, after their eleven-month travail, the European Advisory Commission's chiefs of delegation signed an amended protocol inserting the names United Kingdom and United States into the appropriate blanks for Germany and Berlin. On the same day, they signed a companion document on the Allied control machinery. The agreement conferred supreme authority over zonal issues to the respective commanders in chief. On matters relating to Germany as a whole, however, the commanders would act together through a joint Control Council. The decisions of that body would be unanimous. A standing coordinating committee and thirteen functional divisions would serve as the council's administrative staff and carry out the day-to-day supervision of German agencies. One article dealt with the inter-Allied governing authority for Berlin. With minor changes in wording, it contained the same provisions as the Soviet proposal of 1 July.²⁸

Meeting at Yalta on 4–11 February 1945, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin ratified the commission protocols with a single alteration. To appease Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin agreed to give France a zone of occupation and a place on the joint Control Council. Stalin, although contemptuous of France, was unconcerned provided that the territory involved came from the Anglo-American zones, and Roosevelt appeared content with the thought that the area would be minor.²⁹

²⁶ Telg, Winant to Hull, 29 Sep 1944, in *FRUS, 1944*, 1:342–43.

²⁷ Telgs, Hull to Winant, 3 Oct 1944, 1:347–48; Winant to Hull, 18 Oct 44, 1:354–55. Both in *FRUS, 1944*.

²⁸ Agreement Amending the Protocol on Zone of Occupation in Germany and Administration of the Greater Berlin Area, 14 Nov 1944; Agreement on Control of Machinery in Germany, 14 Nov 1944. Both in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 4–9.

²⁹ Telg, Prime Minister Winston Churchill to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 16 Nov 1944; Min, Second Plenary Mtg, 5 Feb 1945, sub: Treatment of Germany; Mtg of Foreign Ministers, 7 Feb 1945, sub: Integration of France into the German Control Machinery; Charles E. Bohlen, Fourth Plenary Mtg, 7 Feb 45; Fourth Plenary Mtg, H. Freeman Matthews, 7 Feb 1945. All in *FRUS: 1945, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 284–86, 538–57, 607, 613–20, 620–627, respectively.



Map 1

Carving Up the Spoils

When tripartite negotiators concurred on the zonal boundaries in early 1944, no one could foretell where the vise on Germany would close. The Western armies had not landed in France, and Soviet troops were still fighting on home soil. At the time of the protocol's signing in September 1944, the war's end was in sight, but none of the Allies had set foot in Germany. By February 1945, at the time of Yalta, Soviet forces had reached the Oder and held a small foothold on its western bank, only forty miles from Berlin, while Western Allied forces had yet to cross the Rhine. The decisions of the European Advisory Commission, however, had precluded an Allied race to conquer territory. Instead, the commission had struck a balance of competing interests and claims. The agreement on Germany accorded the Soviets disproportionately greater territory in the east, when measured by surface area, while favoring the Western powers with the greatest concentrations of population and productive resources. It assured the same balance for Berlin. Although the Soviet Sector covered 42 percent of Berlin's surface area, the population of each of the three sectors was virtually equal, and once such factors as housing, industry, and political-administrative institutions were taken into account, no discernable advantage favored one party.

The Soviet Sector in eastern Berlin comprised the city's administrative center, important industrial plants, and a heavy concentration of working-class slums. The district Mitte, the historical core of Berlin, was the site of national ministries, the city hall and parliament, state cultural institutions, the main university, the former residence of the kaiser, and the headquarters of Germany's greatest banks. The residential districts of eastern Berlin were chiefly working class. In prewar parlance, they were named after their postal code, NO for *Nordost* (Northeast). The term covered a vast expanse of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century tenements in the districts Prenzlauer Berg and Friedrichshain, home to Berlin's rough but proud industrial proletariat. It also referred to the damp and rotting slums in Mitte, some predating the seventeenth century, home to a wretched underclass.

The presence of several key industrial establishments compensated somewhat for the mediocre quality of East Berlin's residential areas. Foremost among them were the AEG (*Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft*—General Electric Company) installations in the Köpenick and Treptow districts. These comprised an electrical generating plant and four huge factories producing electrical and telephone cable, transformers, broadcasting equipment, vacuum tubes, radios, electrical switches, rectifiers, and studio tape recorders. Moreover, a large Bergmann-Borsig machine tool factory was located in Pankow. Köpenick, Treptow, and Pankow were all suburban areas that had seen little war, and their factories stood ready for productive use, to the extent they had not already been dismantled by the Soviets.

By contrast, the two Western sectors contained Berlin's wealthiest residential districts. The grand villas of Zehlendorf, Wilmersdorf, and

Tiergarten, built by Berlin's industrial bosses during an economic boom in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, equaled or surpassed the opulence of New York's Fifth Avenue, Chicago's Gold Coast, and London's Belgravia—and extended over an area greater than all of them combined. Most had escaped serious damage. Charlottenburg, Schöneberg, and Steglitz were home to high-level civil servants, lawyers, doctors, and other prosperous professionals who resided in immense apartments with thirteen-foot ceilings, inlaid parquet, elaborate moldings, and marbled foyers. In the American Sector, the only working-class districts were Neukölln and Kreuzberg. One of two originally British districts given to France in July 1945, the so-called *Rote Wedding* (Red Wedding), was more famously proletarian, having delivered a defiant leftist majority in Berlin's last election in March 1933, despite conditions of Nazi terror. However, aside from these last exceptions, the Western powers obtained the nicest parts of town.

Besides having the best amenities, the western sectors contained significant industrial establishments. Although the American Sector was largely residential, it boasted an installation of utmost political and cultural value: a huge printing plant in Tempelhof belonging to the prewar Ullstein publishing empire. In addition, Tempelhof was home to Berlin's main airport.

The British sectors contained the city's greatest economic gems. The *Siemensstadt* (Siemens City) in Spandau comprised one of the world's largest complexes for production of electrical goods, including a housing area for company workers. Located in the Tiergarten district was AEG's electrical turbine generator factory and repair workshop, AEG-Turbinen. This facility was of special importance because the Soviet Zone's economy had no such facility for the production and repair of turbine generators, and therefore depended on this one establishment located in western Berlin. Wedding and Tegel, later in the French Sector, were home to a Bergmann-Borsig machine tools and engine factory and another large AEG complex.

In early April, when the Soviets first began discussing sectors for Berlin, they initially fixated on securing economic advantage. A plan submitted to the armistice commission on 30 April assigned a northwestern sector—Spandau, Reinickendorf, Pankow, Wedding, Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg and Weissensee—to the Soviet Union. Explaining this choice, Admiral Aleksei Ignatiev listed no less than nine prime industrial facilities—some of major military significance—located in the proposed Soviet area. The head of the commission, Marshal Kliment Y. Voroshilov, demurred. The different zones of Germany, he declared, were administrative rather than economic compartments and not the property of each Allied power. The Allies would draw reparations from Germany as a whole, he pointed out; therefore, the division of Berlin according to its reparations potential was false. Voroshilov asserted the main consideration should be logistics for the occupying troops. "Each zone of occupation in Berlin should be as close as possible to the respective zone of occupation in Germany and thereby linked with a direct rail connection." According to this principle, the American Sector should lie in the southwestern

part of the city, the British in the northwestern, and the Soviet in the eastern. In this way, the Allies would avoid confusion over routes of transportation. If the British received a sector in the southeast, for example, they would need to transport supplies around half the circumference of Berlin in order to supply their forces.³⁰

Voroshilov's guidance formed the basis of the Soviet proposal readily adopted by SHAEF. Thus, the sectors of Berlin originated in a consideration of logistical rationality. Insofar as the Soviets sought advantage—and they did—they sought it indirectly. As Voroshilov understood more clearly than his colleagues, the Soviets could only lose from a policy where reparations were based solely upon the zone in which they ended up. For the Soviets hoped to receive machine tools, products of heavy industry, and capital equipment from the Anglo-American areas of occupation. It was in their interest, then, to preserve the principle of economic unity across all of Germany. Therefore, in Berlin, the thirst for immediate reparations could not override other factors (*Map 2*).³¹

Stopping at the Elbe

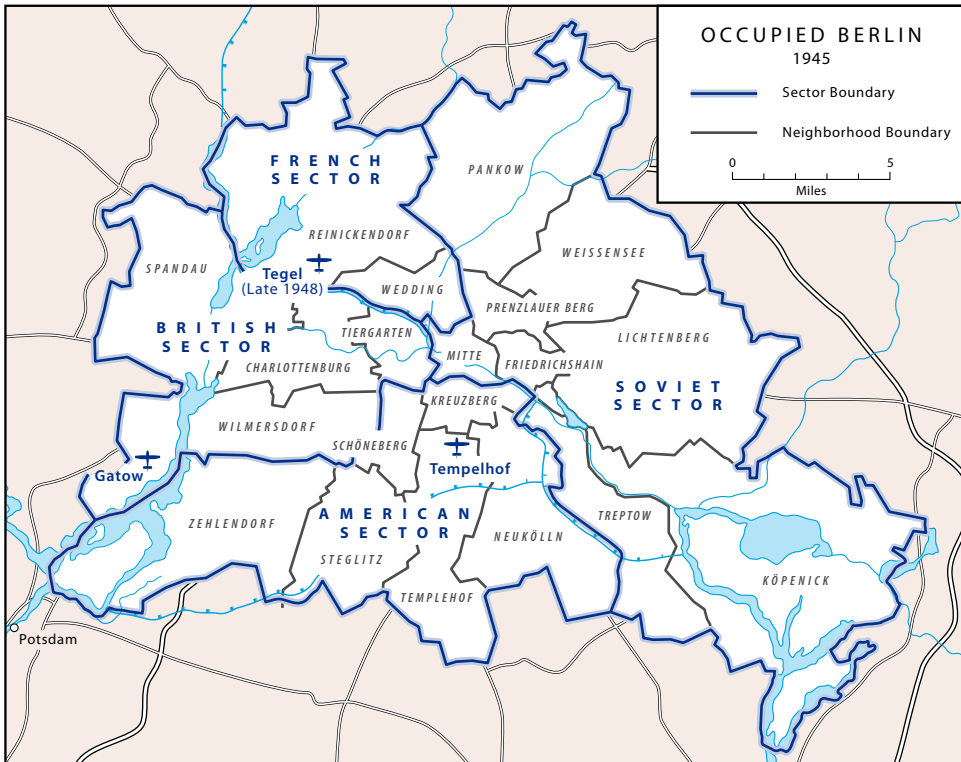
The establishment of Berlin as a tripartite area within the Soviet Zone had clear implications for General Eisenhower. Once the zones of occupation had been settled in London, and confirmed at Yalta, the supreme commander was free to follow his inclinations—to proceed, in his words, “with the single aim of speeding victory.” He could treat Berlin as a purely military issue. He had no reason, and felt no compulsion, to throw Western forces into a battle for the city to achieve political ends, for those ends had already been fixed at the conference table. With the territorial insurance policy in hand, the Western Allied commanders had no cause to substitute political for military judgment.³²

Berlin, in fact, was always a contingent priority. In their final directive to the supreme commander, issued on 12 February 1944, the Combined Chiefs of Staff instructed him to “undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany

³⁰ Min, Aus dem Tagebuch der Waffenstillstandskommission (From the Journal of the Armistice Commission), Draft Protocol, Preparations Commission for the Armistice, 30 Apr 1944, 1:381–85; and 1:384–85. Both in *The USSR and the German Question 1941–1948*; The text refers to an American Zone in “southeastern Berlin.” This had to be in error because the term *northwestern Berlin* would have made no sense and the Soviets assigned to themselves the “eastern” part of the city. For details on earlier discussions in the commission, see Laufer, *Pax Sovietica*, pp. 431–35. At the end of the meeting the commission decided “fundamentally” on a northwestern sector for the United Kingdom, a northeastern sector for the Soviet Union, and a southern sector for the United States. No districts were specified. The proposal submitted to the European Advisory Commission on 1 July modified this to give the United States a southwestern rather than a southern sector.

³¹ Min, From the Journal of the Armistice Commission, 30 Apr 1944, in *The USSR and the German Question 1941–1948*, 1:384.

³² Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), p. 396.



Map 2

and the destruction of her armed forces.” Given the significance of other objectives, such as the Ruhr Valley, no one could regard Berlin as the singular “heart of Germany.” Although SHAEF planners subsequently designated the city as the military objective of the Western powers in May 1944, Eisenhower revised his thinking and objectives as the campaign unfolded. In September 1944, taking account of the Soviet advance to the Vistula, he still defined Berlin as the main prize but foresaw, in the event of a Soviet move on Berlin, no desperate rush to beat them there at all costs. Instead, he would coordinate Allied actions with Soviet progress—pushing Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery’s 21st Army Group northward toward Hannover, Hamburg, and the north German ports, and thrusting General Omar N. Bradley’s 12th Army Group eastward into Saxony. Because of this, Eisenhower rebuffed Montgomery’s demands to concentrate resources for a single Allied thrust across the North Sea lowlands to Berlin. In his view, it was more important to realize the intermediate objective of taking the Ruhr and to maintain a strong secondary effort that would keep German forces under constant pressure at all points. To those ends, Eisenhower refused to strip resources from U.S. Army groups operating in central and southern Germany in order to focus

exclusively on the north. Montgomery would command the *main* effort but not, as he wished, the *sole* effort.³³

On 10 November, Smith's planning staff completed the first iteration of a new plan for posthostilities operations, code-named ECLIPSE. The priorities were unchanged since TALISMAN, and, in line with Eisenhower's thinking, its treatment of Berlin attached no overriding importance to the city. Stating the self-evident, ECLIPSE provided that the first power to reach the city would occupy all of the sectors until the others arrived; after that, forces would deploy into their own areas. It called on the First Allied Airborne Army to make preparations to seize an airhead in Berlin. Writers such as Cornelius Ryan and then-retired Lt. Gen. James M. Gavin, the wartime commander of the 82d Airborne Division, later recounted this instruction as a scheme to seize Berlin through an airborne assault. In fact, the drafters of ECLIPSE contemplated the deployment of paratroops only to escort the arrival of specialist personnel and headquarters staff *after* hostilities had ceased. It is equally clear from the published diary of First Allied Airborne Army Commander Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton that his operational planners never imagined taking Berlin in the face of resistance. Finally, because Berlin fell to the Soviets before Germany's capitulation, a key condition for the airdrop—a prior German surrender or collapse—never materialized.³⁴

A similar proposal, equally as fanciful, also ended in the filing cabinet. Three weeks after the completion of ECLIPSE, SHAEF's Plans and Operations Division received a two-page outline from the office of the Army Air Forces commander, General Henry H. Arnold, proposing a headlong dash to the capital. Three stripped-down armored divisions and twelve motorized regimental combat teams would break across the Rhine, reaching Berlin in four days. To support these troops, the Anglo-American air services would muster 1,464 aircraft to deliver supplies to airfields located every 100 miles along the route. The division's chief of plans, Brigadier Kenneth G. McLean derided the scheme as "academic . . . hardly applicable to conditions as we shall find them in

³³ Text printed in Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, pp. 53–54. Quote from Forrest C. Pogue, "The Decision to Halt at the Elbe," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent R. Greenfield (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1959), p. 482; Pogue, "Decision to Halt at the Elbe," pp. 481–84; Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt, 1951), pp. 396–99, 419–22; Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), pp. 334–48.

³⁴ The ECLIPSE plan was a revision of TALISMAN. The code name was changed after SHAEF intelligence reported that the TALISMAN code name had been compromised. SHAEF (44) 34, Opn ECLIPSE, Appreciation and Outline Plan, 10 Nov 1944, online library, U.S. Army Cmd and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kans.; Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966), pp. 119–24; James M. Gavin, *On To Berlin* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), pp. 269–71; Lewis H. Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries: The War in the Air, in the Pacific, Middle East and Europe, 3 October 1941–8 May 1945* (New York: William Morrow, 1946), pp. 370–71, 373, 396. See also Hist Rpt, HQ, 2 Aug 1944–29 May 1945, History of HQ First Allied Abn Army, pp. 63, 81–82, CMH Library.

Germany.” It predicated no organized opposition, no guerrillas or demolitions, the availability of intact airfields, and perfect weather. Hitler’s counteroffensive in the Ardennes, launched on 16 December, punctured Arnold’s assumptions, and the scheme was promptly shelved.³⁵

The Soviets launched their Vistula-Oder offensive on 12 January 1945, just two weeks after Allied forces had stopped Hitler’s counteroffensive. As German defenses crumbled, Soviet forces entered Germany. By the end of the month, in a heavy blow to German war production, troops of the First Ukrainian Front, commanded by Marshal Ivan S. Konev, had conquered Silesia, a region rich in coal and heavy industry. On 31 January, units of Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov’s First Belorussian Front secured bridgeheads on the western side of the Oder some forty miles from Berlin.

General Smith drew ready conclusions from the Soviet advance. On 22 February, he instructed SHAEF planners to work under the sole assumption “that the Russians would occupy Berlin before ourselves.” The Anglo-American headquarters staff thereby ceased all consideration of a Western move on Berlin, even as a remote contingency. His instruction reflected both the strategic facts and Eisenhower’s evolving views.³⁶

Any remaining chance of Field Marshal Montgomery leading a main effort to Berlin vanished in early March. In a stroke of good fortune, on 7 March General Bradley’s troops discovered a damaged but trafficable railway bridge at Remagen. Bradley pushed his First Army over the Rhine and initiated a right hook sweep to encircle the Ruhr. At the same time, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr.’s Third Army pressed ahead through Frankfurt and Kassel to Eisenach in the future Soviet Zone state of Thuringia. Bradley had taken over the de facto main effort. This allowed Eisenhower to make a definitive decision on Berlin. Without consulting further with Montgomery, the supreme commander met with Bradley in late March to lay out a plan. The two decided to make the final push toward the Leipzig-Dresden area instead of Berlin. Multiple reasons stood behind their choice. They desired first of all to cut Germany in two in order to forestall establishment by Hitler of an “Alpine redoubt”—a concern spawned by U.S. intelligence that later proved exaggerated. In view of the proximity to Berlin of Soviet bridgeheads on the Oder, where Zhukov had concentrated approximately one million men, they regarded a race to the city as foolhardy. They saw no sense in risking the lives of soldiers to seize territory they would later have to surrender. When Eisenhower asked Bradley what an assault on

³⁵ Memo, Brig Kenneth G. McLean, Ch, Plans sec., for Maj Gen Harold R. Bull, Asst. Ch of Staff, G-3, 16 Dec 1944, Entry 27 A, in General Staff, G-3 Div, SHAEF, box 94, RG 331, NACP.

³⁶ Memo, Lt Gen Walter Bedell Smith for Commanding General (CG), 15th Army, 22 Feb 1945, sub: Planning Directive for the Organization of Berlin District, in AGTS/8/6, Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS), Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (BAK); Interv, Charles C. Burg with Maj Gen Raymond W. Barker, 15 Jul 1972, Interv Folder, box 2, Raymond W. Barker Papers, Eisenhower Library.

Berlin would cost, Bradley estimated 100,000 casualties. “A pretty stiff price to pay for a prestige objective,” Bradley recalled saying, “especially when we’ve got to fall back and let the other fellow take over.”³⁷

On 28 March, Eisenhower took the extraordinary step of transmitting a personal message to Stalin through the U.S. military mission in Moscow. He informed Stalin that, after completing the Ruhr encirclement, his goal would be “to divide the enemy’s remaining forces by joining hands with your forces.” The best axis to realize the junction would be Erfurt-Leipzig-Dresden; a secondary advance would effect a junction in the Regensburg-Linz area, thereby preventing consolidation of German resistance in a southern Germany redoubt. He asked Stalin to let him know whether the proposed operations conformed to probable Soviet actions.³⁸

Eisenhower sent copies of his message to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. This was the first time the British learned that Montgomery would no longer lead the main effort, and—by implication, because Eisenhower did not mention Berlin—that Berlin was no longer the end objective of Western Allied operations. On 31 March, Churchill pressed Eisenhower to reconsider. The prime minister’s key argument was political:

If the enemy’s resistance should weaken . . . why should we not cross the Elbe and advance so far eastward as possible? This has an important political bearing, as the Russian army of the south seems certain to enter Vienna and overrun Austria. If we deliberately leave Berlin to them, even if it should be in our grasp, the double event may strengthen their conviction, already apparent, that they have done everything.³⁹

On 1 April, Churchill took his plea to President Roosevelt. He began by asserting that nothing could “exert a psychological effect of despair upon all German forces of resistance” than the fall of Berlin. Using words similar to those in his message to Eisenhower, he warned that the Russians would come to believe they had been the overwhelming contributor to our common victory if they were to take Berlin along with Austria and Vienna. “[M]ay this not,” the prime minister warned, “lead them into a mood which will raise grave and formidable difficulties in the future? I would consider that from a political standpoint we should march as far east into Germany as possible, and that should Berlin be in our grasp we should certainly take it.”⁴⁰

³⁷ For discussion, see Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 340–41, 407–42; Bradley, *A Soldier’s Story*, p. 535. See also Bradley and Blair, *A General’s Life*, pp. 416–20.

³⁸ Telg, General Dwight D. Eisenhower to U.S. Mil Mission, Moscow, 29 Mar 1945, sub: Message for Joseph V. Stalin, in Chandler, Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 4:2557–58.

³⁹ Telg, Churchill to Eisenhower, 31 Mar 1945, in Chandler, Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 4:2563.

⁴⁰ Telg, Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 Apr 1945, in *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, ed. Francis L. Loewenheim et al. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1975), p. 699.

According to an entry in Eisenhower's office diary, the general was "upset . . . quite a bit" by Churchill's intervention. Roosevelt and Marshall, however, backed him unflinchingly. Thus, on 11 April, Eisenhower ordered the Ninth Army's commander, Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson, to halt the advance of the 2d Armored Division on the banks of the Elbe, near Magdeburg—only sixty miles by road from Berlin. Apparently stunned, Simpson refused to accept this as Eisenhower's final word. On 15 April, after the 83d Infantry Division had crossed the Elbe and cleared a bridgehead twelve miles upstream from the city, he approached Bradley with a plan to send an armored division accompanied by an infantry division in trucks on a nighttime dash down the autobahn toward Berlin. When Bradley telephoned Eisenhower for a decision, Simpson learned the answer by listening to Bradley's closing words, "All right Ike, that's what I thought. I'll tell him." There would be no attempt by U.S. forces to capture the German capital.⁴¹

At 0300 the next day, 16 April, the Soviets launched Operation BERLIN. They committed three army groups, comprising over 2.5 million men, 6,250 tanks and self-propelled guns, 41,600 guns and mortars, and 7,500 aircraft to an attack along the entire Oder-Neisse from Görlitz to Stettin. Commanded by Marshal Zhukov, the attackers on the central front crashed against powerful German defenses built up during the ten-week pause in the Red Army's advance. Zhukov's men needed four days to crack the German lines, and the first Soviet spearheads did not reach Berlin's outer suburbs until the morning of 21 April. A ferocious combat ensued in a city landscape especially favorable to defenders: a maze of rivers and canals; nearly 500 bridges; a ready-made inner defense belt fashioned from the S-Bahn ring of parallel railway tracks, some running through deep cuttings; barricaded roads covered by antitank weapons, flak guns and machine gun posts, concealed inside buildings or behind walls of rubble; and finally, three enormous bomb and shell-proof flak towers, self-contained fortresses with their own power and water supplies and well-stocked with food and ammunition. Not until after twelve days of combat inside Berlin, on 2 May 1945, did the city's garrison finally surrender.⁴²

According to Russian military historian Grigory Kivosheyev, Operation BERLIN cost the Soviets somewhat more than 81,000 dead—of whom some 20,000 to 25,000 died inside the city—plus 280,000 men wounded or sick during the action. These figures exceeded Bradley's estimate of 100,000 total casualties for an American assault on Berlin and vindicated his caution. Those who find that estimate far too high assert that Bradley had failed to account for the

⁴¹ Note, Kay Summersby to the files, in Chandler, Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 4:2563; Pogue, "Decision to Halt at the Elbe," p. 487; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, pp. 427–28; MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, p. 399. See also Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944–1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), pp. 697–99.

⁴² For the best English-language treatment of Operation BERLIN, see Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, pp. 531–622.

crumbling of resistance along his entire front, which would have given U.S. forces a clear run to the prize. Diminished resistance in the Bavarian countryside, however, gave no measure of the situation in Berlin.⁴³

Criticism of Eisenhower's decision glosses over three key facts. First, in relation to the palpable risks involved, the forces proposed for the dash toward Berlin were so small in size to leave no margin for error. Simpson had only two divisions around Magdeburg, and they were but spearheads of the American advance, operating far ahead of support troops and tactical air cover. As Eisenhower explained in a 15 April letter to Marshall, "While it is true we have seized a small bridgehead over the Elbe . . . our center of gravity is well back of there." Moving in columns on the autobahn, American vehicles would have been an easy target for flanking fire, and even if they reached Berlin relatively unharmed, they would have lacked the numerical strength to fight an urban battle. Second, without advance planning, Simpson's troops would scarcely have known what to do in the city once they got there. What strategic positions would they secure and how would they reach them?⁴⁴ Third, any presumption of German collapse was unfounded. In mid-April, after having cut through Germany against minimal resistance, U.S. forces at the Elbe suddenly encountered stiff opposition from a reconstituted German Twelfth Army, thrown together from officer training schools and the Reich labor service. Although ill-equipped, these soldiers fought with such zeal that on 14 April they attacked and liquidated a U.S. bridgehead near Magdeburg. Likewise, from 16 to 20 April, the Germans mounted a staunch defense of Nuremberg. On the whole, pure chance dictated whether resistance would continue or dissolve. As Charles B. MacDonald wrote, "[N]obody knew when or where the fighting might erupt—at the next hill, ridge, village, stream, wherever a group of Germans with a will to fight took a stand. . . . Everybody knew that the war was over, yet somehow, at one isolated spot or another, the war still went on, real enough for the moment and sometimes deadly for those involved." Finally, on 25 April, advancing U.S. and Russian troops met at Torgau on the Elbe River, about eighty miles south of Berlin (*Map 3*).⁴⁵

The situation inside Berlin, where Hitler's presence overwhelmed reason, was more problematic. Military commanders remained loyal to him despite all disasters, and tens of thousands of fanatical followers, from *Waffen-SS* units—including remnants of the *Charlemagne*, *Nederland*, *Nordland*, and *Walloon* foreign volunteer divisions—to *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) were primed for a fight to the last. Although the Soviet Union was Hitler's chief enemy, there is no evidence that he would have surrendered Berlin to a couple

⁴³ Grigory F. Krivosheyev, *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (London: Greenhill Press, 1997), p.158. The figures include Polish losses of 2,800 dead and 6,000 wounded or sick. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, p. 698.

⁴⁴ Ltr, Eisenhower to Marshall, 15 Apr 1945, in Chandler, Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 4:2615.

⁴⁵ MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, pp. 395–98, 422–25, 426.



Map 3

of American divisions. Imputing the same subhuman qualities to the Western enemies as to the Russians, the Goebbels propaganda machine exhorted the people to a decisive battle against all “mongrel [*sic*]” invaders. Hitler’s Political Testament, signed on the morning of 29 April—some thirty-six hours before his death by suicide—called for his successors to pursue the struggle, and expelled Hermann W. Göring and Heinrich L. Himmler from the party for having conducted secret dealings with the Western Allies. The city’s defenders surrendered on 2 May, although fighting continued to the west of the city until the final German capitulation on 8 May.⁴⁶

Did the United States Squander Political Advantage?

Second-guessing of Eisenhower’s decision to leave Berlin to the Soviets commenced shortly after the war’s end and still recurs. Most comments reflect frustration with the refusal of American military leaders to view Berlin in anything more than purely military terms.

The criticism—most often expressed by British writers—is that Eisenhower and Bradley remained unduly focused on destroying the German war machine at the least cost in Allied lives. Suffering from what the British might call military tunnel vision, they failed to grasp the geopolitical significance of Berlin, passed up the final prize of battle, and squandered a chance to contain Soviet ambitions in postwar Europe. These writers contrast American “military narrowness” with the purported prescience of “strategic thinkers” such as the British prime minister. One such writer, Antony Beevor, alleged that Eisenhower demonstrated both obstinacy and “astounding naivety” when he rejected Churchill’s wisdom on Berlin. The critics also draw invidious comparisons between naive Americans and the astute Stalin, who, like Churchill, is imputed to have fully understood the wider interests at stake in Berlin.⁴⁷

Many of Eisenhower’s critics cite one particular instance above all others as evidence of Soviet acuity, American myopia, and Churchill’s foresight: Stalin’s reply to Eisenhower’s message of 31 March. In a cable transmitted to SHAEF on 1 April, Stalin approved Eisenhower’s proposals for a link-up on the Leipzig-Dresden axis. The Soviet leader professed his intention of aiming the main blow along that line while committing secondary forces against the German capital, which had “lost its former strategic importance.” These assertions were patently

⁴⁶ John Zimmerman, “Die Kämpfe gegen die Westalliierten 1945 Ein Kampf bis zum Ende oder die Kreierung einer Legend?” (The Struggles against the Western Allies in 1945 A Fight to the End or the Creation of a Legend?), in *Kriegsende 1945 in Deutschland* (War’s End in Germany, 1945), John Zimmerman (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002), p. 117.

⁴⁷ For a survey of such literature, see David W. Hogan Jr., “Berlin Revisited and Revised: Eisenhower’s Decision to Halt at the Elbe,” in *Victory in Europe 1945: From World War to Cold War*, eds. Arnold A. Offner and Theodore A. Wilson (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), pp. 79–81; Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002), pp. 143, 195.

disingenuous, for earlier in the day Stalin had met with his front commanders Marshals Zhukov and Konev to issue orders for the Berlin offensive. “What does he expect from us?” he exclaimed rhetorically when he read Eisenhower’s request for information on Soviet actions. “He wants to learn our plans. I will tell him nothing.”⁴⁸

Proponents of the squandered-chance thesis cite Stalin’s insincerity to underpin three contentions: first, that Eisenhower was readily duped; second, that Stalin, as with Churchill (and unlike Eisenhower, Bradley, Marshall, and Roosevelt), understood the purported significance of Berlin; and third, that while U.S. generals ignored the political implications of military operations, the Soviets subordinated military operations to political ends.⁴⁹

Further analysis belies these contentions. To begin with, the squandered-chance proponents have never explained precisely how the taking of Berlin would have strengthened the Western Allied position after the war. Since the lines of occupation already existed by prior agreement, this could have only occurred if the Anglo-Americans were prepared to repudiate the zonal protocol in order to extract Soviet concessions. A move of that sort, however, would hardly have gone unanswered, and Churchill himself never explicitly argued to Roosevelt that it should be considered. Moreover, if Western-held territories were to be used as political bargaining chips, the U.S. occupation of Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, and one-half of Saxony, including Leipzig, provided no less bargaining power than Berlin. Indeed, Eisenhower’s strategy of pushing along the Leipzig-Dresden axis put American forces in possession of roughly one-third of the future Soviet Zone, including world-leading centers of technology and light industry.

Nor were the Russians to be goaded into a premature offensive to capture the German capital city. The Vistula-Oder operation had Berlin as its final goal. Yet, even though Berlin was virtually defenseless in early February 1945, the Red Army halted its thrust. Both Zhukov and Stalin were concerned over exhausted supplies, stretched lines of communications, and powerful German forces along Zhukov’s flanks in a so-called Baltic balcony running from Königsberg to Stettin. On 6 February, Stalin ordered the marshal to hold at the Oder. He issued the order from Yalta, two days after the start of the “Big Three” conference. If Stalin had accepted a calculated military risk to gain a political trump, nothing would have stopped Soviet troops from entering Berlin while the conference was still in session. Instead, Stalin revealed himself as a commander with unshakeable respect for “permanently operating factors”—his

⁴⁸ Stalin’s reply was transmitted in Telg, U.S. Mil Mission, Moscow, to General Eisenhower, 1 Apr 1945, in Chandler, Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 4:2583–84; Tony LeTissier, *The Battle of Berlin 1945* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1998), pp. 4–5. Quote from Vladimir S. Semenov, *Von Stalin bis Gorbatschow: Ein halbes Jahrhundert in diplomatischer Mission, 1939–1991* (From Stalin to Gorbachev: A Half Century in Diplomatic Service, 1939–1991) (Leipzig: Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1995), pp. 163–64. Semenov was present at a meeting of the State Defense Council when Stalin first saw Eisenhower’s cable.

⁴⁹ Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945*, pp. 194–95.

watchword for textbook prudence, learned from the Red Army's fiasco outside Warsaw in 1922, when it sinned against fact in pursuit of a political adventure.⁵⁰

If Stalin's message to Eisenhower was disingenuous, the Soviet offensive toward Berlin is most reasonably seen as a hurried response to suddenly unfavorable circumstances rather than as part of a political grand strategy. When Stalin sent his note to Eisenhower, Anglo-American forces were set to pour into the Soviet Zone at a time when the Soviets were still on the banks of the Oder. Stalin knew of negotiations, led by the Office of Strategic Services station chief in Switzerland, Allen W. Dulles, with SS General Karl Wolff over the surrender of German forces in northern Italy, and had reason to fear that the Germans would open their front to the Western armies. According to Zhukov, while Stalin "trusted General Eisenhower's reports" and "had attained a complete understanding with President Roosevelt, Churchill conveyed a lack of sincerity, secret intentions, and a persistent desire to seize Germany's central parts." This, he asserted, "compelled certain caution on the part of the Soviet Government."⁵¹

Thus, in early April, the Soviets needed to resume the offensive in order to ensure the occupation of their own zone. U.S. Army historian Earl F. Ziemke wrote, "In view of the dark suspicions aroused by the recent Allied success, the . . . coming offensive had one overriding objective: to take possession at top speed of at least the German territory east of the Elbe." The main weight of the attack could fall only on Berlin. Positioned between Marshal Konstantin K. Rokossovsky's Second Belorussian Front to the north and Konev's First Ukrainian Front to the south, Zhukov's First Belorussian Front was poised due east of the capital. Even so, Berlin was but one objective in a broad operation. Of the twenty-four armies massed for the final drive, fifteen had objectives other than Berlin. The Second Belorussian Front's mission was twofold: to shield Zhukov's flank and to sweep across the northern plain into western Pomerania and Mecklenburg. Of the seven armies under Konev's command, two were directly involved in the drive on Berlin. The others, including the Fifty-second Army, which linked up with Americans at Torgau, pushed into Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt. Three of Zhukov's armies drove to the Elbe without entering Berlin. In Ziemke's words, "the main effort had to be against Berlin because, strategic objective or not, the battle for possession of the Soviet Zone could not be won . . . until and unless the city was taken." In the end, both Western and Soviet armies ended the war closing in on territories that, for the most part, had already been allocated to them by political negotiation. The war ended with the U.S. Army successfully achieving its military objectives, with no particular reason to look beyond those for political implications.⁵²

⁵⁰ Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 85–95; Georgi K. Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), pp. 566–84.

⁵¹ Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*, pp. 556–57.

⁵² Earl F. Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1984), pp. 470–71; LeTissier, *The Battle of Berlin 1945*, pp. xiv, 1–14, 231–42.

3

THE ROAD TO BERLIN

On 8 May 1945, six days after the cessation of combat in Berlin, representatives of the German high command, led by the armed forces chief of staff, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, signed the general act of surrender. The ceremony took place in the auditorium of the former German army engineer school in Karlshorst—the suburb of Berlin soon to become the site of the Soviet Military Administration for Germany and the symbol of Soviet rule in the Eastern Zone. Marshal Georgi Zhukov was present for the Soviet Union and Air Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder for the Western Allied powers. The commander of the U.S. Strategic Air Force, General Carl A. Spaatz, and the commander of the First French Army, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, served as witnesses. Keitel entered the room stiffly erect, bearing a mien of annoyed contempt for the proceedings. He briefly raised his field marshal's baton in salute, laid the baton on the table, adjusted his monocle, and quickly scrawled his signature on the document. With that, World War II in Europe was over.¹

Two months later, on 4 July 1945, another ceremony took place in Berlin. Assembling on the grounds of the former Prussian Military Cadet Academy, the onetime home of Hitler's SS bodyguard regiment in the western district of Steglitz, one company of American armored troops lined up opposite one company of Soviet infantry. Having arrived just the day before, the Americans symbolized the larger force that would enter the U.S. Sector over the following days. Soviet Brig. Gen. Nicolai Baranov was the first to speak. He lavished praise on the "great American democracy," extolled its role as "arsenal of the United Nations," and lauded the "gallant American forces" who destroyed the enemy on the Western Front. He tempered his comments, however, by claiming that the Soviets had guaranteed that success when they "broke the back of the German Army" in 1943–1944 and "nailed down" its "chief forces" in the East. He then relinquished the sector to the United States. General Omar N. Bradley, who had flown from Frankfurt especially for the occasion, accepted on behalf of General Dwight D. Eisenhower with words of praise for the Red Army and hopes of lasting friendship. As the parade ground resonated to the playing of

¹ According to the text of the instrument of surrender, the capitulation took effect at 2301 on 8 May. However, because of problems with the text, the signing actually took place at 1220 on 9 May. Nonetheless, 8 May is the official date in Germany for the capitulation. Russia marks the date as 9 May—not because of the delay in signing, but due to the time zone in Moscow.



Field Marshal Keitel signs the unconditional surrender to the Allies, May 1945.

national anthems, the Soviet flag was lowered and the American flag raised. The Soviet company then departed, followed by its band playing a Soviet march.²

The ceremony at the cadet academy culminated the long advance of U.S. forces from the Normandy beachhead into the enemy's capital. At the same time, it marked a symbolic transition into their postwar mission of occupation and political control. The preparation for that mission had been underway many long months before the fighting ceased.

Military Government for Berlin

In October 1944, Civil Affairs Detachment A1A1, then serving in Paris, received the mission of forming the U.S. military government for Berlin. The

² Memo, Lt Col Edwin A. Machen, HQ, G-3 Div, Berlin District, for All Staffs, 3 Jul 1945, sub: Outline of Turnover Ceremony, Folder Berlin Cmd, box 8, Maj Gen Floyd L. Parks Mil Associate Papers, 1913-1965, Eisenhower Library. A video of the ceremony is viewable at www.criticalpast.com/video/65675074126. Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944-1 Jul 1945, pp. 149-50, box 2, Col Frank L. Howley Papers, AHEC; Brig. Gen. Frank Howley, *Berlin Command* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1950), pp. 47-48; "City of Death," *Time*, 16 Jul 1945.

unit was originally organized as part of Company A, 6901st European Civil Affairs Regiment (later 1st European Civil Affairs Regiment). Civil affairs detachments were placed at all governmental levels and A1A1's designation reflected its classification as a civil affairs "A" detachment, which were intended for administering regional capitals. The unit had come ashore on Omaha beach D plus 4 as part of the Normandy invasion force and had already served with distinction in Cherbourg and Paris. As it began preparing for its next assignment as the U.S.–Berlin detachment designate, it numbered sixteen officers and forty-eight enlisted men.³

After learning of the Berlin assignment, the unit's commander, Col. Frank L. Howley, decided to transfer his men to the countryside for a period of classroom instruction and field training. Already familiar with the Paris region from his years as a student of art at the Sorbonne, Howley selected an exclusive resort chalet in the village of Barbizon, near Versailles. The detachment, as Howley put it, "was to live like gentlemen, study like scholars, and train like soldiers," while "recovering physically from the joys of Paris." After billeting in Troyes in November and December, Howley's unit first occupied the facility in early January and remained until the end of March 1945. During their sojourn in the two French towns, the detachment's officers studied German politics, history, society, and language as well as the administrative organization of Berlin, its public utilities, and its system of food handling. Walter Dorn, a civilian adviser to the Office of Strategic Services, helped to design the program of instruction and furnished a library assembled from materials confiscated in the occupied eastern Rhineland.⁴

An advertising executive in civilian life, Howley was, at first glance, no obvious choice to lead the U.S. military government in Berlin. Although fluent in French, he spoke no German and had little prior knowledge of German affairs. Nonetheless, he was politically shrewd, quick to learn, and a talented propagandist. His experience and contributions in helping to rebuild city services in Cherbourg and Paris had earned him respect among his peers and superiors. Under his leadership, A1A1 had become the premier U.S. civil affairs detachment and had held the two most glamorous and demanding assignments in the war so far. As he led his unit from Cherbourg, then to Paris, and ultimately to Berlin, he attracted glowing mention from American newsmen, praise he would self-consciously use to burnish his public image. Throughout 1945 and into 1946, Howley would cast himself as a tough dealer who got on with the Russians and made quadripartite government work by meeting them

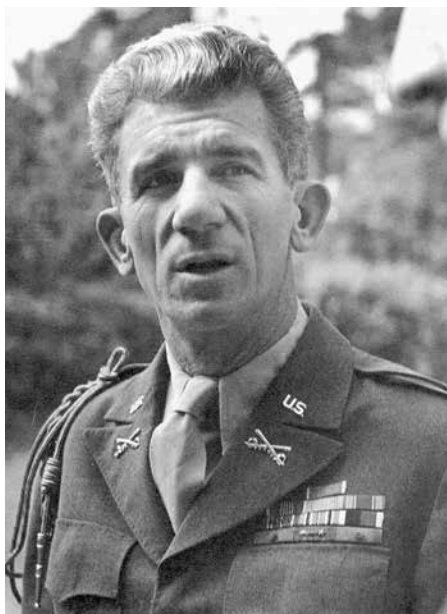
³ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 159–60; Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, Historians files, CMH.

⁴ Howley Diary Entry, pp. 2–3. See also Memo, Col Frank L. Howley for Maj Gen Frank L. Keating, Deputy Mil Governor for Germany, 26 May 1947, file 5/38-2/7, OMGUS, Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB); Howley Diary Entry, pp. 5–15; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 159–60.

on level ground with lusty drinking and roughhouse give-and-take.⁵

While in Barbizon, the detachment grew toward its authorized strength of 227 officers and enlisted personnel. Although no one was as flamboyant as the commander, the men resembled him in several key respects. Most were professionals in early middle age—on average, 42-years-old. Few were career soldiers, and fewer still possessed expertise on Germany or a workable command of the German language. Instead, their strengths lay in technical areas—medicine, justice, law enforcement, journalism, education, and engineering—generically useful in managing a city. To help compensate for language deficiencies—scarcely remediable in only six months of part-time instruction—Howley took special pains to requisition a number of interpreters and translators before leaving Barbizon.⁶

As it prepared for its new assignment, the unit's organization paralleled the administrative structure of Greater Berlin. Under the direction of its headquarters and supported by its administrative elements, the detachment's main sections—Economic Affairs, Public Safety, Public Works and Utilities, Education and Religious Affairs, Communications, Finance, Justice, and Public Health—corresponded to the departments of the city's government, while six local subdetachments, consisting of four to eight officers, corresponded to the district administrations of the American Sector. The only sections with no parallels in city government were Displaced Persons, Intelligence, and Information Services Control.⁷



Colonel Howley, deputy commandant and head of U.S. Office of Military Government in Berlin

⁵ "The Friends," *Time*, 17 Jul 1944; "Rebirth of Cherbourg," *Newsweek*, 10 Jul 1944; A. J. Liebling, "Letter from France, 14 Jul 1944," *New Yorker*, n.d.; Folder Cherbourg History, Jun–Aug 1944, box 7, Howley Papers, AHFC; "Il n'y a à Paris q'un seul Gouvernement et c'est le Gouvernement Français," *L'Humanité*, 2 Sep 1944; "Les 'Civil Affairs' Nous Offrent Leur Aide Et Non Leur Tutelle," *Combat*, 1 Sep 1944. All in Folder Paris Relief Opn, box 7, Howley Papers, AHFC. Charles Christian, "How They Get Along," *Time*, 30 Jul 1945; Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 1.

⁶ Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 19–20; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 159–60; Memo, Howley for Keating, 26 May 1947; Howley Diary Entry, pp. 14, 25–27.

⁷ For organization and personnel, see Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 5–6.

For guidance on the objectives and conduct of the occupation, detachment members could look to SHAEF's December 1944 "Handbook on Military Government in Germany." Written under Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith's direction during the autumn, it drew in part from the earliest iteration of the Treasury, State, and War Department joint directive on Germany, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) 1067, and in part from the U.S. Army Civil Affairs Field Manual (FM), FM 27-5. Because the former source emphasized punishment and control and the latter restoration, the handbook itself displayed a strain of inconsistency. Following JCS 1067, it called for the elimination of "Nazism, Fascism, German militarism, the Nazi hierarchy and their collaborators;" forbade the retention in office of "active Nazis or ardent sympathizers" even for the sake of expediency; and ruled out steps toward economic rehabilitation. "Germany," it declared, "will always be treated as a defeated country and not as a liberated country." By contrast, in line with Army civil affairs doctrine, the handbook promulgated the principle of "indirect rule." After the removal of all objectionable officials, military governments would utilize "the civil administrative, judicial and law enforcement structure . . . to the full extent possible." Accordingly, detachments would "have the responsibility of controlling the German administrative system, not of operating it themselves," and in discharging their functions; German provincial and municipal officials would "be given full responsibility, and in consequence must be accorded some freedom in the selection of their associates."⁸

Thus, while employing the terminology of JCS 1067, the handbook contained an implied contradiction. Under a regime of indirect rule, the military government would be working within the confines of existing structures in Germany. This emphasis on the use of German officials and institutions presupposed an active collaboration between the military government and German officials. Thus, the unsaid drift of its instructions was to get the machinery running again, and the goal of rehabilitation was present although unarticulated.

The handbook offered no instruction on the ultimate goal of the occupation—and had no basis for doing so. The first iteration of JCS 1067, dated 24 September 1944, was intended to provide initial guidance pending the formulation of long-term policies by the Allied governments, and the field manual was primarily a guide to the maintenance of order and public services. Whether the occupation government would retain an essentially negative character, as opposed to fostering a positive reconstruction of German society,

⁸ A copy of the first draft of JCS 1067 is found in Smith's files. Draft Dir, Civil Affairs Div, War Dept, 24 Sep 1944, Encl to JCS 1067, sub: Directive for Administration of Post-Defeat Military Government in Germany, box 35, Walter Bedell Smith Collection of WWII Documents, 1941-1945, Eisenhower Library. For a summary of Field Manual 27-5, see Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 20-21, 84-85; SHAEF, G-5 Political-Mil Affairs sec., Handbook for Mil Government in Germany, 20 Dec 1944, box 36, Smith Collection, Eisenhower Library.

was an unsettled question. Arguably, the answer emerged more through action and experience than through formal policies and principles.

With the preparations of military government already three months in progress, on 31 January 1945, General Smith issued a directive to the commander of the Fifteenth Army, Lt. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, naming him commanding general (designate) of the Berlin occupation force, to be termed the Berlin District. A combined U.K.-U.S. staff would draw up plans for Berlin while providing the kernel of a future headquarters. Initially, this headquarters would operate jointly before splitting into separate U.S. and British organizations on the dissolution of SHAEF. Two divisions—one British, one American—would garrison the Western sectors of the city. Smith requested that the nucleus staff, designated Plans Group G, submit an outline plan by 15 March. He wanted preparations for four different cases: (1) an Anglo-American capture of Berlin in combat operations; (2) a Soviet capture of Berlin in a “fighting advance;” (3) an airborne entry into Berlin after Germany’s surrender; (4) an Anglo-American overland entry into Berlin after German surrender, preceded or followed by the Soviets.⁹

After moving into office space in Versailles on 8 February, the nucleus staff went to work on the plan. Two officers made the forty-mile trip to Barbizon twice a week to coordinate their drafts with Colonel Howley. On 22 February, they received revised instructions from General Smith. Instead of preparing for four cases, the planners should assume “that the Russians would occupy Berlin before ourselves.” The SHAEF chief of staff based his new guidance on Eisenhower’s evolving strategy as well as the disposition of Soviet armies along the Oder.¹⁰

The staff submitted its finished work to SHAEF on 13 March. After restating Smith’s assumption that the Soviets would initially occupy Berlin, the paper proceeded to assess the situation in Germany’s capital. While admitting the impossibility of foreseeing the consequences of a battle inside the city, the planners presumed that Berlin would still be functioning despite the devastation of the air war. Unlike intelligence analysts alarmed over possible German resistance in an Alpine redoubt, they anticipated no organized resistance in the capital. To the contrary, Berlin’s citizens would “probably turn to the Allies to help them out of their difficulties.” In such a case, however, they proposed to limit assistance to medical supplies and soap. An estimated 400,000 displaced persons—mainly conscript workers—lived in the Western sectors, and they would have sole claim to imported food, blankets, and clothing. The Germans would have to feed themselves, asserted the planners; only in the case of famine would the Anglo-Americans release relief goods to the general population.

⁹ Memo, Col William F. Smith, Adjutant Gen, for CG, 15th Army Gp, 31 Jan 1945, sub: Planning Directive for the Organization of Berlin District, file AGTS/8/6, OMGUS, LAB.

¹⁰ Howley Diary Entry, p. 7; Memo, Smith for CG, 22 Feb 1945, AHEC.

The normal provision of external supplies “required to maintain the essential life of the city” would be a responsibility of the Soviets.¹¹

The plan went on to describe the structure of Berlin’s government. Berlin, it explained, was *Reichsregierungsbezirk* (at the same time a municipality, a Prussian province, and a prefecture) of the Reich. It foresaw appointing an acceptable *Stadtpräsident* (the chief of the prefecture) as the supreme German official in Berlin. The Allies would charge him with responsibility for the civil government, which he would constitute according to German law. The military government would supervise German officials “at all levels.” However, if the Soviets had been in the city for “some weeks” before arrival of Western forces, they might have already set up administrative machinery. In that event, the Western Allies would “fall in” with the Soviet arrangement.¹²

The plan specified four stages of movement into Berlin: preliminary reconnaissance, detailed reconnaissance, relief of Soviet troops in the Western sectors, and the final buildup. Depending on the initial availability of housing in the U.S. Sector, some troops might have to bivouac in the city park until they moved into permanent structures. In view of the anticipated length of the occupation and “the need to impress Germans,” accommodations should be “the best available.” Engineering parties would earmark building materials for Allied use, and the military government would conscript German laborers to repair damaged buildings, paying them at the official wage rate.¹³

As a scheme of deployment, the outline plan was detailed enough, but in other respects was painfully superficial. The plan’s *laissez-faire* attitude in respect to food presumed not only that the city’s distribution system would continue to operate, but also that Pomeranian and East Prussian farms would remain productive despite the flight of population before the Red Army. Where it derived the notion that the Soviets would take sole responsibility for external supplies was anyone’s guess. The section on Berlin’s administration was especially weak. Only three paragraphs long, its chief prescription was to appoint an acceptable prefect to restore municipal government. The plan failed to account for the probability that all authority would have collapsed, and that the Allies would have to reconstitute the governmental bodies themselves.

On 28 March, Plans Group G expressed additional thoughts on the timing of Allied movements. The planners had hitherto envisioned that the Western powers would be entering Berlin almost immediately after its capture by the Soviets. But much had changed in the two weeks since they had submitted their paper. Following the Allied breakthroughs over the Rhine, Western armies were driving toward central Germany. Thus, in light of that new situation, the entry of Anglo-American forces into the capital would, they thought, depend

¹¹ Plans Gp G, 13 Mar 1945, sub: Berlin District Outline Plan, file AGTS/50/1-4, OMGUS, BAK.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

on a Soviet invitation that might not appear “until the whole of Germany is overrun and the three Allied forces have met in the middle.”¹⁴

This prediction of delay was prescient, even if the reasons were more complicated than the planners imagined. When the fighting stopped, just five weeks later, Eisenhower’s armies held one-third of the Eastern Zone of occupation. The movement of Western troops into Berlin, therefore, could occur only as part of a mutual redeployment into assigned areas. However, it was not apparent how and when the movements should begin—and no one was willing to start the shift without clear certainty that the other side would follow suit. But did the Western powers still feel bound to their agreements? Winston Churchill perceived that formidable advantages would accrue from the presence of Allied armies in the Soviet Zone of occupation. He was in no hurry to abandon them just to speed up Allied entry into Berlin. The question was whether he could prevail on the Americans to follow.

Redeployments

President Franklin D. Roosevelt died on 12 April 1945. Harry S. Truman had been in office a scant six days when a cable arrived from Churchill. The issue of Allied withdrawals from the Soviet Zone of occupation weighed on the prime minister’s mind, and he sought Truman’s ear. Churchill began with some dubious history: “These occupational zones were outlined rather hastily at Quebec in September 1944 when it was not foreseen that General Eisenhower’s armies would make such a mighty inroad into Germany.” Although the zones could be altered only with Soviet consent, Churchill asserted, one condition should be filled before the Allies withdrew their armies, for the Americans had a “not very satisfactory proportion of food to feed the conquered population. And we poor British are to take over all the ruined Ruhr and large manufacturing districts which are, like ours, in normal times large importers of food.” Therefore, until the powers had resolved this “tiresome question,” the Western armies should not “move from tactical positions we have at present achieved.”¹⁵

Churchill’s message elicited a furious retort from Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius Jr. In a memorandum to the White House chief of staff, Admiral William D. Leahy, Stettinius drew attention to the “disturbing” implications of Churchill’s words. The zones of occupation, he noted, had resulted from “long and careful study and negotiation.” If the U.S. or British government refused to withdraw to the agreed boundaries of their zones pending either a modification of boundaries or an agreement on food, the Soviets would consider such a bargaining position a “repudiation of our formal agreement and the resultant Soviet course of action and Soviet policy would be difficult to

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Telg, Prime Minister Winston Churchill to President Harry S. Truman, 18 Apr 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 9 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967–1969), 3:231–32.

foresee.” Stettinius urged that the president and prime minister contact Joseph Stalin to settle on a date and procedure for withdrawal.¹⁶

Churchill bridled at the idea of retreat. In a cable to President Truman on 24 April, the prime minister abandoned the pretense of being concerned about food. Instead, he invoked naked geopolitics: “It is your troops who would suffer the most by this, being pushed back about 120 miles in the centre and yielding up to unchecked Russian advance an enormous territory.” He continued his barrage into early June with proposals for a strategic masterstroke. He pressed Truman to hold U.S. forces in the tactical positions where they had ended the war. Whereas a withdrawal would unleash a “tide of Russian domination,” the use of those forces as “powerful bargaining counters” could force a “peaceful” settlement on Western terms. Therefore, he insisted, American forces should not retreat until the Western powers had gained satisfaction over their concerns for Poland’s borders and territorial integrity, had assured themselves of the “temporary character of the Russian occupation of Germany,” and had ensured acceptable conditions in “Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkans.”¹⁷

In the end, Churchill could not persuade Truman to risk the repercussions of scrapping Allied commitments. When the president and his secretary of state designate, James F. Byrnes, read the minutes of the Yalta negotiations in order to determine the substance of the agreements on Poland and Eastern Europe, they perceived many ambiguities and concluded that the Soviet interpretation was credible. The Yalta communiqué, which obligated the signatories to “assist” states of Central and Eastern Europe in the establishment of “broadly representative governments,” appeared to be an elastic document. Joseph E. Davies, ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1937 to 1938, and a personal friend of the president, told him that the Soviets were conforming to the true meaning of the Yalta accords and explained the reasons for their attitudes. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had expressed similar views about the agreements. The need to transfer troops and materiel from Europe to the Pacific Theater spoke for caution as well, as did a Soviet promise, at Yalta, to enter the war against Japan.¹⁸

Unconvinced of Churchill’s arguments, Truman sent Roosevelt adviser Harry Hopkins to Moscow for talks with Stalin. In wide-ranging discussions

¹⁶ Memo, Edward R. Stettinius Jr., Sec of State, for Adm William D. Leahy, White House Ch of Staff, 21 Apr 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:235–36.

¹⁷ Telgs, Churchill to Truman, 24 Apr 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:240–41; Churchill to Truman, 11 May 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 2 vols., *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), 1:6–7.

¹⁸ Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 30–33. For the Yalta Conference communiqué, 12 Feb 1945, see *FRUS, 1945, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 973. Admiral William D. Leahy applied the word “elastic” to the agreement. William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Wittlesey House, 1950), pp. 315–16; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, p. 32.

over a twelve-day period beginning 26 May, the two men managed to paper over disputes that had arisen during the Yalta Conference regarding the westward shift of Polish territorial borders to allow Soviet annexation of that nation's easternmost sections. Stalin made a welcome concession on the issue of procedural vetoes at the United Nations, and Truman and Stalin set the place and date—"the vicinity of Berlin" around 15 July—for a tripartite summit.¹⁹ Although Churchill desired an earlier date, particularly in light of the upcoming British elections, he reluctantly acceded to the decision for July. Nonetheless, because Truman had still proposed no date for withdrawals, the prime minister continued to hope for some way to use the American armies as a political hammer in Central Europe.²⁰

Ultimately, it took the intervention of Eisenhower to bring an end to Churchill's scheming. Accompanied by his deputy for military government, Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay, Eisenhower had flown to Berlin from his headquarters in Frankfurt on 5 June, just as Hopkins was wrapping up his discussions with Stalin. The British and French Commanders in Chief, Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery and General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, arrived at the same time. Eisenhower's mission on his first trip to the capital had been twofold. He met with Marshal Zhukov to sign declarations, prepared by the European Advisory Commission, on the assumption of supreme authority in the absence of a German government. He also convened an immediate meeting of the commanders' deputies for military government—Clay, General Vasily D. Sokolovsky, Lt. Gen. Sir Ronald Weeks, and Lt. Gen. Louis Marie Koeltz—to establish the Allied Control Council. At the 5 June conference, Zhukov signed the declarations but resisted over establishing the Control Council. Any such measure, he asserted, "must await withdrawal into the agreed zones," for he could not discuss administrative problems in Germany when he did not control his own zone and was unfamiliar with its problems.²¹

In a cable to the Joint Chiefs of Staff written by Clay, Eisenhower expressed understanding for Zhukov's position. He stated flatly that until the Allies had resolved the question of withdrawal, any further discussion of control machinery would be pointless. His political adviser, Robert D. Murphy, underlined that view in a cable to the State Department: "General Eisenhower does not consider that the retention of our forces in the Russian zone is wise or that it

¹⁹ Telg, Truman to Joseph V. Stalin, 1 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 1, *The Potsdam Conference*, p. 90.

²⁰ Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, pp. 32–33; Memo, Charles E. Bohlen for Dept of State, 26 May 1945, sub: First Conversation at the Kremlin; Ltr, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, Foreign Commissar of the Soviet Union, to W. Averell Harriman, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 26 May 1945; Telgs, Harry Hopkins to Truman, 28 May 1945; Truman to Hopkins, 28 May 1945; Hopkins to Truman, 30 May 1945; Stalin to Truman, 3 Jun 1945; Churchill to Truman, 4 Jun 1945; Churchill to Truman, 6 Jun 1945. All in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:24–31, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, and 93, respectively.

²¹ Telg, Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower to JCS, 6 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:328–29.

will be productive of advantages.” The Soviet position, Murphy said, seemed “sound.”²²

On 8 June, Eisenhower expressed his concerns to a receptive Hopkins, who had stopped in Frankfurt on his way home from Moscow. Hopkins dashed off a message to Truman, urging a quick end to the uncertainty. He warned the president that the indeterminate status of the withdrawal date had exposed Eisenhower to considerable embarrassment, because it would inevitably be misunderstood by the Soviets. In that light, he urged Truman to send a cable to Stalin stating his intention to begin withdrawing U.S. troops from the Soviet Zone on 21 June, subject to concurrent movement of American forces into Berlin, plus guarantees for access to Berlin by air, rail, and highway.²³

With Eisenhower pressing for action, Truman finally made clear his intentions to the British prime minister. In an 11 June message, he reminded Churchill that the zones of occupation had been approved “after long consideration and detailed discussion with you.” In view of this, the United States could no longer delay the withdrawal of American troops to exert pressure on other issues. Instead, following Hopkins’ approach, Truman proposed sending a message to Stalin, calling for a definite date of 21 June for the start of Allied withdrawals into their own zones, coupled with simultaneous movement of national garrisons into Berlin and the provision of free access to Berlin for U.S. forces. Replying three days later, Churchill bowed to the inevitable: “Obviously we are obliged to conform to your decision.”²⁴

On 14 June, Truman conveyed his proposals for mutual redeployments to Stalin. Within two days, Stalin accepted, subject to a minor postponement; Marshal Zhukov was going to be in Moscow along with all other commanders for a meeting of the Supreme Soviet, followed by a victory parade. Because the marshal would not be back before 28–30 June, and mine-clearing work still remained, Stalin requested that the removal of troops begin on 1 July. In a message to the Soviet leader on 18 June, Truman confirmed the date of 1 July. At the same time, he said, he was assuming that a “sufficient number” of American troops would be in Berlin at an earlier date to prepare for the upcoming conference.²⁵

All this time, with scant knowledge of the diplomatic battles being fought at higher levels—and with no inkling of an actual date for redeployment—U.S. planners and field commanders had been working feverishly to prepare the movement of American occupation forces into Berlin. On 7 May, one day

²² Telg, Robert Murphy, Political Adviser for German Affairs, to Dept of State, 6 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:330–32.

²³ Telg, Hopkins to Truman, 8 Jun 1945, in *FRUS 1945*, 3:333–34.

²⁴ Telgs, Truman to Churchill, 11 Jun 1945, 3:133–34; Churchill to Truman, 14 Jun 1945, 3:134–135. Both in *FRUS 1945*.

²⁵ Telgs, Truman to Stalin, 14 Jun 1945; Churchill to Stalin, 16 Jun 1945; Stalin to Truman 16 Jun 1945. All in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 40–41. Telg, Truman to Stalin, 18 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 1, *The Potsdam Conference*, p. 107.



General Parks, first U.S. military
governor in Berlin

before the German surrender, SHAEF relieved General Gerow from his responsibilities as commander of the Berlin District. Selected in his stead was Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton, now head of the purely American “First Airborne Army,” which, despite its name, was no more than a headquarters staff. Earlier, Brereton’s staff had developed plans for an airborne seizure of Berlin, Operation ECLIPSE, in the event of an imminent German collapse. Now, over the next week, with the addition of personnel from Plans Group G, Brereton reshaped and expanded that staff into the Headquarters and Headquarters Command, Berlin District. At the general’s insistence, the newly formed organization bore the designation “U.S. Headquarters Berlin District and Headquarters First Airborne Army.” Because the command’s sole mission was to carry out the occupation of

Berlin, the continued reference to the First Airborne Army was a misnomer, which owed its existence entirely to Brereton’s desire to preserve the unit’s unique identity.²⁶

Brereton did not last long in the post. Shortly after he assumed command of the Berlin District, he left for the United States on what was supposed to be a thirty-day leave. While there, however, he received a new assignment as the commander of the Third Air Force in Tampa, Florida. Initially, SHAEF named Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps, to be the new commander of the Berlin District. Ridgway was also reassigned, and, on 3 June, Maj. Gen. Floyd L. Parks, who had been serving as Brereton’s chief of staff since August 1944, assumed command. A veteran of numerous staff assignments throughout his career, Parks was assuming his first field command since holding company grade assignments after World War I.²⁷

Parks expanded the headquarters to fit its new duties. Because the original First Allied Airborne Army had operated principally as a planning and

²⁶ Telg, SHAEF to CGs, 21 Jun 1945, file 32/43, Ofc of Political Adviser, Top Secret, OMGUS, BAK; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 1, ch. 1, pp. 1–4, file 5/35-3/8, OMGUS, LAB.

²⁷ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651, OMGUS, Berlin District, Rcds of the European Cmd, RG 498, NACP.

coordinating headquarters for air and ground forces involved in airborne operations, it lacked many of the Special Staff sections that were authorized for Headquarters, Berlin District. These sections included chaplain, chemical, finance, medical, ordnance, provost marshal, quartermaster, and information services control. Augmentation to fill those positions brought the headquarters from its original strength of 234 to a total of 573 for the new organization.

From its initial location at Maison-Lafitte in France, Headquarters Command, Berlin District, moved by road march toward Berlin, reaching the Westphalian city of Bielefeld on 22 May. There, it joined Colonel Howley, who had already moved his organization in late April. At this point, the military government detachment A1A1 became the political affairs (G-5) section of the Berlin District's general staff. From 15 to 25 June, the command moved to its final staging area, the Soviet Zone city of Halle in U.S.-occupied Saxony-Anhalt. Over the next four days, it rapidly assembled subordinate units from other locations to constitute the much larger force that would enter Berlin.²⁸

U.S. troops initially earmarked for the occupation of Berlin numbered almost 25,000 men, exclusive of the Headquarters Command, Berlin District. The 2d Armored Division, under the command of Brig. Gen. John H. Collier, was to comprise the nucleus of this force. Planners on Parks' staff, however, regarded that division as not well suited for the task due to the relatively small number of infantry in an armored division and the extensive amount of patrolling and guard duty that would be required. Accordingly, they requested that SHAEF substitute an infantry division for the 2d Armored. SHAEF countered with a proposal to substitute the 82d Airborne Division, which the Berlin District accepted. However, the 82d was then involved in a move and general reassembly, and it would not be ready for occupation duties before July. Consequently, it was necessary to use the 2d Armored Division for the initial entry into the city.²⁹

By 29 June, some 26,000 soldiers had gathered in Halle to prepare for the move into Berlin. More than half of these were in combat units, consisting of the 2d Armored Division, the 702d Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 195th Airborne Antiaircraft Battalion (Automatic Weapons). Service troops included a wide variety of engineer, medical, ordnance, quartermaster, transportation, and signal units, totaling 7,763 men. Miscellaneous units such as military police, microfilm teams, counterintelligence corps detachments, postal units, finance teams, military bands, and others provided another 1,314 troops.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 5-7, 11-15, 17-25; Howley Diary Entry, pp. 10-17; Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 25-26.

²⁹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May-31 Dec 1945.

³⁰ Ibid.; Memo, Smith for CG, 2d Armd Div, 27 Jun 1945, sub: Letter of Instruction No. 1, Entry UD 659, G-3 Rpt of Opns, RG 498, NACP.

Potsdam Interlude

On 15 June, three days before President Truman's last message to Stalin confirming their agreement of mutual evacuations, U.S. officials in Moscow presented a request from General Eisenhower for permission to send an advance party to Berlin to initiate preparations for the Big Three conference. The request was reasonable on its merits, as was Truman's "assumption," expressed in his message, that a "sufficient number" of Americans be allowed into Berlin to begin the work. Both men ignored, however, the sticky matter of reciprocity. Under the terms of Truman's agreement with Stalin, the entry of U.S. forces into Berlin would be part of a simultaneous movement of all forces into their assigned areas of occupation, and that movement would begin on 1 July after Marshal Zhukov had returned from Moscow. The Americans, however, wanted to dispatch troops to Berlin to begin preparing for the conference prior to 1 July. These two separate matters became tangled into a single strand of confusion and sparked the first confrontation over Berlin.³¹

On 16 June, before the Soviets had responded to Eisenhower's request, General Parks received instructions to proceed with a staff by air to the German capital. His job was to confer with Soviet representatives on the use of a neutral meeting area for the tripartite meeting scheduled for 15 July. In the absence of a general agreement on the entry of U.S. forces in Berlin, he would induce the Soviets to set aside an area to accommodate the U.S. delegation. Because the writers of the instruction assumed that this location would lie in the American Sector of the city, they suggested that the advance group should find and prepare for the delegation facilities that the Americans could later use as headquarters for the occupation. This, they argued, would accomplish two tasks at once and save a lot of future work. In addition to preparing for the conference, Parks' men would be reconnoitering the U.S. Sector of Berlin.³²

On 19 June, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union W. Averell Harriman sent a letter to Assistant Soviet Foreign Affairs Commissar Andrei Y. Vishinsky, elaborating on General Eisenhower's plans for the mission. General Parks would head a party of 50 officers, 175 enlisted men, and 50 trucks, with the vehicles and enlisted men motoring up the Dessau-Berlin autobahn while Parks and the officers traveled by air. After first replying that the matter could await Zhukov's return to Berlin, the Soviets relented in the face of a White House threat to postpone the conference. Meeting with Harriman on 21 June, Vishinsky grudgingly agreed to let Parks embark on his assignment. Vishinsky

³¹ General Eisenhower's message is paraphrased in Telg, Murphy to H. Freeman Matthews, Director of European Affairs, 15 Jun 1945, 1:100; Telg, Truman to Stalin, 18 Jun 1945, 1:107. Both in *FRUS, 1945*.

³² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 1, ch. 2, pp. 2–3.

tendered a letter stating that the Soviet command would meet the American party and render all necessary assistance.³³

In his communications with Truman through Vishinsky, Stalin never mentioned Berlin as the conference venue. He used instead the terms “suburbs of Berlin,” “vicinity of Berlin,” and “Berlin area.” Exactly what he meant by these expressions remained unclear until Vishinsky’s discussion with Harriman on 21 June, when the commissar finally named specific sites. Each delegation, he explained, would stay in separate zones in the town of Babelsberg; the negotiations would take place in Cecilienhof Palace—the home of the Hohenzollern Crown Prince—in nearby Potsdam. The American advance party, he continued, would learn more when it arrived. A quick parsing of Vishinsky’s words shows that he was talking about a party arriving in Babelsberg, not Berlin. The Americans, it turns out, set off with different expectations.

At 0900 on 22 June, while in Frankfurt, Parks received a phone call from SHAEF informing him that the Soviets had authorized his reconnaissance mission, to comprise exactly the number of men and vehicles requested by Eisenhower. This was Parks’ first knowledge of the intended size of the group. Shortly thereafter, he got another call directing him to set off by air that same afternoon. Parks promptly phoned his headquarters staff in Halle with orders to send the ground party toward Berlin at 0600 the following day. At 1100 he met with Maj. Gen. Lowell W. Rooks from SHAEF. Rooks instructed him to negotiate with the Soviets over the accommodations President Truman would occupy at the conference. If it proved impossible to enter the American Sector of Berlin, he was to agree to any adequate arrangement and to leave the matter of entering Berlin for the future. This was the first intimation Parks received that he might not be reconnoitering the U.S. Sector of Berlin.

Parks took off from Frankfurt at 1600 with a delegation totaling fourteen officers. Two hours later, he landed at Berlin’s Tempelhof airport. Only then did he learn for certain his destination. Soviet Lt. Gen. Nicolai S. Vlasik escorted the U.S. visitors to Babelsberg, making a circuitous tour over the Unter den Linden, the Brandenburg Gate, Tiergarten, and the Gr unewald Forest. Once in Babelsberg, Parks conferred with Col. Gen. Sergei N. Kruglov, an internal security commissar. Kruglov announced that the Soviets had selected the town to house the official parties because it was only lightly damaged, contained many commodious residences, and was near the Crown Prince’s palace. Leaving nothing for inference, Kruglov went on to assert that his authority extended only to arrangements for the conference and was thus geographically confined to the area of Babelsberg-Potsdam. He could not discuss the entry of American

³³ MFR, Edward Page, Sec of U.S. Embassy, Soviet Union, 15 Jun 1945, sub: Conversation, Harriman-Vishinsky; Telg, Eisenhower to Maj Gen John R. Deane, Cdr, U.S. Mil Mission in the Soviet Union, 19 Jun 1945; Ltr, Harriman to Andrei Y. Vishinsky, 19 Jun 1945; Telg, Deane to Eisenhower, 20 Jun 1945; Memo, Leahy for Stettinius, 20 Jun 1945; MFR, Page, 21 Jun 1945, sub: Conversation, Harriman-Vishinsky; Ltr, Vishinsky to Harriman, 21 Jun 1945. All in *FRUS*, 1945, 1:100, 108, 109, 110, 112–113, 113–114, and 114, respectively.

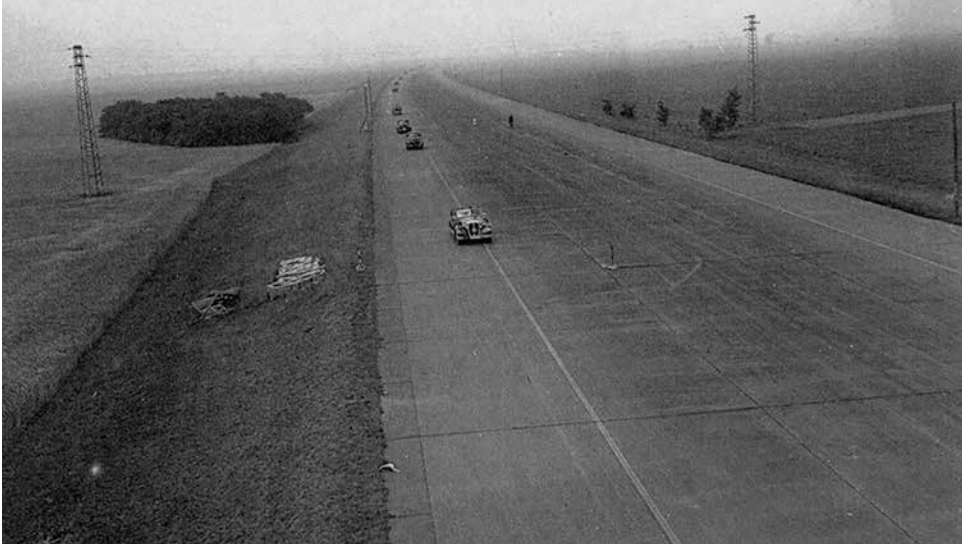


Colonel Howley's treasured Horch roadster

forces into the U.S. Sector of Berlin. After some further discussion of logistical matters, General Kruglov escorted the Americans to what one acknowledged as “an excellent billet.” There, in the words of the Berlin District’s official history, “a fine meal was served, supplemented by appropriate wines and champagne, the gifts of General Kruglov and General Vlasik.”³⁴

The motor convoy departed for Berlin the morning after Parks arrived in Babelsberg. As convoy commander, an exuberant Howley sought to stage a “spectacular” movement. He assembled a cavalcade of some 500 officers and men and 114 vehicles—jeeps, trucks, and machine gun-armed half-tracks. The vehicles had been newly painted with a glossy lacquer to replace the wartime flat finish; the personnel were scrubbed up to look sharp—“everyone in natty Eisenhower jackets with ribbons in place, equipment and vehicles all shined up, fender flags flying.” Accompanied by the Berlin District headquarters commander, Brig. Gen. Stewart Cutler, who hitched a ride at the last minute to participate in the excitement, Howley rode at the head of the column in a gleaming black Horch roadster—a vehicle he selected “because of its flashy appearance.” His men had discovered the car, the former property of a high Nazi official, hidden in a barn. No one had informed Howley of the size limits of the convoy. Nor did Howley know its true mission. As far as he was

³⁴ Maj Gen Floyd L. Parks Diary Entry, 16–23 Jun 1945, box 1, Floyd L. Parks Papers, AHFC; Excerpt, Maj Gen Parks’ Rpt of Visit to Berlin, 24 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:121; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, p. 8.



A U.S. convoy under way to Berlin with Colonel Howley's Horch in the lead

concerned, his party would be preparing the American Sector for the arrival of U.S. occupation forces several weeks later.³⁵

Howley's convoy made its way on schedule to the Elbe crossing at Dessau, around thirty-two miles from Halle. After a Soviet guide brought it over a one-lane pontoon bridge into Soviet-occupied territory, it proceeded to the local Soviet headquarters. There it remained for seven hours. The Soviet commander first offered a toast with German champagne but then raised a problem: The party had too many men. Allowing for the fourteen officers already in Babelsberg with Parks, the Americans could bring in only 36 officers, 175 enlisted men, and 50 vehicles. While many hours passed in trying to establish telephone contact with Babelsberg, Cutler and Howley remonstrated that they had orders to go to Berlin and could not be delayed. Two higher ranking Soviet officers, a major general and colonel general, joined the altercation. Cutler warned of international repercussions if the Americans did not proceed. At last, word came from Babelsberg. According to the Soviets, General Parks had ordered Cutler to take the convoy excess back to Halle; Howley was to proceed to Berlin with the prescribed 36 officers, 175 enlisted men, and 50 vehicles.³⁶

Parks' diary reveals that the Soviets had correctly transmitted his instructions. Parks had spent the morning of 23 June surveying the American billets in Babelsberg. While conferring with General Kruglov at 1130, he

³⁵ John J. Maginnis, *Military Government Journal: Normandy to Berlin* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), p. 253; Howley Diary Entry, p. 112.

³⁶ Howley Diary Entry, pp. 117, 121, 122. See also Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 28–32.

learned of the problem with the size of Howley's convoy. Parks, who—unlike Howley—understood the formal terms of the mission, told Kruglov to pass only the approved number of vehicles and personnel. Thus ended the first Soviet-American standoff over Berlin. It had been more parody than drama, but it was still a harbinger of future misunderstandings.

After surveying the Cecilienhof Palace in the early afternoon, Parks left for Tempelhof for his return flight to Frankfurt. Marshal Zhukov's chief of staff, Col. Gen. Mikhail S. Malinin, met him at the airport in order to discuss conference logistics. Although Malinin could let no more than fifty vehicles into Soviet-occupied territory, he would permit the fifty trucks arriving in Babelsberg to operate a shuttle in order to bring in more supplies and rations. Parks departed at 1600, taking a route that passed directly over the highway toward Dessau. Looking from his low-flying C-47, he recognized Howley's vehicle, the Horch, at the head of the convoy, now some four miles east of the Elbe.³⁷

Howley's party proceeded toward Berlin, so Howley thought, along a secondary road parallel to the autobahn. Its members saw a countryside empty of Germans. At the end of the journey, around 1830, Howley found himself in Babelsberg. He was met by a colonel from SHAEF, part of Parks' group, who had remained in Babelsberg to begin work on the conference. At that point, he learned that he was not leading a reconnaissance party to Berlin but had come to Babelsberg to "do a housekeeping job."³⁸

Howley saw no reason to stay if he could not reconnoiter Berlin, and he was concerned lest the housekeeping party expropriate both his group and the Horch. Happily, he received orders to return to Halle four days later. The colonel's only satisfaction from the episode, he would later declare, was to have "chiseled" a two and one-half hour trip to Berlin on 26 June. On the pretext of conferring with an American aircrew in Tempelhof, Howley and his executive officer, Lt. Col. John J. Maginnis, took a circuitous route that traversed five of the six districts of the U.S. Sector. Their Soviet guide, an internal security officer, knew little of Berlin's layout, and so did nothing to restrict the itinerary. Indeed, he proved unusually talkative. He informed Howley and Maginnis that the Soviets were feeding Berlin's population from *Wehrmacht* food stocks and that the sewer system was operating fairly well. On the other hand, he stated, Red Army dismantling crews had sent much machinery and equipment to the Soviet Union. Although the outlying districts had escaped massive damage, the Americans observed a scene of utter devastation in the city center—skeletons of buildings, streets blocked with rubble, the stench of decaying bodies on every block. In Howley's eyes, Berlin "didn't look like a city anyone would deliberately

³⁷ Parks Diary Entry, 23 Jun 1945; Memo, Howley for Keating, 26 May 1947; Excerpt, Parks' Rpt of Visit to Berlin, 24 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:124.

³⁸ Quote from Excerpt, Parks' Rpt of Visit to Berlin, 24 Jun 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:127.

come into.” Maginnis agreed: “I was forced to wonder, from what I had seen, whether this ruined city was really worth bothering with.”³⁹

On 28 June, Howley’s military government officers boarded his roadster and set off to rejoin their unit. After his run-in with the Soviet authorities, the colonel was now convinced that dealing with them would prove nearly impossible. As the journey progressed, he told Maginnis that the United States would never occupy Berlin, and that the detachment should find good accommodations in the area of Halle, in order to settle in for a long stay. Thus, the moment he returned from Babelsberg, Howley instructed his officers to “locate some big estate or some chateau to which A1A1 could be moved where we could live in comfort based on the fact we would not be ordered into Berlin.” They found a huge chateau six miles from Halle—“magnificent,” declared Howley, “the most luxurious of all A1A1 establishments.” The detachment received authorization to move into the chateau on 1 July.⁴⁰

Howley had, however, drawn false conclusions from his frustrations, mistaking legalism for hostile intent. The Soviets were adhering precisely to agreements, granting no more than the wording allowed but also no less. Truman and Eisenhower had asked to send an advance party only in connection with the tripartite conference, not to begin the occupation of Berlin. The numbers of men and vehicles approved for passage to Babelsberg were contained in Eisenhower’s request to Moscow. Soviet insistence that deployments to Berlin await Zhukov’s return simply matched the terms of the Stalin-Truman correspondence of 14–18 June. That correspondence had also spoken of “simultaneous” movement. Because no Soviet advance parties had entered the U.S. occupied Eastern Zone, an advance movement of U.S. forces into Berlin, however reasonable and appropriate, would have violated strict reciprocity by giving the Americans something for nothing.⁴¹

Howley himself offered a more nuanced assessment of Soviet actions as well as lessons for future dealings. In a report he sent to General Parks on 26 June, he concluded his discussion of a meeting with a Soviet colonel, in which they worked on the details of the supply shuttle, with the following remark:

The spirit of the Russian-American meeting was excellent, friendly but literal. In dealing with this Russian Headquarters, it is necessary never to assume anything, or to assume details based on principle. Each detail must be agreed to and repeated again and again until thoroughly understood.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 129–31. Quote from Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, p. 259; and see also pp. 257–58.

⁴⁰ Howley Diary Entry, pp.132, 133–35.

⁴¹ Telg, Truman to Stalin, 14 Jun 1945. See also Telg, Churchill to Stalin, 15 Jun 1945.

⁴² Quote from Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 1, ch. 2, p.17. See also pp. 4–16.

The problems surrounding Howley's convoy stemmed, in fact, from his deficient knowledge of details that had never reached him through the chain of command.

The Move

From 27 to 30 June, just as Howley was preparing to occupy his chateau, Generals Clay and Parks were pursuing critical negotiations with Marshal Zhukov. These talks would end the deadlock over redeployments and trigger a rush of U.S. forces into Berlin.

On 27 June, General Parks returned to Babelsberg to continue preparations for the Big Three conference. At 1730, he learned that Marshal Zhukov had returned from Moscow and would see him at 2000. Parks made the thirty-mile trip to Karlshorst—Zhukov's office was just a few steps from the scene of Germany's surrender—in the company of Colonel General Kruglov and Lieutenant General Vlasik.

Zhukov said he had still not received any information on his forthcoming meeting with Clay and the British representative, General Weeks. He had obtained the U.S. agenda but nothing from the British. Parks offered to help get the information to him the following day and to work out a date and time with the U.S. and British conferees. Zhukov expressed a preference for 29 June but could also meet late on the evening of 28 June. Parks said that U.S. forces had orders to move on 1 July, and that roughly 25,000–30,000 troops would occupy Berlin. Zhukov accepted this date, "providing an agreement on all points could be reached at the conference and the move could be begun simultaneously." Before then, no troops could enter the U.S. Sector. The conversation then shifted to preparations for the Big Three conference. Parks asked for more space to accommodate American service and communications personnel; he also wanted to add another 125 vehicles and 750 men to those already in Babelsberg. Zhukov instantly granted both requests.⁴³

Shortly after 1200 the next day, Parks received a call from SHAEF. Generals Clay and Weeks would be arriving at Gatow airport, on the outskirts of Berlin, at 1130 on 29 June. The British had combined their agenda with the U.S. agenda and would send it by wire later in the day. Parks instructed his interpreter to ask Soviet commanders in Babelsberg to telephone Karlshorst and arrange a conference there with Marshal Zhukov for 1430 on 29 June.⁴⁴

General Clay would soon be stepping onto the stage of high diplomacy, far exceeding the scope of purely military affairs. He was fully disposed to the task. During his long service in the Corps of Engineers, he had distinguished himself in multiple capacities as a manager and organizer skilled in political maneuver. In the early 1930s, he had thrived amid the turmoil of New Deal innovation, acting as the Corps of Engineers contact officer with Congress, the White House, and

⁴³ Parks Diary Entry, 27 Jun 1945.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 Jun 1945.



General Clay confers with Robert D. Murphy.

the National Emergency Council, Roosevelt's coordinating body for domestic affairs. In 1940, the Corps reassigned him from an enormous water management project in Texas to head Roosevelt's emergency airport construction program. When the United States entered the war, he became chief of Army procurement and the Army's representative to the War Production Board. After a brief time in Europe, where he served as chief of logistics in Normandy, Eisenhower sent him back to Washington to grapple with munitions shortages. Byrnes, head of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, promptly snatched Clay into service as his deputy responsible for war production. Clay's role was to decide resource allocation issues in Byrnes' name. He became virtual czar of the American war economy.

Clay brought three key attributes to his talks with Zhukov. The first was an impatiently analytical mind that got to essentials, abhorred trivialities, and sought quick results. The second was a determination to make the quadripartite system work. The third was the lack of preconceived anti-Sovietism. These qualities distinguished him from many other American military leaders and diplomats whose past experiences with the Soviets might have led them to take a harder line if negotiations had been left to them.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1950), pp. 1–6; James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 47–48; Jean E. Smith, *Lucius D. Clay: An American Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), pp. 59–117, 188–93, 201–14; General Ofcr Biographical Data, file: Lucius Clay, Historians files, CMH.

The delegations arrived at the appointed time. Eschewing small talk, Zhukov went straight to the agenda. The first and principal item was the shift of Allied forces into Berlin and the Soviet occupation of Germany to the west of the capital. After Zhukov inquired as to the anticipated strength of the U.S. and British garrisons—30,000 for the United States, a maximum of 25,000 for the U.K.—he began a discussion of dates. Clay stated that the United States could start its withdrawal from the Soviet Zone on 1 July and complete it in nine days. Zhukov asked whether the Americans could not vacate the Soviet area more rapidly. Clay agreed, subject to General Bradley's approval, that the United States would evacuate in four days. There followed a discussion of coordinated, phased movements. The Soviets would send reconnaissance parties into their zone on 1 July to survey ground installations; airfield reconnaissance would occur on 2 July; and on 4 July, the exchange of territories would be complete. Correspondingly, the United States would conduct ground reconnaissance in Berlin on 1 July and airfield reconnaissance the next day. The main body of troops would start moving from Halle on 3 July and finish its move on 4 July. British movements into Berlin would follow a similar timetable.⁴⁶

Having obtained Bradley's concurrence, Clay confirmed these arrangements the following day. General Parks communicated the news in a meeting at Soviet headquarters with Zhukov's deputy, General Sokolovsky. At Parks' request, Sokolovsky agreed to extend the withdrawal deadline to 7 July. While the 2d Armored Division would have to clear the Halle area on schedule, U.S. service troops could stay in Halle another three days and retain the use during that time of the Halle-Berlin autobahn. Thereafter, the U.S. and British forces were to use the Hannover-Magdeburg-Berlin autobahn, although it would not belong exclusively to them and was not to be considered a corridor. Parks also took the opportunity to raise a question concerning the fourth occupying power, France. Although the French had yet to receive a sector, the Allies wanted to bring a "token force" of ten French officers into the American and British sectors "as a gesture to the French people." This would be followed by a small contingent of roughly 1,000 troops once the French could pull it together. Sokolovsky found these ideas satisfactory.⁴⁷

Access to Berlin

After briefly discussing the treatment of displaced persons—Zhukov's main desire was to rid himself of responsibility for the care of non-Russians—the three generals turned to the issue of Western access to Berlin. Zhukov brought up Anglo-American requests, contained in the U.S.-U.K. joint agenda, for two

⁴⁶ MFR, Maj Gen Floyd L. Parks, 29 Jun 1945, sub: Conference between Marshal Zhukov and Soviet Representatives, General Clay and U.S. Representatives, General Weeks and British Representatives at Marshal Zhukov's Headquarters, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:353–56.

⁴⁷ MFR, Parks, 30 Jun 1945, sub: Conference between Army General Sokolovsky . . . and Major General Parks . . . held at Marshal Zhukov's Headquarters, file 5/38-1/14, OMGUS, LAB.

autobahn routes, two railway lines, and two air corridors. He declared that all roads and lanes cut across Soviet Zone territory and involved significant administrative difficulties; moreover, one autobahn and one railway line seemed enough to supply a garrison totaling 50,000 American and British troops. Zhukov offered an autobahn route through Magdeburg, a railway line through Magdeburg, and an air route through Magdeburg and Goslar. Although Allied vehicles would be subject to Soviet traffic regulations and document checks, the Soviets would demand no inspection of cargo and no limitations on the amount of vehicular traffic. If the Americans did not like the route through Magdeburg, they could choose another, Zhukov said. He had proposed it because it was a central lane, reasonable to both the Americans and British, and the most economical. Besides, at a later time, the Allies could change “possibly all points” discussed at the present conference.⁴⁸

General Clay briefly defended the request for several routes on the grounds that the Americans were spread between a port in Bremen, an occupation area in the southwest, and an administration in Berlin, but he dropped the argument, accepting Zhukov’s offer while reserving his right to reopen the question at the Control Council should the single routes prove unsatisfactory. The alacrity with which he yielded to Zhukov’s views indicated not only his willingness to compromise, but also suggested that Zhukov had persuaded him on the technical merits of the Soviet position. If so, experience validated both Zhukov’s assertion and Clay’s judgment. The single routes met all Allied requirements, from the initial phase of the occupation until its very end.⁴⁹

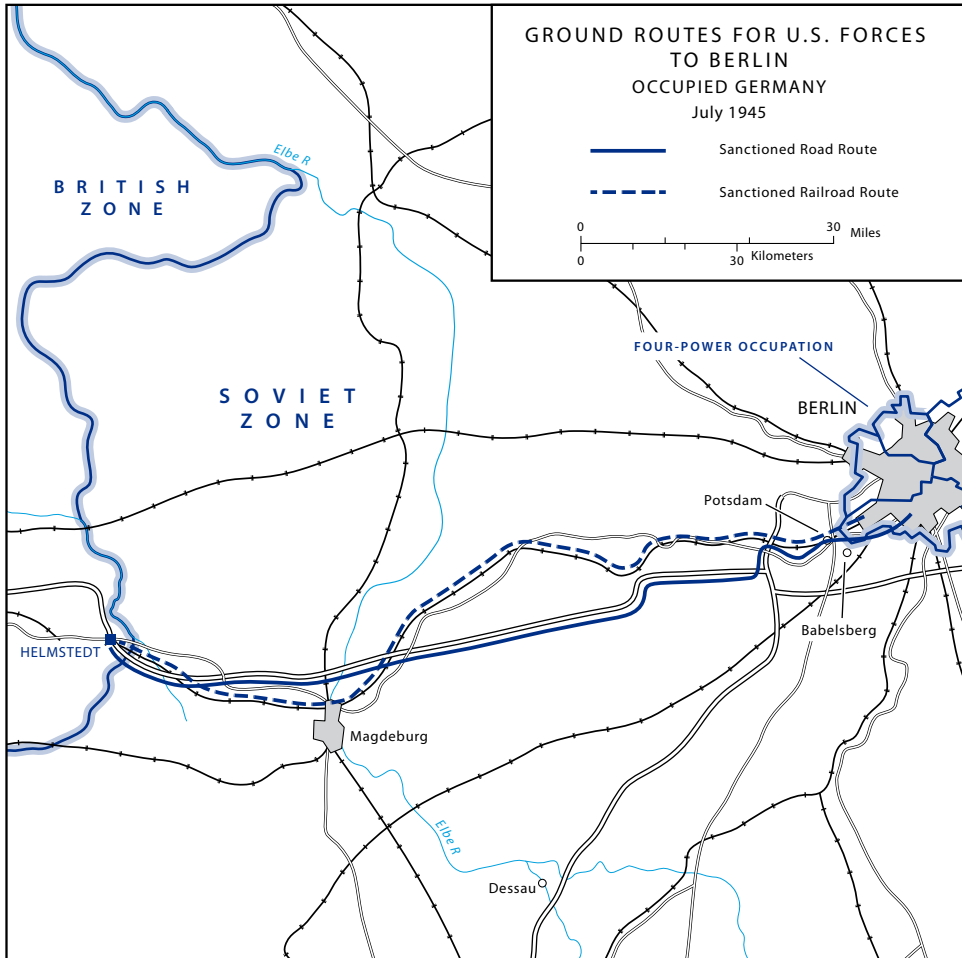
Toward the end of the meeting, the attendees discussed control over airports. General Weeks and Marshal Zhukov could not agree on who should have Staaken or Gatow—Staaken’s buildings were in the British Sector but not the landing field—and decided to consider the issue later. The parties readily agreed, however, to give the United States exclusive use of Tempelhof. Although this massive facility—the largest in the world—lay in the American Sector, it was not self-evident that Zhukov would relinquish it entirely, for it was Berlin’s main airport. Although the Soviets might have demanded to share its use, claiming that it was vital to air transportation in the Soviet Zone, they did not.⁵⁰

Weeks and Clay then agreed on Zhukov’s offer of an air lane from Berlin to Magdeburg. From that point, the lane would fork into two paths, one turning southwest to Frankfurt and the other toward Hannover. The single route soon proved unsatisfactory from the standpoint of flight safety. Hence, on 30 November 1945, the Control Council approved the recommendations of its Air Directorate to establish three corridors over the Soviet Zone to Berlin and to develop strict flight rules for all aircraft using them. Unlike the earlier

⁴⁸ MFR, Parks, 29 Jun 1945, sub: Conference between Marshal Zhukov . . . Headquarters, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:358–59.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 360–61.



Map 4

agreements, the decision over air corridors was a formal act of the Control Council and thus became a formal obligation.⁵¹

The land access arrangement, however, remained a gentlemen's accord between Zhukov, Weeks, and Clay. It never took shape as a protocol. The American record of it was contained in notes prepared by General Parks. Clay and his political adviser, Robert Murphy, kept copies in their office files, but few others saw them. Parks first sent his notes to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on

⁵¹ "Recommendations of the Air Directorate Respecting Air Corridors," 28 Nov 1945; "Decision of the Control Council Approving Establishment of Berlin-Hamburg, Berlin-Buckeburg (Hannover), and Berlin-Frankfurt-am-Main Air Corridors," 30 Nov 1945. Both in *Documents on Germany, 1944-1945*, pp. 69-77.

1 April 1948, and Murphy followed with a copy to the State Department six days later. In his letter of transmittal Murphy wrote:

A number of decisions were taken regarding the practical features of the quadripartite occupation of Berlin and the use of the corridor Berlin-Helmstedt by railroad and air. As you understand, this agreement was never formalized, each party having made its own notes. However, during the interval that has elapsed since June 29, 1945, the lines of agreement have become established by daily usage and practice.⁵²

The very lateness of the access talks—two days before the initial movement of Allied forces into Berlin—as well as the informal nature of the agreement, are perplexing, and beg the question as to why the European Advisory Committee had not settled the issue as part of the agreement on zones. The answer is threefold. First, the War Department regarded the matter as a military issue that should be resolved by commanders on the basis of prevailing circumstances. How could anyone foresee American military requirements or know which roads would be most suitable or even passable? Second, the Soviet delegation's head, Ambassador Gousev, worked to keep the access question off the commission's agenda. He asserted that access across the Soviet Zone was already implied in the zonal protocol and stated flatly that "arrangements for transit facilities will be made, providing the United States and United Kingdom forces and control personnel full access to the Berlin zone across Soviet-occupied territory." Third, Ambassador Winant was eager to complete the zonal protocol and did not want further complications. He vehemently rebuffed an effort by Murphy to define access rights through the protocol. When Murphy suggested this at a private luncheon in London in mid-September 1944—after the draft protocol had already been signed—Winant exploded: "You have no right to come along at this late date and make such a proposal just after we have agreed upon a draft!" Free access to Berlin was implicit in the U.S. right to be there, Winant argued, and to raise the question at that point would upset the hard-won agreement and impede additional settlements.⁵³

Despite later recriminations over the lack of a formal access agreement, for most of the Cold War era the access regime functioned smoothly and met all military and civilian requirements in Berlin. The Soviets challenged it twice—once physically during the Berlin Blockade of 1948–1949, and once verbally during the Berlin Crisis of 1958. These two confrontations had political origins and ramifications unrelated to the existence or nonexistence of written access guarantees for Allied forces in West Berlin, and in neither case did the outcomes prove to be a

⁵² Ltr, Robert Murphy to Charles Saltzman, Asst Sec of State for Occupied Areas, 7 Apr 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 3:353.

⁵³ Feodor T. Gousev cited in Telg, Nicholas Gallman, Chargé in the United Kingdom, to Edward R. Stettinius Jr., 6 Nov 1944, in *FRUS, 1944*, vol. 1, *The Conference at Quebec*, p. 384; Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), p. 231; and pp. 230–32. See also Telg, Gallman to Stettinius, 6 Nov 1944; Philip E. Mosely, "The Dismemberment of Germany," *Foreign Affairs* 28 (July 1950): 580–604.

threat to the U.S. occupation. In each case, the Allies would affirm their victors' rights as justification for their continued presence in Berlin and guaranteed access to the city. In extremis, the Soviets could have violated a written protocol just as quickly as a gentlemen's accord. The geography was the same in either circumstance, and pretexts were always available.⁵⁴ (*See Map 4.*)

The Americans Arrive

The stage was now set for the Americans to begin their movement into Berlin. U.S. officials had always recognized that the plan for unit areas and assignments would not be complete at the time of entry into the city. Instead, they proposed initial assignments based on aerial photographs and other intelligence then available. With this in mind, General Parks, at his first meeting with Marshal Zhukov on 27 June, had requested permission to make immediate ground reconnaissance of the U.S. Sector in Berlin. The Soviet commander's refusal to grant this request emphasized the Russian determination to prohibit the entry of U.S. troops into Berlin prior to the American evacuation of the Soviet Zone west of the Elbe River.⁵⁵

The Americans turned to other methods to get the information they needed. On 28 June, several officers from the Berlin District forward headquarters at Babelsberg arranged to get lost en route to Tempelhof Airfield. By this maneuver, they were able to confirm that, while the center of Berlin was practically unusable, outlying portions of the American Sector were relatively undamaged. Although they could not examine any of the building interiors, they were able to ascertain the suitability of various neighborhoods for use by the occupation forces.⁵⁶

Thus, on 30 June, Parks' headquarters issued the final order for the march into Berlin. The force would move into Berlin in three installments. A preliminary reconnaissance party would be the first element to enter the city. Consisting of 2,000 men and 434 vehicles, it would depart from the staging area at Halle at 0600 on 1 July. This first group would include the Military Government Detachment A1A1, the Berlin District Press Party, and detachments of air, engineer, signal, quartermaster, and military police units in sufficient strength to begin setting up the initial headquarters and to begin determining unit locations. A force of 725 men from the 2d Armored Division would provide security for the movement.⁵⁷

The second segment of the march, the detailed reconnaissance party, would depart Halle on 2 July. It would consist of approximately 3,000 men and 700 vehicles. Most of this group would consist of the remaining elements of Headquarters Command, Berlin District, and a reinforced engineer group. The bulk of the 2d Armored Division would begin its movement on 3 July.

⁵⁴ Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 233.

⁵⁵ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*



A U.S. military government detachment camps in the Grünewald after the initial convoy into the city.

Remaining support units and the rear headquarters of the Berlin District would constitute the final march segment, departing for Berlin on 4 July.⁵⁸

Right on schedule, the preliminary reconnaissance party departed Halle at 0600 on 1 July, just as Soviet reconnaissance units began to arrive. Proceeding northeast on the Munich-Berlin autobahn, its movement was uneventful except for delays by Russian checkpoints at the bridges over the Mulde and Elbe Rivers. The military government detachment, with light vehicles, took the lead, once again with Howley's prized Horch. The convoy operated under quartermaster rules, with all vehicles moving down the autobahn in a tightly packed line at twenty miles per hour, the speed of the slowest trucks. The lead group reached Berlin at 1700. There, they met representatives from the forward headquarters at Babelsberg with the information that the Russians had vacated only sufficient building space to accommodate the officers for the night. The group therefore decided to bivouac the entire party, except for portions of the 2d Armored Division security force, in the Grünewald Forest in the western part of the sector.⁵⁹

An entry in Colonel Maginnis' personal diary described the first night American occupation forces spent in Berlin:

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 8–9.

With no billets to go to, we would end up in the Gr unewald, that great forest park in the southwestern area of the city. We had to set up pup tents in the mud and rain, and crawl into them for the night. . . . I had managed to avoid pup tents throughout World War II, yet here I was, with the war over and making a triumphal entry into Berlin, established in that dreaded form of shelter under the most dreary and uncomfortable conditions.

“This was,” as Maginnis wryly noted, “undoubtedly history’s most unimpressive entry into the capital of a defeated nation by a conquering power.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, p. 261.

4

THE BEGINNING OF QUADRIPARTITE RULE

When American forces spread across wide areas of Germany in the spring of 1945, they filled a political vacuum. The Reich, along with all of its agencies and civic apparatus had collapsed, and the Allied military governments assumed all of its powers and authority. Hence, wherever its troops held the ground, U.S. sovereignty was undivided.

By 1 July, however, the U.S. evacuation of those portions of the Soviet Zone it still held was well underway. When Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay and Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov had discussed the withdrawal on 24 June, the Soviet marshal said that he wanted it done fast and without ceremony. Rather than formal reliefs, he preferred a two- or three-mile gap between his advanced guards and the American rear guards. Accordingly, the Russians sent reconnaissance parties to selected points on 1 July. For the next three days, both forces moved to an agreed phase line each day until, by midnight 4 July, U.S. forces had completely departed the Soviet Zone.¹

By the time the Americans had occupied their sector of Berlin, Soviet military authorities had ruled the capital for nearly ten weeks. For the Germans there, it had been a time of turmoil. On the one hand, the Soviets had terrorized the population of Berlin, allowing soldiers to rape and pillage almost at will while beginning to dismantle nearly every bit of surviving infrastructure of value in the name of reparations. At the same time, however, they had organized the supply of food; appointed a German administration; reactivated parties and unions; cleared rubble from streets; restored basic power, sewage, and water; repaired systems of transportation; and resuscitated the city's arts and culture. They remained in the U.S. Sector—and continued issuing orders to district mayors—one week after having solemnly lowered their flag on 4 July. In the words of one historian, the Americans entered Germany's capital less as conquerors and more as "guests received by the master of the house."²

Four-power supervision over the occupation was a bold experiment. Could it work? On the one hand, the feeling of wartime comradeship was strong, and sheer antagonism toward the former enemy bound the Allies together.

¹ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, p. 306.

² Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater: Cultural and Intellectual Life in Berlin, 1945–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 10.

On the other, the Allies in Berlin represented divergent cultures, interests, and ideologies. When even technical directives required four-power agreement, every issue involved negotiation and political decisions resembled acts of state. The desire for solidarity prevailed. Attuned to their mutual interests, and fueled by the determination to succeed, commanders of the occupying forces worked at all levels to cement a partnership in Berlin.

The Red Army Takes Its Revenge on Berlin

Widespread rape and other crimes by Soviet soldiers in Eastern Europe turned out to be a pale foreshadowing of what was to come when Soviet armies marched into German territory. Red Army political officers intensified their propaganda campaign, reminding the troops that they had entered the lair of the Nazi beast. Joseph V. Stalin himself mocked protests regarding his soldiers' conduct, remarking that, after crossing thousands of kilometers of blood, fire, and death, they were entitled to have fun with a woman or to take a trifle. When protests continued, he rejected them, saying that he would not allow anyone to drag the reputation of the Red Army in the mud.³

For the Germans in Berlin, the Soviet occupation became a struggle for survival. Red Army soldiers, no longer engaged in deadly combat with the German Army, turned their energies to settling old scores. They were driven by anti-German propaganda, which Stalin reversed too late, and by deep hatred over German atrocities throughout Eastern Europe. Alcohol stoked insensate fury against civilians, above all women. Rape and pillage became the chief outlets for emotions of retaliation and revenge.

The chaos worsened in Berlin when second-line troops entered the city after the battle. The city fell under attack from what the Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht branded "drunken hordes," who "marched through apartments, grabbed the women, shot down the men and women who tried to resist, raped in front of the eyes of children," and murdered commissars who tried to stop them. That many soldiers came from the Central Asian republics—Berliners called them "the Mongols"—intensified the terror. As the occupation progressed, however, it became apparent that each successive set of replacements undertook its own campaign of aggression against the civilian population. The problem seemed to be not one of a particular cohort of troops, but rather the combustible combination of battle-weary troops hardened by their wartime experiences and a defenseless population.⁴

Initial efforts by Soviet Army leaders to restore discipline were sporadic and ineffective. Sometimes officers would punish the offenders by severe whipping

³ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 71.

⁴ Quote from Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, p. 106; Interv, Brewster Chamberlin with William F. Heimlich, Asst Ch of Staff, G-2, Berlin Cmd, 1945–1946, 4 Aug 1981, p. 14, OMGUS, LAB; Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, p. 90.



A Russian soldier and a German woman "negotiate" over a bicycle.

or even execution. All too often, though, local commanders sympathized with their soldiers' anger and frustration and ignored their nightly rampages. During the initial days of the occupation, released Soviet prisoners of war and forced laborers exacted their own reprisals on their former captors. It would not be until 1947, when Soviet commanders confined soldiers to strictly guarded posts and restricted almost all contact with the civilian population, that the rampage against German civilians subsided.⁵

The Soviets' thirst for revenge against the German capital city in the spring of 1945 was also manifest in their thirst for reparations. While Soviet leaders in Berlin sought to resuscitate Berlin's economy, dismantling teams—directed by a variety of Soviet ministries and operating independently of the military government—were disassembling machinery for shipment to the Soviet Union. On 12 May, when Marshal Zhukov ordered the restarting of Berlin's electrical power stations, he did not know that one plant had already appeared on a

⁵ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 77–83, 106; Notes, Wilhelm Pieck, "Besprechung mit Shukov" (Discussion with Zhukov), 11 Jul 1945, in *Wilhelm Pieck—Aufzeichnungen zur Deutschlandpolitik 1945–1953* (Wilhelm Pieck—Notes on Policy toward Germany 1945–1953), eds. Rolf Badstübner and Wilfried Loth (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), pp. 53–54.



Soviet troops leave the U.S. Sector of Berlin in July 1945.

removals list; a second would follow two weeks later. Likewise, a subsequent order to restart industrial activity by mid-August collided with decisions of the reparations committee to dismantle the very enterprises Zhukov aimed to restore. The military administration, he feared, was facing “the beginning deindustrialization of East Germany.”⁶

The Soviet haste to strip Berlin of its remaining industrial infrastructure underscored a basic difference in the way the Allies approached the very concept of reparations. As General Clay explained to John J. McCloy in a letter in September 1945, the Western Allies, and in particular, the United States, understood the goal as expressed in the Potsdam agreements to be that of leaving Germany sufficient resources to maintain a standard of living equal to the average of other European countries. The Soviets, he believed, were less concerned with maintaining that standard and more concerned with removing what resources remained as quickly as possible. East and West also differed on which agency should create and oversee reparations policy, with the Soviets supporting the positions of the Reparations Committee meeting in Moscow

⁶ Jochen Laufer, “Politik und Bilanz der sowjetischen Demontagen in der SBZ/DDR 1945–1950” (Policy and Accounts of the Soviet Dismantlings in the Soviet Occupation Zone/DDR 1945–1950), in *Sowjetische Demontagen in Deutschland 1944–1949: Hintergründe, Ziele und Wirkungen* (Soviet Dismantlings in Germany: Background, Goals and Effects), eds. Rainer Karlsch and Jochen Laufer (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002), p. 51. Quote from Idem, “Policy and Accounts of the Soviet Dismantlings in the Soviet Occupation Zone/DDR 1945–1950,” p. 52.

while the Western Allies preferred to assign the responsibility for reparations policies to the Allied Control Council.⁷

Even as these policy discussions continued, the Soviets accelerated the dismantling of the city's remaining resources. To maximize removals from Berlin, the Soviet reparations crews had to strip the Western sectors before the Anglo-Americans arrived. According to one German source, the Soviets took from those districts roughly 88 percent of the industrial capacity that survived the war. Among the enterprises affected by the removals were Osram, Siemens, Borsig, and the *Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft* (General Electric Company, AEG). In addition, according to the source, the Soviets removed 33 percent of the industrial capacity left standing in East Berlin. By comparison, Soviet documents confirm the dismantling of 605 plants in West Berlin coupled with the eventual removal of 782 objects from the Eastern sector. Although the Soviet figures show that the removals extended throughout the city rather than being concentrated in West Berlin, they still testify to a huge loss of industrial capacity. Clearly the Soviet removals severely compounded the difficulties of restarting Berlin's economic life and permanently darkened the mood against the Soviet Union.⁸

Berlin in Soviet Hands

Despite the reprisals and indiscipline that marked the initial period of the occupation, the Soviets also undertook many of the initial steps to put the city back into working order. For the first two months, before the Western Allies arrived in the city, the Soviets alone faced the task of restoring basic services and bringing some order to the devastated city. Writing in January 1946, Col. Frank L. Howley termed Soviet accomplishments during the period when they were the sole occupying power in Berlin a "good first echelon Military Government job."⁹

While historians in later years looked past the material performance of the Soviet administration to focus on their plans to lay "the foundations of a new communist order" in the German capital, that might not be a fair characterization of the Soviets as initial occupiers. Although Howley was right in his assessment, the Soviets reached well beyond "first echelon" military government work to shape political, social, and cultural developments in Berlin

⁷ Ltr, General Lucius D. Clay to John J. McCloy, Asst Sec of War, 16 Sep 1945, in *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay, Germany 1945–1949*, ed. Jean E. Smith, 2 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 2:74–82.

⁸ Senats von Berlin, *Berlin: Kampf um Freiheit und Selbstverwaltung* (Berlin: Heinz Spitzing Verlag, 1961), pp. 25, 62; Laufer, "Policy and Accounts of the Soviet Dismantlings in the Soviet Occupation Zone/DDR 1945–1950," p. 51. The dismantlings in East Berlin continued through May 1946, when the actions were stopped in favor of leaving plants in Germany to produce for the Soviet Union. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 166–70, 178–83.

⁹ Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 9, Historians files, CMH.

for decades. They deserved credit for doing much of the heavy lifting in restoring basic services to the city during the early days of the postwar period. At the same time, those who posit an orchestrated scheme to “Sovietize” Berlin assume that the Soviets had the same interests in Germany as they did in Eastern Europe. In fact, many of their goals in Eastern Europe were better served by more flexible and less dogmatic policies in Eastern Germany and Berlin.¹⁰

Stalin may ultimately have sought communism for Germany, but he had to take into account immediate requirements. The Soviets needed to activate production without delay, and could ill afford social turmoil. They wanted Germans to accept the loss of territory east of the Oder-Neisse and to acquiesce in payment of reparations—and all who took a sober view of such demands, and who assisted in their fulfillment, were welcome. The Soviets also wished to extract reparations from Western Zones as well as from their own. The breaking of the country along lines of ideology would have blocked Soviet access to the West, rich in coal and heavy industry, and would have also crippled the Eastern Zone’s light industry, which depended on western Germany for raw materials and intermediate goods. Thus, a neutral Germany, kept whole and open to Soviet influence as well as exploitation, was more valuable to Stalin than a communized rump state in the east. Therefore, it might be better to delay the full-fledged expansion of communism into Germany until he had fully extracted all of the economic gain that he could through reparations and cooperation with the West. If Stalin had to disappoint the hopes of the party’s German rank-and-file, it was a small price to pay. In the 1930s, after all, he had abandoned them to Hitler with scarcely a twinge of regret.

Soviet district commandants began appointing municipal officials in Berlin even before the battle’s climatic phase—the struggle around the Reichstag and Chancellery—had begun. On 24 April, they made their first appointment with the mayor of Hermsdorf, a small locality in northwestern Berlin. By the time of Berlin’s surrender on 2 May, the Soviets had already named officials for nine districts or subdistricts in the city. Because many Soviet commandants knew little German, the appointments were often haphazard. Under pressure to establish local administrations, the commandants would install individuals who appeared congenial and declared themselves to be “anti-Fascist,” “old Communists,” or “concentration camp inmates;” sometimes they happened on competent people, but many appointees quickly proved themselves incapable.¹¹

On 30 April, the Soviets delivered to Berlin a group of party officials composed of Germans who had fled to the Soviet Union during the war. Led by Walter Ulbricht, a skilled organizer and loyal servant to Soviet interests, the group moved quickly to begin setting up a civilian administration for the city. Throughout early May, they identified and installed district administrators

¹⁰ Ann and John Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift* (New York: Athenum, 1988), p. 27.

¹¹ Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlasst ihre Kinder* (Berlin: Keipenheur and Witsch, 2005), pp. 437–39.

and assembled a list of potential individuals to form the Magistrat, a central civilian authority for the city. Despite his devotion to the Communist party, Ulbricht's initial list appeared to be politically balanced, with seven bourgeois, or Western-leaning members; six Communists; two Social Democrats; and two nonparty experts. The designated *Oberbürgermeister* (mayor), Arthur Werner, was an architect with no party affiliation.¹²

After the Soviet authorities confirmed Ulbricht's selection, Werner announced the Magistrat's membership on 17 May in his first official statement as governing mayor. The next day, the members met with the Soviet commandant, Col. Gen. Nikolai Bersarin. An engineer by training, Bersarin had distinguished himself as a frontline commander, most recently at the head of the Fifth Shock Army. As soon as the fighting stopped, however, he worked with fierce intensity to save Berlin. With the exception of exhortations to eliminate fascism, the general's words to the assembled German officials were nonpolitical. He urged them to do everything humanly possible to restore "normal life" in Berlin and to perform their duties in a spirit of unity, common purpose, and conscientious discipline. He listed the immediate needs they had to address: clearing streets, putting damaged dwellings in shape for winter, restoring transportation systems, and preventing the spread of infection and disease. "In every part of the city and in every house," he told his listeners at the end of his talk, "people should have just one thought: that everyone must pull together."¹³

Under Bersarin's leadership, the Soviet authorities and their German appointees began the process of restoring basic necessities to the people of Berlin. Before they could set up a regular system of food distribution, the Soviets fed the population from Red Army field kitchens. They soon brought in food from *Wehrmacht* stocks discovered south of Berlin and organized a system of rationing. They put regiments of conscript laborers, many of them women, to work clearing rubble in order make streets passable. The first bus lines went into operation on 13 May, and one subway line began service the next day. Ration cards were ready for distribution on 15 May. To disburse them, as well as to serve as general auxiliaries to the administration, the authorities enlisted thousands of unpaid house, street, and *obleute* (block wardens). Delivery of official mail by courier commenced on 18 May. Gas supplies began flowing from municipal coal gasification works on 19 May.¹⁴

¹² Richard Gyptner, "Die ersten tag in der Heimat: Das Wirken der Gruppe Ulbricht im Mai 1945" (The First Days in the Homeland: Impact of the Ulbricht Group in May 1945), in *Quellen und Dokumente 1945–1951* (Sources and Documents 1945–1951), ed. Hans J. Reichardt, 2 vols. (Berlin: Heinz Spitzing Verlag, 1964), 1:212, 752.

¹³ For a German appreciation of Bersarin, see *Bersarin Nikolaj: Generaloberst, Stadtkommandant Berlin* (Nikolai Bersarin: Colonel General, City Commandant of Berlin), ed. Peter Jahn (Berlin: Elefant Press, 1999). Quote from Address by Bersarin, 19 May 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:217–18.

¹⁴ Berlin, *Berlin*, pp. 40–67; Rpt, Berlin Public Transportation Directorate, sub: Aufbauleistungen von Mai bis Dezember 1945 (Construction Performance from May to December 1945), in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:705.

Soviet rejuvenation of Berlin continued through May and June. On 20 May, leading judicial agencies, including the office of public prosecutor, took up work. Also on that day the first tram lines went back into service. A courier service for letters and postcards commenced on 22 May. By 30 May, electricity had been restored to eleven of Berlin's twenty districts, and rail traffic had resumed between Berlin and outlying towns. Berlin's health authorities launched a campaign to counter epidemics on 4 June. On 5 June, the Magistrat announced the opening of the *Berliner Stadtbank* (Berlin Municipal Bank) to distribute wages and pay current expenses. Instruction resumed in elementary schools, and on 11 June the Magistrat's division of public education issued guidelines for the reopening of all schools in the fall. On 1 July, a new social security administration began operations, beginning with the resumption of health insurance. Tram, bus, and subway service continued to expand. The number of trips by public transport grew from 2,475,000 in May to 18,280,000 in June.¹⁵

Accompanying these efforts to fill material needs were initiatives to resuscitate art and culture in Berlin. The Berlin Chamber Orchestra held the city's first public concert on 13 May, only eleven days after the fighting had ended. The next day, on the invitation of General Bersarin, the city's leading writers and performing artists met to discuss the reconstruction of cultural institutions. The Berlin Philharmonic gave its first postwar performance on 26 May. Theatrical performances began the following day, with the nineteenth-century comedy *Rape of the Sabines*, the irony of which was apparently lost on the Soviet occupiers.¹⁶

Berlin's political life was the next priority for revival. In early June, Ulbricht flew to Moscow with two colleagues, Anton Ackermann and Gustav Sobottka. In a meeting with Stalin on 4 June, followed by further meetings with the Soviet politburo, they received instructions on the restoration of party organizations. The *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KPD) (Communist Party of Germany) would come first and non-Communist parties soon thereafter. The *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) (Social Democratic Party of Germany) would reconstitute itself, and new bourgeois parties would correspond to the center and liberal parties of the Weimar era. Whatever his ultimate objectives, Stalin reiterated the policy of forswearing communization, and defined the character of the anti-Fascist struggle in terms of consummating the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution and eliminating the vestiges of "feudalism." Stalin's instructions provided the basis of the Communists' "appeal" to the people, written by Ackermann during the stay in Moscow. In it he asserted, "We believe that the imposition

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The authors of the piece, first performed in 1884, were the Austrian playwrights Franz and Paul von Schönthan. *Berlin: Kampf un Freiheit*, pp. 44–45, 49; Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater*, pp. 39–98.

of the Soviet system on Germany would be a false path, for it would not conform to the contemporary conditions of development in Germany.”¹⁷

Ultimately, however, Stalin’s seeming forbearance went unrewarded. Little time passed before any positive achievements of the Soviet occupation were forgotten. Memories of Soviet efforts to restore life and morale to the city faded, overshadowed by the evil aspects of those frightful days. Soviet political prestige in Germany never recovered, and German Communists remained tarred with the brush of Red Army atrocities and derelictions.

The Americans Take Control

Such was the situation in early July 1945, as the Americans prepared to assume control over their assigned sector of the city. On the morning of 2 July, Howley left his encampment in the forest to join Maj. Gen. Floyd L. Parks in Babelsberg, where the general was directing preparations for the tripartite summit. From there, a Soviet guide escorted them to the headquarters of Col. Gen. Alexander V. Gorbatov, who had succeeded Bersarin after the latter’s death in a motorcycle accident. A group headed by British Commandant Maj. Gen. Lewis O. Lyne arrived separately. The three commanders took care of immediate business first. They agreed that the Anglo-Americans would move into their sectors on the night of 4–5 July; the Allied powers would handle all matters involving civil affairs, health, telephone, police, and utilities on a common, citywide basis; Allied specialists would establish direct contact over technical issues; and the commanders would meet again on 7 July. Gorbatov proceeded to brief his guests on the condition of Berlin’s utilities and on the German administrations in the city. He told Parks and Lyne that they could replace all district officials who proved unsatisfactory. Parks responded that he intended to use the extant structures and personnel as much as possible.¹⁸

The next issue on Gorbatov’s agenda was food. The Soviet ration system, he explained, allocated calories by work or social status, with heavy laborers, intellectuals, and artists receiving the most. He stated that the United States would have 800,000 people to feed in its sector and Britain 900,000. In response to a British remark about transportation problems, Gorbatov said he understood the difficulty of bringing new supplies into the city and promised to continue feeding the population until Allied supply arrangements were decided later. The general asked for Western help in guarding food stores and utilities, and

¹⁷ Notes, Wilhelm Pieck, Provisional Chairman of the KPD, “Beratung am 4.6.1945 at 6 Uhr bei Stalin, Molotow, Shadanow” (Consultation on 4 June 1945 at 1800 with Stalin, Molotov, Zhadnov), in Badstübner and Loth, eds., *Wilhelm Pieck—Notes on Policy toward Germany 1945–1953*, pp. 50–52; Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlasst ihre Kinder*, pp. 479–80. Quote from “Aufruf der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands” (Appeal of the Communist Party of Germany), 11 Jun 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:759; and see also pp. 755–58, 760–61.

¹⁸ Bersarin had died in a traffic accident in mid-June.

said that Soviet guards would remain until American and British personnel had replaced them. General Parks mentioned the French: They had not received a sector, but their advance party was arriving and needed somewhere to stay. Parks suggested letting them occupy the suburban district of Reinickendorf, in the British Sector, pending a final decision on their area. Gorbатов accepted that idea. The generals then agreed to allow personnel from all powers to cross sector boundaries so long as they behaved in an orderly fashion.¹⁹

That night in the Gr̈unewald Forest, Howley told his team to prepare to take over their districts at midnight on 4 July. Lt. Col. John J. Maginnis had already gone to Scḧoneberg, where the Soviet district commander staged a “very warm reception.” The American local commanders for Zehlendorf and Kreuzberg had also established contact with Soviet officers and came back reporting them to be perhaps a “little rough” in their handling of Germans but to be “pretty good guys.”²⁰

On 3 July, the civil affairs detachment moved out of the woods. Because of the relative lack of damage in Zehlendorf—Berlin’s wealthiest district, where nearly 80 percent of the dwellings were still intact—many fine properties were available for sequestration. Some officers, including Maginnis, lodged at the Harnack House, the guest residence and meeting center of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics. Others dispersed around requisitioned private homes. Howley established himself in an extravagant villa on the Gelfertstrasse, close to U.S. headquarters.²¹

After moving into their new accommodations, Maginnis and his team traveled to Scḧoneberg for tea with the Soviets. That “tea,” Maginnis wrote, “turned out to be a terrific drinking bout.” Bottles of all sorts lined the center of a table. Americans sat on one side, the Soviets on the other. The officers then launched into a series of toasts, first to President Harry S. Truman, then to Generalissimo Joseph Stalin, continuing on to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Marshal Zhukov, the Red Army, the Allies, the U.S. Army, the United States, the Soviet Union, and countless more. Vast quantities of meats, vegetables, and bread could not counteract the effect of the alcohol. The American interpreter was so inebriated that he became confused and could only interpret between Russian and French. Unable to continue, Maginnis announced the last toast. The interpreter piloted the group home. “How he did it,” wrote Maginnis, “I’ll never know.”²²

¹⁹ Maj Gen Floyd L. Parks Diary Entry, 3 Jul 1945, sub: Notes of a Conference between General Parks, General Lync, and General Gorbатов, at General Gorbатов’s Headquarters, in Floyd L. Parks Diary Entry, box 1, Parks Papers, AHEC.

²⁰ Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, p. 148, Frank L. Howley Papers, box 2, AHEC.

²¹ Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 261–64. For the extent of damage in each sector, see Hauptamt für Statistik (Main Statistical Office), *Berlin in Zahlen* (Berlin in Numbers) (Berlin: Berliner Kulturbuch Verlag, 1949), p. 186.

²² Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 262–63.

In the evening of 4 July—the transfer of power ceremony had taken place that afternoon—General Parks summoned Howley for an urgent meeting. Parks had just received a letter from Marshal Zhukov rescinding the agreement struck with General Gorbatov on the removal of Soviet detachments from the U.S. Sector. In view of the fact that Berlin would be run by the quadripartite Kommandatura, Zhukov asserted that it would be premature to withdraw the Soviet local commanders from the U.S. Sector, because that body did not yet exist. When Parks asked Howley what he thought, the colonel said that the Soviets were stalling in order to remove cattle, supplies, and equipment. Howley wanted to proceed with the takeover as already arranged and laid out a scheme, devious in its simplicity. The Soviets were notoriously late risers. He would order his local commanders to move into their districts early in the morning, before the Soviets had awakened. They would contact the district mayor and tell him that he would henceforth take orders from them. They would then raise the flag, post ordinances, and establish a military court. The Soviets would arise to a fait accompli. Parks approved with the admonition, “Don’t get into too much trouble.” Howley briefed his detachment commanders at midnight. The American officers could only guess how the Soviets would respond.²³

The plan worked flawlessly. For the most part the Soviet officers seemed confused. In most districts, the encounters unfolded almost according to rote. The Soviets approached the Americans plaintively, arguing that Marshal Zhukov had ordered them to remain in place. The Americans replied that they also had orders. The officers then shook hands, and the Soviets returned to their offices. In Schöneberg, Maginnis’ Soviet counterpart did not even appear, although he did tell the district mayor to take no orders from the Americans. Before long, the two sides settled into a *modus vivendi*. On 5 July, in a conversation with Parks, Zhukov said nothing about wanting the Americans to withdraw their detachments. Rather, he suggested that the Soviet units should remain in order to assure the distribution of food and fuel, and to safeguard the daily routine of the city, until the Kommandatura had met to decide common policies. He offered to remove his commanders immediately if Parks could guarantee food supplies to the U.S. Sector. Unable to meet such a condition, Parks said he was pleased to have the assistance of Soviet local commanders and desired to “retain their services” until the Allies could reach agreement on supplying the necessities of life to the city.²⁴

Thus, until 12 July, when the Soviets finally withdrew from the U.S. Sector of Berlin, they coexisted with the American detachments. The Soviets relaxed as soon as they realized that Zhukov was not ordering them to undo the Americans’ action and neither party got in the other’s way. After several days, as Howley

²³ Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, pp. 150–55; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 264–65.

²⁴ MFR, Floyd L. Parks, 5 Jul 1945, sub: Conference with Marshal Zhukov, Parks Diary Entry, box 1, Parks Papers, AHEC.



A group of GIs views the Brandenburg Gate.

noted in his diary, the American and Soviet officers formed a liking for each other, helped along by evening social gatherings.²⁵

Completing the Movement into Berlin

Parallel to the transfer of political control in Berlin, the main troop units were moving into the city. With Howley and the preliminary reconnaissance party safely into Berlin on the night of 1 July, the rest of the U.S. movement continued over the next several days. The second installment, the detailed reconnaissance party, departed Halle on 2 July. A short time after the convoy's departure, the Soviets brought it to a halt at the bridge over the Mulde River, south of Dessau. It was their understanding that units flying into Tempelhof Airfield would be the only parties entering Berlin on 2 July. It took most of

²⁵ Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, p. 156; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 267–68.

the afternoon for General Parks to convince General Vasily D. Sokolovsky to allow the ground movement into the city. The convoy resumed its march around 2100 and arrived at its destination at 2250, where guides directed it to the bivouac area in the Gr unewald Forest.²⁶

The preliminary reconnaissance party had already begun to select suitable locations for headquarters elements and troop billets. On 1 July, representatives of the Berlin District forward headquarters at Babelsberg had selected the Luftgau Building (Air Defense of Germany Headquarters) for the new headquarters in Berlin. By 2 July, the group had made sufficient progress to permit the opening of the Berlin District headquarters at that location. In one of its first acts, the headquarters hired 600 German civilians to rehabilitate the entire area. By 3 July, workers had cleared enough billet space to allow the troops to move from the Gr unewald bivouac area into temporary quarters.²⁷

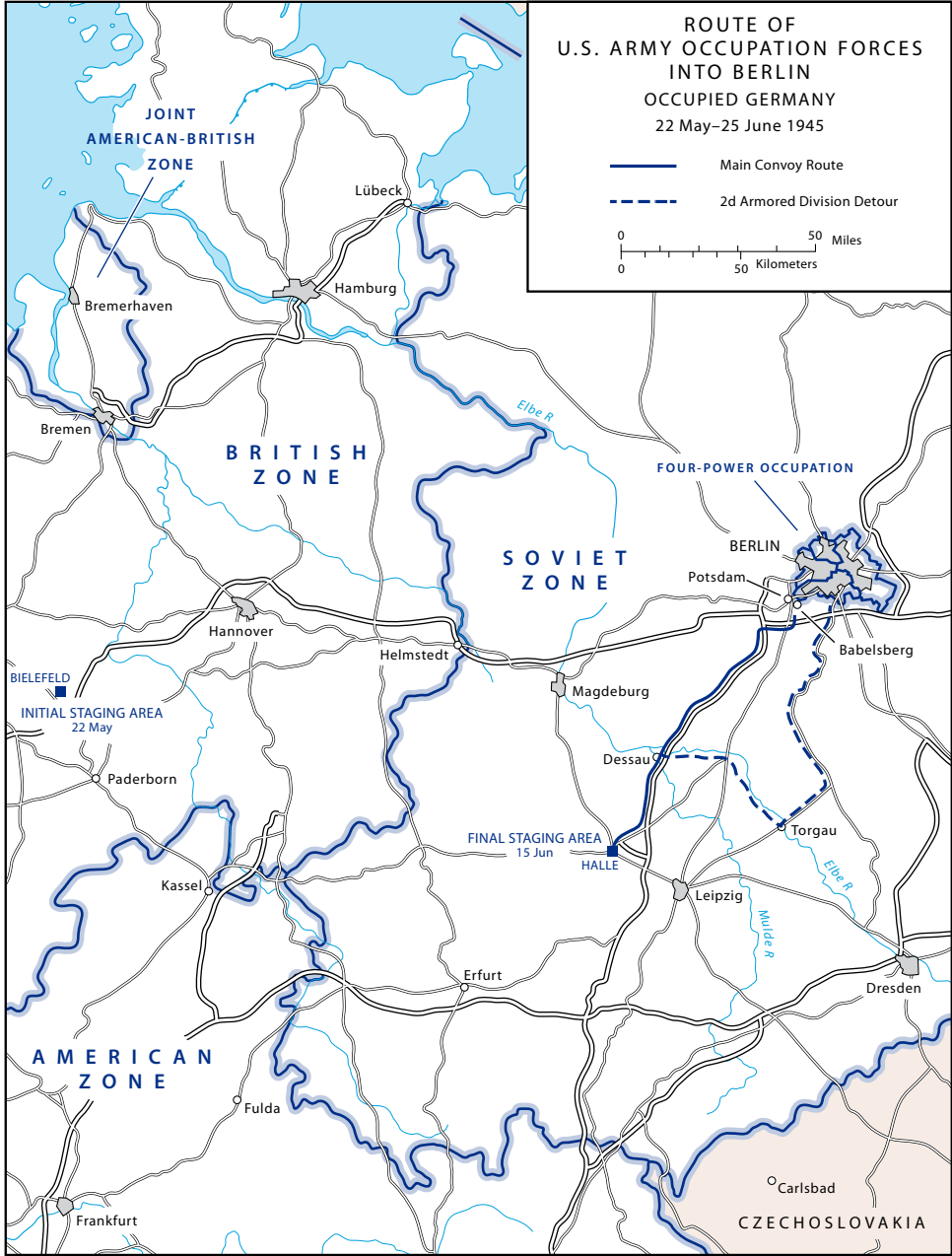
However, the advance party of the U.S. Group Control Council, which arrived with the detailed reconnaissance party on 2 July, exercised its prerogative, and selected the Luftgau Building for its own use, compelling the Headquarters, Berlin District, to select another location to set up operations. Its officers quickly selected the buildings of the Telefunken Radio Engineer Research Laboratory for the new location. Soviet troops occupying the buildings evacuated the area on 3 July and American engineers, assisted by German civilians, began the task of clearing away debris and cleaning and repairing the installation for occupancy. They made quick progress, and on 7–8 July, the Headquarters, Berlin District, was able to take up quarters and get to work.²⁸

Meanwhile, the 2d Armored Division had begun its scheduled two-day movement to Berlin at 0600 on 3 July. When its leading element, Combat Command B, reached the Elbe River Bridge, east of Dessau, it was also halted by the Soviets who, despite previous assurances to the contrary, insisted that the bridge was unsafe for the passage of armored vehicles. They had not expected any crossings on that day and were in the process of repairing the bridge. The division commander, Brig. Gen. John H. Collier, drove ahead into Berlin, where he met with General Parks and Maj. Gen. Trussov, the liaison officer from Marshal Zhukov's headquarters. Together they arranged to reroute the division through Torgau. Meanwhile, during the afternoon, the division's Combat Command B had succeeded in crossing the bridge and was proceeding to Berlin. The remainder of the division, however, marched by way of Torgau, a ninety-mile detour, and did not reach Berlin until the morning

²⁶ Parks Diary Entry, 2 Jul 1945; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651, OMGUS, RG 498, NACP.

²⁷ Memo, Lt Col Edwin A. Machen Jr., Acting Asst Ch of Staff, G–3, for 9th Information and Historical Service, 9 Nov 1945, sub: G–3 Operations, Jul–Sep 1945, Entry UD 659, OMGUS, Berlin District, G–3 Rpt of Opns, RG 498, NACP; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651.

²⁸ *Ibid.*



Map 5

of 5 July. The 2d Armored Division completed its movement into Berlin on 5 July. The remaining service troops departed Halle on 7 July, reaching Berlin later in the day (*Map 5*).²⁹

Rather than attributing the conflicts at the bridges to Soviet intransigence or political motivation, General Parks chose to dismiss them as normal military snafus. He offered the opinion to Zhukov that their difficulties arose from unfamiliarity with each other's military procedures. Once he and his staff became familiar with Soviet methods, he believed, such difficulties would no longer arise. Zhukov suggested that the Allies should put future requests and agreements in writing to preclude these kinds of misunderstandings.³⁰

Zhukov was also adamant that the U.S. forces abide by their agreement to vacate the Soviet Zone by the agreed date. This meant clearing the Halle staging area by 7 July. Additional convoys left Halle on 5, 6, and 7 July; by midnight 7 July, the area was clear. The transfer of two forty-car train loads and many airlifts of U.S. Army supplies and equipment from Halle to Berlin directly, or by way of the temporary staging area at Helmstedt, made it unnecessary to abandon any material as a result of the rapid evacuation of the area.³¹

The U.S. force entering Berlin—some 30,000 strong—imposed heavy, immediate demands for infrastructure, logistics, and security. The rush for lodging and office space began immediately. On 2 July, American engineer officers established a Real Estate and Labor Office amid uncleared debris in the *Luftwaffe Luftgaukommando* (regional air defense headquarters). These men had the job of allocating office space and billets for the soldiers and officials entering Berlin. Working with recent aerial photos, the engineers planned to house enlisted personnel in former *Wehrmacht* barracks or contiguous blocks of apartment houses, keeping battalion-sized units together. They pinpointed houses in Zehlendorf for officer billets. High-ranking officers and civilians attached to the Control Council received villas and bungalows in the exclusive Dahlem area. Before making final allocations, the engineers sometimes needed to adjust their plan following a physical inspection of properties. Nonetheless, they still succeeded in providing indoor lodgings for all of the main body personnel.³²

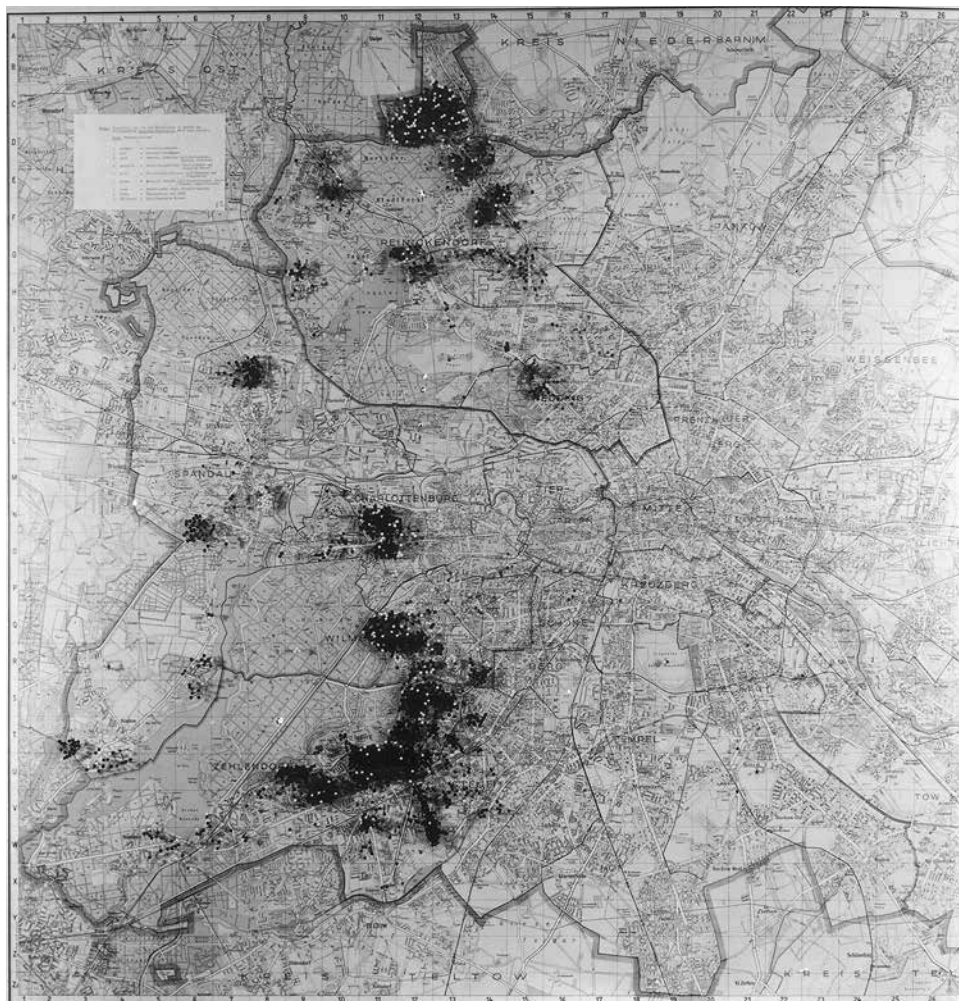
Even though, in theory, only the real estate office could requisition facilities, hierarchy prevailed among the various organizations coming to Berlin. Parks and his staff had already had to relinquish their quarters at the Luftgau and move to the Telefunken Radio Engineer Research Laboratory on the southern outskirts of Steglitz. The military government experienced a more complicated odyssey, moving from quarters in Dahlem and Nikolassee before ending at

²⁹ Parks Diary Entry, 3–4 Jul 1945; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651.

³⁰ MFR, Parks, 5 Jul 1945.

³¹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651.

³² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 75–78, file 5/35-3/8, OMGUS, LAB.



This pin board map shows the Allied confiscations in the Western Sectors.

the Telefunken compound as well. Although the facility was modern and had housed the main offices of the corporation as well as the radio laboratory, its location was inconvenient.³³

In addition to billets and office space, the Americans requisitioned substantial facilities for the storage, issue, and production of supplies. The largest such property was the quartermaster depot, installed in the former Rheinmetall-Borsig bomb and rocket factory in Neukölln. Factories in Zehlendorf, Tempelhof, and Steglitz served as depots for the engineering, signal,

³³ Ibid., pp. 72–74.

and ordnance branches. The Army Exchange Service set up its warehouse in the former Askania-Werke factory in Tempelhof. It also took control of the Coca-Cola plant in Steglitz and the Schultheiss brewery in Schöneberg. The Berlin District acquired plants for laundry and dry cleaning as well as for the production of beverages and baked goods.³⁴

With only four months until the onset of cold weather, a scramble ensued to put installations and lodgings into shape. Although Zehlendorf, where the requisitioning was most intense, had survived the war relatively unscathed, many structures were in a bad state of repair, and others had been struck by artillery fire. With the exception of Neukölln, the remaining districts of the U.S. Sector had suffered heavier than average damage. To carry out repairs, the military government, acting at the engineers' requests, ordered the district administrations to deliver labor and construction materials. During 2–4 July, even before the United States formally assumed control of its sector, the Zehlendorf government had already furnished some 3,700 laborers to rehabilitate American facilities. As the pace of work picked up, so did the calls for workers. By the end of September, the Real Estate and Labor Office was employing almost 27,000 German civilians conscripted through the district administrations. Some were clerical personnel, but most were general laborers or building tradesmen. Approximately 6,600 U.S. engineering personnel, drawn from the “tactical” forces as well as from the Berlin District's own engineering section, organized and oversaw the work.³⁵

While Zhukov, Weeks, and Clay had settled the main logistical issue—the establishment of lines of supply across the Soviet Zone of Germany—on 29 June, technical difficulties remained. The garrison's future logistics chain would run by sea from America through Bremen and Bremerhaven—the port area President Franklin D. Roosevelt had wrested from Winston Churchill at Quebec in 1944—and thence by rail to Berlin. The Bremen Port Command, however, was not prepared to supply Berlin. As an interim solution, the Ninth Army issued supplies for the Berlin District until 10 July, when the Seventh Army assumed that responsibility. Prior to repairs on the railway bridge at Magdeburg, goods brought there by rail were loaded onto trucks for the last segment of the journey east. The initial U.S. supply train to Berlin arrived on 27 July, after a roughly forty-hour journey over a single track rail line. The first shipments from Bremerhaven arrived at the end of August, but the Seventh

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 75–76.

³⁵ Kreuzberg was the fourth most heavily destroyed district in Berlin. Schöneberg, Steglitz, and Tempelhof all suffered above average damage. On the other hand, Neukölln and Zehlendorf ended the war with over 75 percent of their buildings intact. Figures compiled in Main Statistical Office, *Berlin in Numbers*, p. 199; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 79, 130; Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, pp. 6–7.

Army continued to share responsibilities until the beginning of 1946, when all regular supplies finally came through the Port Command.³⁶

Rudimentary telephone communications became available within a week after the arrival of the American advance party. On 29 June, Marshal Zhukov guaranteed Western use of the landline between Berlin and Frankfurt—a large underground cable running by way of Leipzig—and offered to let Anglo-American signal teams enter Soviet territory at any time to undertake inspections and repairs. By 5 July, acting on information provided by the Soviets, American signal experts had serviced the cable from Berlin to the Elbe. American and Soviet teams then checked the entire line and fixed a major break under the Mulde. This enabled American technicians to connect their switchboard in Babelsberg to Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), in Frankfurt, to Soviet and British headquarters in Potsdam, and to the headquarters of the Berlin District. To provide service within Berlin, where the destruction of local exchanges made communications more problematic than those to Frankfurt, the powers ordered the *Reichspost*, which operated telephones as well as mail services, to create an exchange for exclusive Allied use.³⁷

In the meantime, as the engineers and technicians built up the infrastructure of the occupation, the 2d Armored Division attended to its physical security. As laid out in the Berlin plan, the division's priorities comprised the protection of U.S. facilities, billeting areas, and supply routes through Berlin. After the last Soviet guards left the American Sector, the troops also assumed responsibility for protecting public utilities. To accomplish these tasks, the division posted sentries at critical installations, established outposts, and patrolled the sector in armored reconnaissance vehicles along varying routes. Each subsector headquarters of battalion size had an officer and a Russian-speaking interpreter standing by at all times to go to the scene of any trouble. In addition, the division formed riot platoons with transportation and arms adequate to reach quickly and quell incipient disturbances. The philosophy was to prevent civilian disturbances through a display of strength, armor, and mobility.³⁸

However, just as the outline plan had predicted, the soldiers encountered no resistance. Their very presence was enough to intimidate any potential rabble-rousers. The most common infringement on the security of American

³⁶ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 1, ch. 2, p. 37; and pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 5, 80; Interv, 1st Lt Edward N. Tomlinson, Historical Ofcr, Berlin District, with Lt Col Robert S. Demitz, G-4, Berlin District, 15 Oct 1945, in Rep 37, Acc 3108, Nr 103, LAB.

³⁷ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 1, ch. 2, pp. 30–32; and pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 86–93; MFR, Parks, 29 Jun 1945, sub: Conference between Marshal Zhukov and Soviet Representatives, General Clay and U.S. Representative, General Weeks and British Representatives at Marshal Zhukov's Headquarters, in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 3, *European Advisory Commission, Austria, Germany*, pp. 359–60.

³⁸ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 9–12, 18–27; Memo, Machen for 9th Information and Historical Service, 9 Nov 1945.

installations and billets on the part of Germans was petty theft. The practice of some Soviet soldiers, or those disguised as Soviet soldiers, of looting or confiscating German civilian property in the early days of the occupation of the U.S. Sector was never directed at property under U.S. guard.

On the other hand, Soviet marauders presented continuing problems at unguarded homes and facilities throughout the U.S. Sector. Asserting the rights of conquerors, they looted not only trophies and valuables but also equipment from German homes and businesses. They also seized German homes to more comfortably continue their conquests of German women. Until 12 July, the date of the final Soviet withdrawal from the U.S. Sector, American sentries had orders to avoid conflict and to employ no force or threat of force against the Soviet intruders. Afterward, General Parks authorized both sentries and military police to use whatever means—including deadly force—they considered necessary to safeguard not only U.S. property and personnel but also to halt crimes against civilians. As a result, Soviet soldiers started to become casualties of American gunfire. Although Soviet lawlessness decreased, the use of American firearms in cases other than self-defense became an early sore point in U.S.-Soviet relations.³⁹

During the early days of July, Lt. Col. James P. Smith Jr., the Berlin District provost marshal, sought out his Soviet counterparts to work out procedures for inter-sectoral law enforcement. The first issue—of immediate relevance given the understanding on free movement between sectors—was the disposition of soldiers apprehended in the sector of another power. The talks led to an agreement empowering the military police in each area to arrest all soldiers, regardless of nationality, involved in crimes or misconduct. In case of serious crimes, the arrested parties would remain in the sector where the incident occurred, pending investigation, while soldiers charged with simple misconduct were escorted to exchange points along the sector boundaries. Additionally, General Gorbatov proposed to allow military police to enter the sectors of other powers with authorization to arrest their own personnel. Although the commandants never agreed to issue blanket approval, they did authorize such actions on a case-by-case basis.⁴⁰

Transient Persons Camps

After developing the infrastructure for the U.S. forces of occupation, the second priority for the U.S. construction effort was housing for displaced persons. Fortunately for the Americans, the size of that population was far smaller than the 400,000 estimated in the outline plan for Berlin. Eager to empty Berlin of nonresidents—and thus reduce the number of mouths to feed—the Soviets had

³⁹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 11–14, 18–20; Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 67–71.

⁴⁰ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 3, pp. 55–58.

ordered the displaced persons to depart the city by 1 July. Not all left, however, so the Western Allies assumed the task of processing the remainder as quickly as possible, and assisting them on their journey home.

The Berlin District opened its first displaced persons camp on 8 July in a former barracks on the Potsdamer Chaussee in Zehlendorf. The 2d Armored Division operated the facility, initially under the supervision of the civil affairs branch (G-5) of the military government. With a capacity for only 2,000 persons, the camp rapidly filled. After Parks' chief of staff, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Ransom, declared the conditions unsanitary, the Berlin District personnel section (G-1) took over the administration from the civil affairs branch while the military government developed a new site on Teltowerdamm, also in Zehlendorf. Two hundred German labor conscripts worked intensively for two weeks to prepare the new facility, which opened on 5 August. By that time, administrators from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration had arrived to take over operations, with the military government exercising general supervision. The German administration shouldered the costs of the facility and provided the same rations to camp inhabitants as went to German office workers. From 8 July to 30 September, 7,300 persons—mainly French, Swiss, Dutch, and Belgian—registered at the two camps, and 6,540 were evacuated from the German capital. The pattern recurred over the following months. By early January 1946, the centers had sent some 16,500 individuals home or to other camps farther away, and only 750 remained at Teltowerdamm. Although displaced persons continued to arrive, the flow diminished over time and, as before, most soon moved on. Even those known as “stateless persons”—people with no legal nationality and no place of return—did not linger in Berlin. In essence, the Allies transferred the problem to camps in western Germany.⁴¹

In November 1945, a new group of uprooted people began entering Berlin. Fleeing terror at the hands of the *Armija Krajowa* (anti-Soviet Polish Home Army), thousands of Jewish refugees infiltrated into Berlin from Poland. Present illegally, and therefore ineligible for ration cards and lodging, they first took shelter with the Jewish community of East Berlin but then started to slip into the other sectors.⁴²

The powers viewed the refugees chiefly as a drain on Berlin's scarce food supplies. The British refused to let any into the U.K. sector or to contribute to their care, and, on 21 December the commandants formally decided to deny the refugees ration cards. Even as the Allies reversed that decision one week later, the main desire of the British was still to rid themselves of a burden. In early January, the Soviets attempted to evacuate those living in East Berlin—roughly

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 43–45; Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District.

⁴² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 3, ch. 6, pp. 57–58; HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1945, pp. 18–19, file 5/35-3/11, OMGUS, LAB; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 323, 325; Monthly Rpt, Nov 1945, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, file 5/37-1/11, OMGUS, LAB.

2,000 individuals—to the town of Prenzlau, seventy miles northeast of Berlin. The action failed when all but thirty absconded to the American and French sectors. With the French themselves dependent on American support, the problem was progressively becoming an American one.⁴³

In the end, the solution came from Washington. Under pressure from Jewish and refugee aid lobbies, the War Department directed the military government in Berlin to accommodate the Polish Jews. Within forty-eight hours after receiving that order, the Berlin District engineers—employing 132 labor conscripts, working day and night knocking out walls, installing new kitchens, and refurbishing plumbing and wiring—transformed a former barracks complex, Camp Düppel, into a civilian shelter. By 31 January 1946, the camp lodged 1,500 persons. By the end of June, as the refugees continued to stream into Berlin, its capacity had increased to 4,000, and three months later to 6,000. That more people remained as residents of Düppel compared to Teltowerdamm is explained by the difference between the wearisome process of emigration—the Jews had to bide time awaiting papers from their new homelands—and the relatively simple task of repatriation.

Establishing the Kommandatura

With the Western Allies moving into their assigned sectors in Berlin, U.S., British, and Soviet military leaders entered discussions toward the formation of the Kommandatura, the joint governing body for the city of Berlin. General Parks, General Lyne of the British Army, and General Gorbatov of the Soviet Army met in Gorbatov's headquarters on 3 July to discuss initial plans and policies. They agreed to instruct their experts to prepare an agenda for discussion so that the principals might meet again on 7 July to open discussions. During a 5 July encounter with Zhukov, Parks referred to his session two days earlier with Gorbatov and Lyne as the "preliminary meeting of the Kommandatura," and told Zhukov of the plan to hold a second conference on 7 July. In view of the significance of the issues to be discussed, Zhukov expressed a desire to be present and readily agreed to a suggestion by Parks to bring in Clay and Lt. Gen. Sir Ronald Weeks.⁴⁴

The key issue for discussion was the division of power between the Kommandatura and the various national commandants. Citing the 12 September 1944 protocol on Germany and Berlin, Zhukov asserted that the Kommandatura would govern Berlin as a whole. Parks disagreed. The Kommandatura, he proposed, would coordinate activities in the city, but ultimate responsibility should rest with the commandants acting in their

⁴³ Min, Commandant's Mtg, BKC/M(46)1, 8 Jan 1946, file 11/148-1/10, OMGUS, LAB; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 3, ch. 6, pp. 57–58; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 324–27.

⁴⁴ MFR, Parks, 5 Jul 1945.

own sectors. Both officers agreed that food, fuel, and the restoration of basic services to the city would also be important topics of discussion.⁴⁵

On the morning of 7 July, Parks and Clay rode together to British headquarters to work out a common position with General Weeks in advance of their discussions with Zhukov. Howley, who followed in a separate vehicle, had submitted a paper, prepared by his legal section, which addressed the division of powers in Berlin. He proposed to deal with such matters as food and utilities on a citywide basis but to leave purely local issues in the hands of the sector commandant. If a quadripartite agreement was unobtainable on citywide matters, each commandant would decide for his sector. Clay and Parks discussed the paper during their ride; Clay rejected it.

When they arrived for their meeting, the two generals entered the conference room as Howley waited outside. A short while later, they summoned the colonel to the gathering, which, in addition to Clay, Parks, and Weeks, included Ambassador Robert Murphy, Sir Percy Mills from the Foreign Office, and an assortment of British and American generals. Sensing Clay's attitude, Howley argued for the need to retain freedom of action in the event unanimity was not possible. Clay cut him short, spurning his ideas as completely contrary to the spirit and intentions of the U.S. government. Howley felt that Clay was using him as a foil to reprimand some of the higher ranking dignitaries in the room. This was the first encounter between the two men, and relations between them scarcely improved over the years to come.⁴⁶

The conference ended and the parties made their way to Karlshorst. There, in a manner recalling their talks on 29 June, Zhukov, Clay, and Weeks reached quick agreement on the organization of the Kommandatura. The conferees began by clearing up the "misunderstanding" between Zhukov and Parks over its authority, dismissing Parks' interpretation as "mistaken" and confirming Zhukov's point of view. Clay and Zhukov then exchanged suggestions on the workings of the body, which they consolidated into an overall plan. Heading the Kommandatura would be a "Chief Military Commandant," whose duties would rotate between each of the four Allied commandants every fifteen days. He would exercise authority over all of the sectors through enactments of the commandants, who would decide on questions of principle and problems common to all sectors. Their decisions would require a unanimous vote. The Kommandatura would establish a headquarters with a quadripartite staff. In addition, it would establish eighteen specialist committees, corresponding to the eighteen departments of the Magistrat. One or two representatives from each occupying power would serve on these committees, where the unanimity principle would also prevail. The Kommandatura would hold its first conference on 11 July.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, pp. 158–60.

⁴⁷ Quote from Telg, Robert Murphy to James F. Byrnes, Acting Sec of State, 7 Jul 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 1, *The Potsdam Conference*, p. 631; and see also pp. 630–33.

These points were written down in a one-page protocol signed by the three generals on 10 July. Absent from the protocol, however, as well as from the official reports of the meeting prepared by Clay and Murphy, was a key additional understanding recorded in Parks' detailed minutes. In respect to the division of powers in the city, Zhukov proposed that all questions arising within a national sector, but having no citywide impact, should be settled by the sector commandant without reference to the Kommandatura. All agreed, thereby establishing the practice as an unwritten rule. Ironically, Zhukov's proposal resembled the plan for which Clay had rebuked Howley. The only difference was the treatment of citywide issues when the commandants could not reach unanimous accord. Whereas Howley would have expressly permitted each commandant to decide for his own sector, Zhukov bypassed the question entirely. In practice, stalemates would result in the referral of problems to the Control Council, consisting of the military governors for each occupation zone. If the Control Council failed to agree, the commandants could only remove the issues from their agenda unresolved.⁴⁸

A second understanding was also missing from the protocol. As already noted, Gorbатов, Lyne, and Parks had agreed on 2 July to permit free passage of Allied personnel across sector boundaries. Zhukov reaffirmed this in a passing remark that appears in Howley's personal diary but in no official report of the meeting. Despite these casual origins, Western Allied access to the whole of "Greater Berlin" became an unwritten right, validated by both Allied practice and Soviet acquiescence. It was by virtue of this right—never enshrined in a formal protocol—that Western soldiers and officials continued to enter East Berlin after the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961.⁴⁹

Following the frictionless agreement on the Kommandatura, Zhukov turned the discussion to food and coal. He explained that the Soviets had been feeding Berlin partly from supplies "taken as trophy" and partly from Red Army quartermaster stocks. These reserves were now running low, and the city had no supplies in the immediate vicinity. Indeed, the situation in the entire Eastern Zone was acute. Therefore, now that the Americans and British authorities were occupying their sectors of Berlin, they had to assume responsibility for supplying their share of the city's food and coal requirements. The three powers had to resolve the emergency at once, the marshal asserted, "or we will have hunger and starvation in this dense population with consequent results."⁵⁰

Zhukov's statements, said Howley, "were the first intimation by the Russians that we were expected to feed and fuel Berlin." The Americans were caught "cold turkey." Clay had brought no experts to the meeting and was unprepared for technical discussions. When he noted that Berlin had always

⁴⁸ Protocol, Allied Agreement on the Quadripartite Administration of Berlin, 7 Jul 1945, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 43–44; MFR, Parks, 7 Jul 1945, sub: Notes of a Conference Called . . . in Marshal Zhukov's Headquarters, file 727/10, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁴⁹ Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, p. 162.

⁵⁰ MFR, Parks, 7 Jul 1945. See also Telg, Murphy to Byrnes, 7 Jul 1945.

been fed from eastern Germany and had obtained a large proportion of its coal from Silesia, Zhukov replied that no supplies existed from these sources. So many German farmers had fled from the food-producing areas of Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and East Prussia that agricultural production had ceased. As for coal, Silesia was under Polish administration and Poland would provide the fuel only if the Allies paid for it. In fact, Zhukov asserted, everything east of the Oder-Neisse was Polish and none of its resources would be available for the four-power administration of Germany. Coal would have to come from the Ruhr and Saar. When General Weeks pointed out the lack of miners in the Ruhr, Zhukov said he would be happy to conscript 50,000 men from Berlin for work in the mines.⁵¹

General Clay needed time to return to Frankfurt to find out how to obtain and deliver the food to Berlin. Zhukov furnished charts showing the daily requirements and agreed to postpone further discussion until 10 July. In Clay's view, expressed in a cable to the War Department, the Allies had no choice but to accept Zhukov's statements as correct and to accept "as an interim measure" a commitment to provide food and coal. General George C. Marshall concurred with one reservation: The United States did not accept Silesia's transfer to Poland and would make no agreement that implicitly acquiesced in unilateral concessions of Soviet Zone territory.⁵²

When Clay and Weeks met with Zhukov on 10 July, all sides were ready to deal and again struck a quick agreement. The Americans and British agreed to bring in 20,000 tons of food monthly, starting on 15 July. They would turn the food over to the Kommandatura, which would pool it with Soviet resources and distribute it citywide on the basis of the Soviet ration schedule. The British undertook to provide 2,400 tons of high-grade coal a day, pending further study of Berlin's fuel needs by the Kommandatura. Zhukov promised to supply one-third of Berlin's coal needs with lignite mined in the Eastern Zone. When British Assistant Under Secretary of State Sir William Strang contested Zhukov's earlier statement on the Polish frontier, the Soviet marshal "reacted mildly," Murphy reported, "stating that under his orders his jurisdiction did not extend east of the Oder and Neisse line." Clay and Murphy decided to let the matter stand, because it was clear that the marshal "had no authority to take any other position."⁵³

The full notes of the meeting, located in Clay's files, recorded a particularly revealing exchange between Marshal Zhukov and General Weeks. Noting that

⁵¹ First quote from Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 58. Second quote from Howley Diary Entry, 14 Jun 1944–1 Jul 1945, p. 162; and pp. 161–63. Telg, General Lucius D. Clay to War Department, 9 Jul 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:633–34.

⁵² Quote from Telg, Clay to War Department, 9 Jul 1945, in 1:634; Telg, George C. Marshall to Clay, 10 Jul 1945, in 1:635–36. Both in *FRUS, 1945*. MFR, Parks, 7 Jul 1945.

⁵³ Telg, Murphy to Byrnes, 12 Jul 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:638–39. See also MFR, Parks, 10 Jul 1945, sub: Notes of a conference held at Soviet occupational forces in Berlin . . . presided over by Marshal Zhukov, in Adjutant Gen file 1945-46/30/7, OMGUS, BAK.

the proposed ration for Berlin was larger than that provided in the western part of British occupied Germany, Weeks asserted that it would be difficult politically to slight Western Zone residents in favor of Berlin. Zhukov was untouched by Weeks' sense of fairness. After all, said the marshal, Soviet authorities were providing food to only three Eastern Zone cities—Berlin, Dresden, and Chemnitz—and Berliners were getting a larger ration because the Soviets thought “they suffered more and are entitled to it.”⁵⁴

Although Howley believed the Soviet demands to be outrageous, both Clay and Murphy took the incident in stride. Murphy felt that the meeting on 10 July “went off smoothly,” and characterized the Soviet attitude as “conciliatory.” In Clay's eyes, it was only reasonable to accept responsibility for supplying Berlin. Because “we are now in Berlin,” he told the political adviser, “we have an obligation to see that the civilians living in our [sector] have sufficient food to live and the minimum of utility service.” In any case, both men agreed, the Americans had little leverage.⁵⁵

If Zhukov's terms took the Allies by surprise, their shock owed more to faulty Western planning assumptions, combined with missed communications between American and Soviet commanders in Berlin, than to the marshal's allegedly brusque behavior. SHAEF's 13 March “Berlin District Outline Plan” had stipulated that Berlin's food needs were a “German responsibility” and postulated that the Soviets would bring in “most of the supplies” from the so-called breadbaskets of eastern Germany. SHAEF's planners, however, had founded these assumptions on wishful thinking. The idea that the Germans could conjure up food supplies in a devastated city of some three million persons had no basis beyond the airy optimism of the planning staff, which did not account for the collapse of Berlin's government, the German mass flight over the Oder, or the certainty that the areas east of the Oder-Neisse would become Polish. The last omission is critical, for as early as November 1943, during their conference in Tehran, the Big Three leaders had agreed to award Poland parts of Germany in compensation for a westward shift of the Polish-Soviet frontier. Although the Yalta summit produced no agreement on the extent of Polish gains, any plan that neglected them was built on sand.⁵⁶

The Kommandatura Starts Work

The Kommandatura convened for the first time on 11 July, when Parks, Lyne, and Gorbатов met, along with their staffs, at Gorbатов's headquarters, located some 500 meters from Hitler's ruined chancellery. Although France had

⁵⁴ MFR, Parks, 10 Jul 1945.

⁵⁵ First quote from Telg, Murphy to Brynes, 12 Jul 1945. Second quote from Telg, Murphy to Brynes, 12 Jul 1945.

⁵⁶ Mil Government Supply Estimates, an. 2 to app. B of Berlin District Outline Plan, 13 Mar 1945, Folder Berlin District Outline Plan, box 39, SHAEF Selected Rcds, 1943–1945, Eisenhower Library.

not yet received its sector, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey de Beauchesne was present as an observer—the very first time a French officer participated in the quadripartite administration. In the minds of most attendees, including Howley, the meeting began as an ad hoc gathering to discuss food. The group realized that it was holding the first meeting of the Kommandatura only after Parks, referring to the protocol signed the previous day, brought that fact to his colleagues' attention.⁵⁷

The meeting was uncommonly long and, unlike the contentious sessions in the years ahead, remarkably productive. In addition to discussing food supplies, the representatives worked on organizational questions, including a procedure to select a building for the Kommandatura. The most important single decision of the meeting was a declaration by the commandants extending, unless expressly revoked, all ordinances and regulations issued by the Soviet command or the Berlin Magistrat. In historical hindsight, writers have portrayed the purported “surrender” as acquiescence in the “structures” established during the ten weeks of Soviet rule. Those structures, however, comprised mostly practical measures to restore essential institutions and services to the city after the collapse of Hitler's regime. As Howley remarked in his diary, it “was the only practicable decision,” because the Berlin administration required both continuity and uniformity between sectors. In any case, the commandants retained the right to act unilaterally in matters affecting their own areas.⁵⁸

The commandants confirmed the food agreement. Bookkeeping for the delivery of food supplies would start on 15 July. However, because the Americans could provide only 60 percent of their allotment, Gorbатов agreed to cover the shortage as long as they repaid it later. The Soviet commandant did not conceal his agitation over what he apparently saw as U.S. foot dragging. In contrast to the Western powers, as Howley noted in his diary, the Soviets had instituted a “positive” program for feeding Berlin's population, including relatively high ration commitments they wanted to keep, whereas the Americans, presuming that the Germans would feed themselves, had lagged behind.⁵⁹

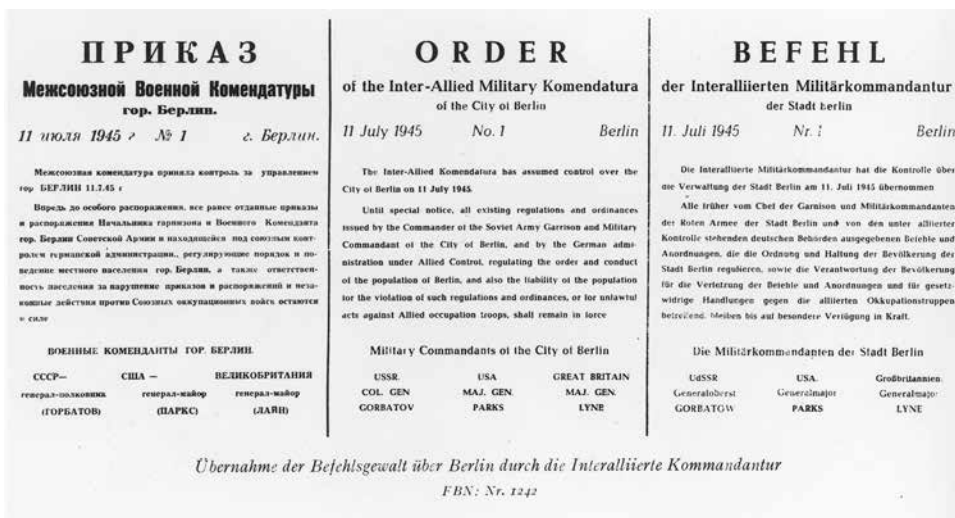
Following the commandants' discussions, General Clay's economics director, Brig. Gen. William H. Draper, arrived at the meeting, along with the British representative, Sir Percy Mills. A distinguished investment banker in civilian life, Draper had come to negotiate the details of the food agreement; Mills had the same task with respect to coal. Parks and Lyne departed, leaving the floor to the new arrivals.

In long and highly technical proceedings, the representatives hashed out wide-ranging commitments to supply Berlin. In the temporary absence of rail connections, they agreed on interim measures to deliver food to Soviet transport units in Magdeburg, as well as to turn over cattle-on-the-hoof at the border of Bavaria and Thuringia. They worked out exchange ratios between different

⁵⁷ Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, pp. 2–3.

⁵⁸ Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift*, pp. 34–35. Quote from Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 45–1 Jul 1946, p. 27. See also Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, pp. 42–43.



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categories of food—such as flour versus potatoes or canned fish versus dressed meat—based on caloric value. Included in the exchange was the ratio of live cattle to be delivered to the Soviets at the Bavarian border to the amount of dressed meat the Soviets would deliver in Berlin. Finally, they agreed to turn over food brought to Berlin to the city authorities who would store it in central warehouses and distribute it, according to the ration schedule, on a citywide basis. The principle of pooling afforded the inhabitants of all sectors equal access to supplies, regardless of origin, and thereby limited the use of food as a political weapon.

Discussions regarding coal were more contentious. The Americans, whose zone contained no coal, played observers to a clash between Sokolovsky and Mills. During the 10 July meeting between Zhukov, Clay, and Weeks, the British general had agreed to bring in three trainloads of coal daily—some 2,400 tons. When Mills asserted that the British could bring in only two loads, Sokolovsky noted that Weeks had promised three. If the British representative now offered two, argued Zhukov's deputy, maybe another representative would appear at the next meeting with an offer of one. Mills rejoined that the Soviet estimate of Berlin's coal needs was too high. "That is our problem," Sokolovsky snapped, "If you want us to close electrical stations, we can sit down and try to economize." When Mills begged understanding, citing a "large number of obligations elsewhere," Sokolovsky retorted, "We don't care what your obligations are. We only have two days supply of coal and need what you are supposed to bring in." After pressing Mills on why the British had not done more to clear canals for barge traffic, he agreed to continue providing coal from Soviet sources until 22 July; after that, he asserted, the British would have to bring in the tonnage promised by General Weeks. Finally conceding,

Mills said he would issue instructions to deliver 2,400 tons of coal daily. The representatives concluded the meeting with an agreement to convene committees of experts the following day with instructions to settle remaining details within seventy-two hours.⁶⁰

Over the next several weeks, the Kommandatura transformed itself into a standing bureaucracy with regular staffs and formalized decision-making procedures. The process began with the commandants' meeting on 18 July, when General Parks proposed that all Kommandatura business be studied initially in committees before reaching the commandants. His proposal—later codified into a Kommandatura “procedure paper”—received prompt approval, and at Gorbатов's suggestion the generals set up the first committee, with responsibility for cultural affairs. Over the following weeks, nineteen other committees came into existence, ranging from public safety, legal affairs, property control, education, and religious affairs, to public health, labor, food, public welfare, fine arts, denazification, and personnel. They were staffed by specialists, who, despite national differences, spoke common languages stemming from technical expertise. The task of the committees was to investigate issues, discuss them exhaustively, and formulate recommendations for the commandants. A unanimous recommendation from a committee virtually assured approval by the commandants. When unanimity was unobtainable, the commandants would send an issue back to the committee for further consideration. In the event of continued inability to agree, the commandants could either remove the question from their agenda or send it up to the Allied Control Council for resolution.

Because the commandants were also responsible for the “tactical” forces in Berlin, they began to delegate Kommandatura business to the directors of military government in each sector—initially, Howley, Soviet Maj. Gen. Aleksandr I. Barinov, and British Brig. William R. N. Hinde. After several weeks, what started as ad hoc meetings between these three officers evolved into a formal committee of deputies. Instead of sending papers directly to the commandants, the specialist committees began forwarding their recommendations to the deputies, who, in the case of unanimous agreement, could reach final decisions, and issue orders to the Magistrat, without the commandants' involvement. The commandants dealt only with questions of high principle or those which the deputies could not resolve. When an issue did reach them, the commandants relied on these subordinates for information and advice. The deputies sat at the commandants' sides during all bilateral and quadripartite meetings, and represented them in case of absence. Thus, in the handling of most issues, Howley became the de facto U.S. commandant, exercising authority substantially exceeding his rank.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Min, Mtg held at Russian HQ, 11 Jul 1945, in Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin District, Basic Document 1, Min of Early Kommandatura Mtgs, Historians files, CMH; Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, pp. 3–4, 30–31, 42–43, 53.

⁶¹ Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, pp. 67–69; Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 10, 15–16.



Allied Kommandatura headquarters

Prior to the 18 July meeting, Barinov, Howley, and Hinde had surveyed buildings in the three sectors and selected one in the U.S. Sector—the former seat of an association of fire insurance companies—to serve as Kommandatura headquarters. Howley conscripted 250 German laborers to repair the building. After the commandants confirmed the selection, Howley promised to have the building ready for business within five days. When the work was done, the structure provided common meeting spaces as well as four separate sections each housing national secretariats consisting of a chief of staff, two assistants, an administrative office, and various clerks. Like the Kommandatura chairmanship, the position of Kommandatura chief of staff rotated between the powers. The presiding chief of staff was responsible for preparing agendas and for ensuring the timely flow of papers, memoranda, and recommendations to all parties. A translators' pool, consisting of German employees, put orders and directives into German for transmittal to the Magistrat. The occupational powers contributed their own personnel to a separate interpreter's pool, which had the job of translating documents between Russian, English, and French. The officers dined in a common mess, with food provided by the power holding the chairmanship. An American administrative officer had charge over building maintenance, which he financed through direct orders to the Zehlendorf district authorities for materials and labor.⁶²

⁶² Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 14–16.

France Receives Its Sector

All this time, as the Allied structures were emerging, France still had no sector in Berlin, and General de Beauchesne sat as a mute observer in the Kommandatura. A month had passed since he and his party had arrived in Berlin, only to sit and wait.

The origins of the delay went back to Yalta. Both Stalin and Roosevelt had been indifferent toward French participation in the postwar occupation of Germany. Stalin begrudged a French role only as a sop to Churchill, who assured him that the French Zone “could come out of the British and perhaps the American Zones and . . . would not in any way affect the Soviet Zone.” At the same time, no one mentioned a French Sector in Berlin. Clearly, such a sector was implicit in France’s participation in the Allied Control Council, but the Big Three neglected to discuss it.⁶³

In early July, when the European Advisory Commission reached agreement on a French Zone in western Germany, the Western members proposed to refer the question of France’s sector in Berlin to the military commanders in Germany. Ambassador Gousev, however, insisted that the Soviet commander would have no part in the matter because the French Sector in Berlin, like the zone in Germany, would come from the American and British areas. Blankly ignoring the spirit of Churchill’s assurances to Stalin, the British representative countered that all three powers should contribute to the French Sector. Ambassador Winant thought that the four commanders should make a joint decision, regardless of how the French Sector was constituted. Gousev countered by refusing to let any instructions go to Berlin unless they specifically excluded the Soviet Sector from consideration.⁶⁴

At this point, in a message to General Marshall on 12 July, Clay suggested a way around the impasse. Instead of waiting for the commission to sort out its differences, he would meet with General Weeks to determine the practicality of assigning France a sector entirely from the American and British areas. If Weeks agreed, the American, British, and French commanders could settle on France’s area of occupation in Berlin without involving the Soviets. Once the deal was done, the commanders would inform the Advisory Commission, and it could then instruct them to conclude the agreement they had already reached.

⁶³ Min, Charles E. Bohlen at Second Plenary Mtg, 5 Feb 1945, in *FRUS, 1945, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 616.

⁶⁴ MFR, U.S. Delegation to the European Advisory Commission, 12 Jul 1945, Encl to Telg, Ambassador John G. Winant to Byrnes; Telgs, Winant to Byrnes, 7 Jul 1945; Winant to Byrnes, 11 Jul 1945; Winant to Brynes, 12 Jul 1945. All in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 1, *The Potsdam Conference*, pp. 291, 597–602.

The virtue of this approach was that no side would have to concede any points of argument in order to dispose of the issue.⁶⁵

As it went, the American and British commandants had no shortage of undesirable districts they could readily yield to France. General Parks pointed to Kreuzberg and Neukölln, and Lynes to Reinickendorf and Wedding. Kreuzberg, a working class neighborhood adjacent to Berlin-Mitte, had lost nearly 50 percent of its prewar dwelling space. Neukölln, also working class, had escaped the war with relatively light damage but offered few amenities. Reinickendorf was largely intact and contained a large military facility, the Hermann-Goering kaserne. Semirural with a vast expanse of lake and forest, it lay on Berlin's outermost periphery, isolated from the mainstream of city life. Wedding, a proletarian stronghold, had suffered less than average damage and was close to the city center. It counted, nonetheless, as one of Berlin's unpleasant areas, a jumble of tenements, factories, and bars.⁶⁶

On 19 July, in talks with the French deputy military governor, Lt. Gen. Louis Marie Koeltz, General Weeks offered France Reinickendorf and Wedding. When Koeltz accepted on 23 July, the European Advisory Committee could at last refer the issue to the Allied Control Council in Berlin. There, during the council's first meeting on 30 July, Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery formally extended the offer, which the French military governor, Lt. Gen. Marie-Pierre Koenig, promptly accepted.⁶⁷

Despite whatever wounded pride such meager concessions might have provoked, the French assessed the situation realistically and came to terms with their diminished circumstances. Thus, during the meeting of the Kommandatura on 9 August, General de Beauchesne displayed enthusiasm rather than resentment when, speaking his first words as a full member of the four-power body, he announced that France would be taking over its sector in three days' time.⁶⁸

Security in the U.S. Sector

After the initial period of entering the city and relieving the Soviet forces in the U.S. Sector, General Parks made changes to the security plan. On 16 July, he

⁶⁵ Telg, Clay (signed Eisenhower) to Marshall, 12 Jul 1945, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:53; Memo, Phillip E. Mosely, Political Adviser to the Representative on the European Advisory Commission, for James C. Dunn, Asst Sec of State, 15 Jul 1945, sub: Agreement on French Zone in Germany, in *FRUS, 1945*, 1:603–04.

⁶⁶ Parks Diary Entry, 12, 13, 18 Jul 1945; Main Statistical Office, *Berlin in Numbers*, p. 186.

⁶⁷ Parks Diary Entry, 21 Jul 1945; Memo, John J. McCloy for Dunn, 17 Jul 1945, sub: The French Sector in Berlin, 2:1001; Rpt, European Advisory Commission for Governments of United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and Provisional Government of France, 26 Jul 1945, 2:1003–04. Both in *FRUS, 1945*. Min, 30 Jul 1945, sub: First Meeting of the Control Council. . . ., in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 3, *European Advisory Commission, Austria, Germany*, pp. 366–67; Telg, Clay to Marshall, 23 Jul 1945, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:56–57.

⁶⁸ Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, p. 56.

directed that all armed units assume responsibility for their own local security. Additionally, he charged the provost marshal Colonel Smith and the military police with providing security for the Berlin District headquarters, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) billet area, and the quarters of the commanding general and other general officers of the command. To provide additional strength for discharging those responsibilities, he placed the military police platoon of the 2d Armored Division under the operational control of the provost marshal.⁶⁹

While the structure of the military government in Berlin continued to evolve, so did the composition of U.S. forces in the city and the manner in which they provided security in the U.S. Sector. On 29 July, the 16th Cavalry Group, Mechanized, comprised of the 6th and 28th Cavalry Squadrons, entered the district and immediately initiated a system of motorized patrols. The patrols provided a mobile link between the static sentry posts throughout the area and the tactical headquarters responsible for occupational security. Eight patrols, consisting of jeeps and M8 armored cars, performed the required contact missions between guard posts and headquarters.⁷⁰

By the beginning of August, the 82d Airborne Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin, had completed its movement and assembly, and was prepared to take over the responsibility for the security mission in Berlin. Thus, on 6 August, the first elements of the 2d Armored Division began their withdrawal from the city, paving the way for the entrance of the first units of the 82d on 8 August. As part of the transition, and to provide the paratroopers with a greater degree of firepower and mobility, the command relieved the 16th Cavalry Group and the 750th Tank Battalion from attachment to the 2d Armored Division and attached them to the 82d Airborne Division. By 9 August, the changeover was complete and the 82d Airborne Division assumed the responsibility for security in the U.S. Sector of Berlin.⁷¹

As part of the division rotation, the Berlin District operations staff reviewed and revised its tactical security procedures, issuing new guidance in the form of a standard operating procedure on 21 August. The new policy allowed the U.S. Group Control Council and the military government detachments to transmit requests for guards directly to the security forces. It also required the

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23; Memo, Col William F. Smith, Adjutant Gen, U.S. HQ, Berlin District, for Distribution, 16 Jul 1945, sub: Responsibilities for Providing Guards and local Security, Entry UD 659, OMGUS, Berlin, G–3 Rpt of Opns, RG 498, NACP.

⁷⁰ Memo, Machen for 9th Information and Historical Service, 9 Nov 1945.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*; Troop Movement Order 57, U.S. HQ, Berlin District, 31 Jul 1945, Entry UD 652, OMGUS, Berlin, Orders and Memos, 1945–1946, RG 498, NACP; Memo, Brig Gen Paul L. Ransom, HQ, Berlin District, Ch of Staff, for CG, 82d Abn Div, 6 Aug 1945, sub: Letter of Instruction, Entry UD 659, OMGUS, Berlin, G–3 Rpt of Opns, RG 498, NACP.

Headquarters, 82d Airborne Division, to report weekly to U.S. Headquarters, Berlin District, any additions or changes to the guard or patrol requests.⁷²

The number and variety of facilities assigned to the division for protection increased considerably from those originally allotted to the 2d Armored Division. New assignments included food warehouses, supply storage sites, and utility plants. Also added to the list were VIP billets (which had previously been a military police function); signal installations; prisoner of war, displaced persons, and war criminal camps; German banks until damaged buildings or vaults were repaired; and hospitals containing patients detained by counterintelligence.⁷³

The division rotation coincided with a change in policy regarding security responsibilities. While the 2d Armored Division had been in Berlin, it had employed some of its strength in military police duties. After the arrival of the 82d Airborne Division, however, the Berlin District clarified the responsibilities of the military police and security forces in the standard operating procedure issued on 21 August. The document made military police units primarily responsible for the preservation of law and order among U.S. troops. Security forces, on the other hand, retained the mission of protecting U.S. facilities from major disorders or violence regardless of the personnel involved. The changeover relieved security forces from other routine military police duties.⁷⁴

The directive required the provost marshal to maintain military police substations at each of the six military government detachments for liaison with military government authorities and to answer routine calls. Personnel at those substations were to assure protection of both military and civilian personnel in areas under military jurisdiction. They also supported local authorities, enforced curfew, supervised price control regulations, and maintained control over refugees and stragglers. In emergencies beyond their capabilities, military police units could call on security reserves for reinforcement. Other more orthodox police duties included apprehension of absentees, enforcement of off-limits and uniform regulations, investigation of crime, recovery of missing military property, and traffic control.⁷⁵

The ability of the military police and the security forces to maintain order during the summer of 1945 was essential because of the absence of a strong German police force in Berlin. Inexperienced and unarmed, the newly established local police were not capable of controlling the city, and U.S.

⁷² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651; Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), U.S. HQ, Berlin, 21 Aug 1945, sub: Organization of U.S. Sector for Security, Entry UD 659, OMGUS, Berlin, G-3 Rpt of Opns, RG 498, NACP.

⁷³ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; SOP, U.S. HQ, Berlin, 21 Aug 1945.

⁷⁵ SOP, U.S. HQ, Berlin, 21 Aug 1945; Memo, Maj John D. Gray, Adjutant Gen, HQ, Berlin District, for Distribution, 18 Aug 1945, sub: Area Reserves, Entry 37042, 82d Abn Div, Memos, 1945–1946, RG 338, NACP; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651.

military personnel had to discharge many of the functions in the U.S. Sector that would normally be handled by the civilian police. The authority of the civilian police was aggravated at times when Allied soldiers publicly contradicted the directions of individual policemen, who had no power to arrest military personnel. With the effects of troop redeployment becoming more evident every day, and in anticipation of a reduced troop basis for the occupation force in the coming year, Headquarters, Berlin District, took steps to develop the Berlin police force in order to compensate for the imminent loss of U.S. personnel. In addition to helping to train prospective police cadres, the command increased its use of civilian police as guards at nonmilitary installations, either singly or with U.S. troops.⁷⁶

With France's entry into the circle of victors, the preparatory phase of the occupation came to a close. The Western powers had taken physical possession of their areas, the Allied governments were functioning, and the actors were all in place. In hard but productive bargaining, American, British, and Soviet authorities had reached key agreements on supplying and administering Berlin. The Kommandatura was operating according to a standard routine and had the trappings of a military staff.

Although the military government in Berlin had begun to settle in, U.S. tactical forces in the city were still in a state of flux. Already within the span of one month the primary security element had completely rotated, replacing the 2d Armored Division with the 82d Airborne Division. With a public clamor to bring the soldiers home escalating back in the United States, additional changes in organization and personnel were imminent. U.S. military leaders were quickly becoming aware that the passive German population in Berlin offered little threat to the policies of the military government or to its evolving infrastructure. Without an obvious military mission, it would be harder to justify the retention of so many occupation troops within the city of Berlin.

⁷⁶ Park Diary Entry, 6 Aug 1945; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 651.

5

VICTORS AND VANQUISHED IN BERLIN

Common wisdom, both German and American, regards the U.S. occupation of Germany as historically unique. Instead of exerting the prerogatives of conquest according to time-honored laws of victory and defeat, the American occupiers appeared before the Germans as bearers of security, democracy, and well-being. Images of CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe) packages providing nourishment to the desperately hungry and of the Berlin airlift defeating Soviet attempts to blackmail the city through a starvation blockade come most readily to mind.

These images, however, omit much of the story. In fact, when Americans entered Berlin in the summer of 1945, they came as conquerors. They had come not to rebuild but to control. They distrusted the so-called German character, impugned German motives, and avoided personal contact with German officials, refusing even to shake hands. Self-rule was but a distant prospect, realizable only after a prolonged period of tutelage and constraint.

For the people of Berlin, the first year of the occupation would be harsh. With a desire to provide for their own well-being and also to drive home the totality of the German defeat, the Americans requisitioned the finest accommodations available in the sector and maintained an almost garishly lavish lifestyle. Soldiers who had been conditioned to despise an enemy who engaged in unspeakable acts against humanity found it difficult to regard the now defeated foe with any sense of benevolence. Also, with the war over and no real military threat, many U.S. soldiers lost the sense of purpose that had held them together. While leaders looked for ways to maintain unit cohesion, military discipline deteriorated as some sought riches on the black market while others chose to exact their own personal revenge on German civilians. To many Berliners, especially those who had not come to grips with their own complicity in the excesses of the Nazi war machine, the Americans became a terror. By early 1946, U.S. intelligence reported that many Germans had come to refer to the G.I.'s as "Russians in pressed pants."¹

¹ Weekly Intel Sum, HQ, Berlin District, G-2, 9 Feb 1946, Historians files, CMH.

Preventative Punishment

The interdepartmental directive on Germany, JCS 1067, encapsulated the harsh spirit of the early occupation. Although it spared the country dismemberment and deindustrialization—measures that Secretary of the Treasury Henry J. Morgenthau Jr. had urged in his famous plan—it forgave the Germans little. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson called it a program of “preventive punishment.”²

The final version of JCS 1067, which the Joint Chiefs transmitted to General Dwight D. Eisenhower on 10 May 1945, retained most of the wording of the draft from fall 1944. The American occupiers would treat Germany as a defeated nation. They would purge the country of all Nazis, reactionaries, and militarists, and eliminate its capacity to wage war. The Germans would have to care for themselves from their own resources and should expect no help or personal “friendship” from the occupying authorities. “In the conduct of your occupation and administration,” the directive declared, “you should be just but firm and aloof. You will strongly discourage fraternization with the German officials and population.”³

For Americans in Berlin, JCS 1067 confirmed existing inclinations. While aware that all directives could be interpreted in various ways, Col. Frank L. Howley had given special weight to guidance received from Brig. Gen. Julius C. Holmes, the deputy assistant chief of staff for civil affairs at SHAEF, in December 1944. Holmes told Howley to teach his men “to forget all about . . . the idea of friendly helpfulness.” Most civil affairs detachments, Holmes complained, had tried to produce “model communities,” as each unit competed with the other to have its community the best fed, the best housed, and the best run. That, the general stressed, was not the point of the occupation. Rather, “We are going in as conquerors; we are going in to force our will upon the people who have caused so much suffering in the world.” Holmes’ words were present in Howley’s mind in the summer of 1945 when the colonel remarked in his diary, “I am definitely on the record as being on the ‘treat the Germans rough side,’” for Berlin was “the once great center of Prussianism and militarism,” and if any one city could be held responsible for the consequences of the war, “Berlin is it.”⁴

² JCS Dir 1067, Policy Committee on Germany to Cdr in Ch of U.S. Forces of Occupation, 10 May 1945, sub: Military Government in Germany, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 15–32. See also Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 105–06. Quote from Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 581.

³ JCS Dir 1067, Policy Committee on Germany to Cdr in Ch of U.S. Forces of Occupation, 10 May 1945.

⁴ Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, pp. 19–22, box 2, Howley Papers, AHEC.

Little could reveal more sharply the spirit and tone of the early occupation than the statement delivered by Lt. Col. John J. Maginnis at the Schöneberg city hall on 4 July. The district mayor and his staff had lined up at attention to observe the ceremonial handover of authority to the United States. After the departing Soviet district commander had spoken words to the effect that the Germans were now on the “democratic” road, Maginnis gave the assembled officials an icy greeting. “I am the representative of the Military Government here,” he declared,

All requests and external contacts will be routed through me. You will only deal with my office. . . . All residents of Schöneberg will communicate with the Military Government only through the *bürgermeister*. . . . There will be no fraternization. All contacts between Military Government and [the district administration] will be official. *Fragebogen* (personnel security questionnaires) will be . . . completed by all officials. Great difficulties face you. We are not here to degrade you, but we are here to punish those who have caused this great destruction and suffering. We are here to help you to rehabilitate yourselves and to make a start in a new democratic way of life. Obey the regulations that Military Government has laid down for your conduct and we will get along well together.

In his diary, Maginnis wondered whether these Germans could tell the difference between Soviet and American use of the word democracy. He had discerned no answer from “their impassive faces.” However, he concluded, the question was “immaterial anyway, for what we would practice was not democracy but Military Government. Democracy would come later, when Germans had learned it and earned it.”⁵

Initial U.S. occupation policies were rooted in the concept of a collective German personality characterized by authoritarianism, racism, and militarism. Although greatly stereotypical, this concept found apparent confirmation not only in the experience of the Third Reich but in the course of German history over centuries. Thus, when Americans arrived in Berlin, they expected Germans to behave according to character. Actual encounters with Berliners during the early stages of the occupation appeared to validate these expectations.

As the war drew to a close, American occupation planners had detected few signs of democratic potential in postwar Germany and anticipated little good from the German people. In a paper prepared in April 1945, the civil affairs staff at SHAEF wrote off virtually the whole of Germany’s elite. While these officers “presupposed” that trade unionists, Social Democrats, liberals, and former members of the Catholic Center Party were “reasonably” prodemocratic, the planners believed that industrialists, big businessmen, large landowners, and conservative anti-Nazis “were so generally imbued with German nationalism, militarism, and conservative traditionalism as to be unsuitable for all purposes.”

⁵ Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, pp. 264–65.

Ambassador Robert Murphy agreed: “While many of the rightists and conservatives were anti-Nazi, they were at the same time strongly nationalistic.” One official on the Control Council staff questioned the acceptability even of Social Democrats and trade unionists, because they demanded treatment of Germany as a liberated country rather than a conquered nation and rejected territorial concessions beyond renunciation of Nazi conquests. For General Eisenhower, the matter required no complex analysis. Memories of his walk through the Buchenwald death camps remained seared into his brain. In letters to his wife describing his frustration with pockets of die-hard Nazis who refused to surrender, he declared, “The German is a beast” and “God, I hate the Germans!” In late 1945, when Morgenthau published the book *Germany is Our Problem*, setting forth his proposal to “pastoralize” the country, Eisenhower ordered the distribution of 1,000 free copies to military government officials.⁶

American officials held scant hope that the Germans would accept defeat. Instead, they expected German nationalists to “bend every effort” to stir conflict between the Anglo-American Allies and the Soviet Union. In the words of the final report of SHAEF’s Joint Intelligence Committee, dated 14 May 1945, German leaders were already at work “to gain for Germany the status of a co-belligerent against Russia.” In hopes of fooling the West “into rebuilding Germany as a bulwark against the Russians,” they would “take every opportunity to lick the Allies’ boots to make us grudgingly acknowledge that they were ‘correct.’” Proof of these suspicions seemed abundant. Interrogation reports showed senior German officers eagerly offering their knowledge and services for an eventual conflict with the Soviets. One SS *Obergruppenführer* (lieutenant general) volunteered what his interrogator termed “a ‘friend’s’ advice.” If America “were to start anything against the Russians,” the officer asserted, “now would be a good time to go ahead.”⁷

This profound distrust extended beyond Germany’s elite to encompass the larger population. In support of the nonfraternization policy, indoctrination materials exhorted U.S. soldiers to resist all German attempts to entice sympathy and favors. Shortly before the end of the war, a Signal Corps film production, *This is the Enemy*, became required viewing for all troops. It featured scenes from the 1920s depicting “friendly and charming” German behavior while the narrator reminded viewers that these “charming” people had unleashed war, exterminated Jews, and operated concentration camps. In April 1945, Lt. Gen.

⁶ Memo, SHAEF, Civil Affairs Br, for Robert Murphy, sub: Political Considerations for the Guidance of Military Government Officers in Making Appointments in Germany, Encl to Ltr, Brig Gen Frank J. McSherry, Deputy Ch of Staff, Civil-Mil Affairs, to Robert Murphy, 31 Mar 1945, file 32/10, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Ltr, Murphy to McSherry, 4 May 1945, file 32/10, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), p. 422.

⁷ Political Intel Rpt, Joint Intel Committee, SHAEF (45) 22 (Final), 14 May 1945, Encl to Ltr, Murphy to Dept of State, 18 May 1945, file 32/48/48, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Interrogation Rpts, 7th Army Interrogation Center, Apr–Jun 1945; 7th Army Interrogation Center, 5 Jun 1945, sub: Gottlob Berger. Both in file AGTS 42/3, OMGUS, BAK.

John C. H. Lee had special orders printed on pocket-sized cards to be carried by every soldier. In them, he directed the men “never to trust Germans, collectively or individually,” for “the German has been taught that the national goal of domination must be obtained regardless . . . of treachery, murder and destruction.” Making no distinctions for political allegiance or social class, Lee warned that “the Germans” would attempt to “poison our thinking” with “deliberate, studied and continuous efforts to entice our sympathies and to escape the just consequences of their guilt.” Soldiers could expect “appeals to generosity and fair play; to pity for ‘victims of devastation;’ to racial and cultural similarities; and to sympathy for an allegedly oppressed people.”⁸

Because Berliners were, as Germans, generically suspect, Army intelligence agencies threw a wide net over the city in order to capture the pulse of public opinion as well as to uncover plots and machinations. The civil censorship division of the Berlin District intelligence staff monitored German postal, telegraphic, and telephonic communications inside Berlin. The Counterintelligence Corps engaged myriad informants, recruited from “white lists” of reputed anti-Nazis drawn up at SHAEF. In addition to helping the corps track down wanted persons, these individuals reported on political meetings, audience reactions to theater performances, and conversations overheard from people in public places, such as subways or breadlines, in exchange for increased rations, cigarettes, gasoline, or relief from work details.⁹

The overall picture that emerged from these covert sources showed the Germans living up to their stereotype as a people who “ruthlessly kill and destroy, but when they are beaten . . . feel that somebody should ‘help’ them.” To Army intelligence officials, the average Berliner was a “vicious, immoral creature,” whose attitudes compounded “suppressed nationalism, hatreds, a feeling of insecurity and negative criticism and hunger,” and who lost no chance to complain one day to the Americans about the Russians and the “next evening to seek out a Russian and pour out to him his grievances against the Americans while the Russian pours the vodka.” Such Berliners did “not comprehend the relationship between twelve years of Nazi rule and their present sufferings.” They blamed the occupation for their low living standards and displayed no concern for the losses and sufferings of other countries. “Reactionary forces,” officials warned, were “as alive as ever” and people still thought “along Nazi lines.” Although most Berliners abhorred the Soviet system, few expressed any

⁸ Weekly Intel Sum, Intel Staff, U.S. Army, Berlin District, 20 Jul 1946, Historians files, CMH; Dir, Special Orders for American-German Relations, Encl to Ltr, Murphy to Edward R. Stettinius Jr., 9 Apr 1945, file 732/38, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 29–30, file 5/35-3/8; 1 Jan–31 Mar 1946, pp. 37–43, file 5/35-3/11; and 1 Apr–30 Jun 1946, pp. 22–24, file 5/35-3/1. All in OMGUS, LAB.

clear preference for the West either. Many would remain neutral in hopes of securing the best deal possible.¹⁰

In October 1945, Americans added a new surveillance technique—public opinion polling. Trained in the methods of the Gallup poll, a team of German researchers began to survey Berliners' views and mood for the Information Control Division of the military government. They conducted numerous polls on political, social, and cultural issues and wrote public mood assessments. Their research reinforced the negative picture derived from covert sources. For example, a survey report of 4 January 1946 addressed the issue of compensating victims of religious or political persecution under national socialism. Although 60 percent of the sample agreed to the return of lost property, this form of restitution involved no public costs. By contrast, a mere 30 percent expressed willingness to pay higher taxes to compensate Nazi victims for financial loss or physical injury. Likewise, only 42 percent of the sample felt that people who were physically disabled due to Nazi treatment in concentration camps or jails should receive greater consideration than disabled *Wehrmacht* veterans. A report completed on 24 January 1946 revealed that 77 percent of respondents in all sectors of Berlin denied any truth to the statement that the German people as a whole were responsible for the war because they had ceded power to the Nazis. At the same time, virtually none of those questioned regarded a single Nuremberg defendant as innocent, demonstrating their readiness to assign guilt to the National socialist leadership while dissociating themselves from all blame. The same survey showed that 53 percent of respondents saw national socialism not as a "bad idea," but as a "good idea badly executed." These and other polling results confirmed American preconceptions as to "German character," cast doubt on German readiness to accept responsibility for Nazi crimes, and made it difficult to see Germans as capable of a free, democratic society.¹¹

The Purge

In most occupations of Europe's modern era, the victorious powers controlled defeated states only to the extent needed to ensure their own strategic interests. Even if kings or emperors might be deposed, both the apparatus of government and the social order were left intact. The guidance encapsulated in JCS 1067, however, ordered a wide-ranging purge of Germany's ruling and professional circles. Not only were all Nazis to be removed from positions of

¹⁰ Rpt, Curt Riess to Allen Welsh Dulles, OSS Station Ch, Bern, 5 Mar 1945, sub: The Eisenhower Appeal, Encl to Ltr, Lt Col Paul van der Stricht to Murphy, 14 Mar 1945, file 729/45, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Weekly Intel Sum, Intel Staff, U.S. Army, Berlin District, 14 Aug 1946; 8 Dec 1946; and 9 Feb 1946. All in Historians files, CMH.

¹¹ Public Opinion Survey Rpts, Information Services Control sec., HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, 4 Jan 1946, sub: Survey of Attitudes toward Restitution Problem; and 24 Jan 1946, sub: Survey of Attitudes towards the Nuremberg Trial. Both in file 4/8-3/2, OMGUS, LAB.

leadership in government, society, and the economy, but also Nazi sympathizers, proponents of militarism, and all others hostile to Allied purposes. This terminology encompassed members of the business elite who had profited from the regime as well as conservative nationalists who had welcomed Adolf Hitler's program before he started to lose the war but had tried to jump from the train as it raced toward derailment. It also encompassed teachers, journalists, physicians, and cultural personalities who had promoted National Socialist ideology, as well as judges, lawyers, and policemen who became willing tools of Nazi "justice." No one could legally work in these professions without undergoing a process of investigation that began with an obligatory Fragebogen, and without receiving clearance from the military government.

The Fragebogen became one of the primary tools used in the American denazification program. It consisted of a series of 131 questions, meant to establish a person's level of participation in the Nazi party. Unlike the other Allies, who applied the questionnaire somewhat selectively, the Americans required completion of the survey by every German over the age of eighteen. Once the answers were completed and analyzed, the individual received an assessment at one of five levels; major offender, offender, minor offender, follower, or exonerated person. More often than not, these assessments would determine whether or not an individual might resume a prewar livelihood.¹²

Despite the sweeping scope of the purge order, it contained specifications that were concessions to reality as well as loopholes through which innumerable ex-Nazis could avoid sanctions. Under the terms of JCS 1067—matched by agreements in the Kommandatura—persons categorized as active supporters of Nazism were supposed to be expunged from public office and positions of private influence. At the same time, so-called "nominal participants" could continue working. Thus, the chief issues in conducting the purge were of determining who was a nominal as opposed to an active Nazi, and to what extent nonparty sympathizers and supporters had backed the Nazi cause.¹³

The responsibility for making such determinations rested with the Special Branch of the Public Safety Section of the military government for Berlin. The Special Branch began work on 4 July 1945 with two officers and three enlisted personnel. By the end of the year, its staff consisted of 7 officers, 21 enlisted men, 3 American civilians, and 91 Germans, who had processed 26,193 denazification cases and designated 1,157 persons for mandatory removal from employment in the U.S. Sector. In 1946, the branch processed an additional 96,488 cases and designated 3,782 persons for mandatory removal. Almost 27,000 received an

¹² Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), pp. 254–61.

¹³ JCS Dir 1067, Policy Committee on Germany to Cdr in Ch of U.S. Forces of Occupation, 10 May 1945. The distinctions "nominal" and "active" appear in section 6.c. of the directive.

employment discretionary classification, reserved for those who had engaged in “some Nazi activity,” for whom the final decision rested with the employer.¹⁴

During its early months of operation, the Special Branch made determinations based on a person’s position and rank. It assumed automatic guilt for people occupying high positions, holding a particular rank, or carrying out certain functions. It applied such rules mechanistically, in a spirit of moral cleansing. The results were sometimes capricious and arbitrary, and at other times ambiguous. Even so, they were often fully justified.

The case of an eminent surgeon, Dr. Ernst F. Sauerbruch, illustrates the difficulties of trying to rid a whole society of the Nazi stain. Sauerbruch’s professional renown dated from pioneering advances in thoracic surgery at the turn of the century. Since 1928, he had occupied posts as professor at the Berlin University and director of surgery at the world-famous Charité Hospital, where he built an international reputation in amputation and prostheses. Although he never joined the Nazi party, he was a fervid nationalist who spoke publicly in favor of the regime, advocated German rearmament, accepted honors for scientific research, and headed the medical section of the Reich Research Council, where he approved SS experiments using concentration camp prisoners. In 1942, he received appointment as *Generalarzt des Heeres* (Surgeon General of the Army). In his defense, he could claim efforts to protect vulnerable colleagues, including several Jews, from dismissal at the Charité, and his opposition to the Nazi euthanasia program. The Soviets had closed their eyes to Sauerbruch’s past and summoned him to take office as director of public health in the Magistrat.

The Americans, however, proved unforgiving of Sauerbruch. In late September 1945, Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin, who had succeeded Maj. Gen. Floyd L. Parks as commandant at the beginning of the month, sent a letter to the Kommandatura, requesting Sauerbruch’s dismissal from his positions both in the Magistrat and as director of surgery at the Charité. Although Sauerbruch was no security threat, said Gavin, he had “prospered during the Nazi regime and occupied a position of prominence” through which he contributed to the prestige of the Nazi party. The Soviet representative agreed to Sauerbruch’s dismissal as head of public health but resisted demands that he be removed from the hospital, which was located in the Soviet Sector. The Kommandatura reached a compromise. Sauerbruch would be dismissed from both leadership positions but could remain at the Charité as a practicing surgeon.¹⁵

The contrast between American and Soviet attitudes in this case was striking. Despite the unspeakable devastation of the Soviet Union, the Soviet authorities had sought out Sauerbruch by virtue of his professional achievements. The integration of distinguished individuals into Soviet plans for a German

¹⁴ Six Months Rpts, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 67–68; and 4 Jul 1946–1 Jan 1947, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 31–34. Both in Historians files, CMH.

¹⁵ Memo, Maj Gen James M. Gavin, Cdr, U.S. HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, for the Allied Kommandatura, 29 Sep 1945, sub: Dismissal of Dr. Ernst F. Sauerbruch, file 4/135-3/1, OMGUS, LAB.

“democracy” was a matter of political prestige as well as pragmatism. The Americans, by contrast, perceived a morally corrupt Nazi sympathizer who fell clearly into a removal category. Efficiency was no consideration, moreover, because JCS 1067 had expressly forbidden the retention of such persons on grounds of “necessity, convenience, or expediency.”¹⁶

In early 1946, the military government altered its method for determining culpability. The use of categories and fixed criteria had proved unreliable. Many party members had remained aloof from party activity while nonparty individuals, particularly conservative nationalists, had eagerly abetted Hitler’s actions. Following the recommendations of a high-level policy board, which reported to Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay on 15 January, American authorities adopted a case-by-case approach for settling the fates of “chargeable” persons. In most cases chargeable parties had exculpatory stories, supported by written testimonies, called *Persilscheine* after Persil, a brand of laundry soap. Denazification authorities now had the burden of assessing tens of thousands of these stories in order to adjust sanctions to the offense.

In the U.S. Zone of Germany, responsibility for denazification devolved in June 1946 to *Spruchkammern* (local boards), which set out to rehabilitate accused persons as quickly as possible. In Berlin, however, authority remained in the hands of the Special Branch. When parties objected to an initial finding, they could appeal their cases before a seven-member German denazification commission in their district. These bodies, however, could only recommend action to the Special Branch. The military government, therefore, remained deeply involved in an unpopular process, wielding power over masses of people desperate to resume their livelihoods.

Although the German denazification commissions were, in theory, more capable than American officials of cutting through the fog of claims and excuses, they became scenes of favoritism and score settling. “Desirable” members were hard to recruit. Competent and unprejudiced persons were often reluctant to perform in positions that exposed them to pressure and calumny. On the other hand, to cite the chief of a military government review board, “Competent people with prejudices” were “very anxious to serve” for their own ends. As a U.S. officer in Schöneberg remarked, “Directives and decisions have been variously interpreted. . . . The present system allows German officers a good deal of opportunity for petty persecution or undesirable leniency when such is personally advantageous.”¹⁷

¹⁶ JCS Dir 1067, Policy Committee on Germany to Cdr in Ch of U.S. Forces of Occupation, 10 May 1945.

¹⁷ Memos, Alfred J. Radosta, Ch, Security Review Board, for Ch Public Safety Ofcr, 27 Sep 1946, sub: Improvements in review procedure of Denazification Commissions in U.S. Sector of Berlin, file 4/135-2/9; Maj Matthew J. Kasprzycki, Liaison Ofcr, Schöneberg, for Manpower Br, 30 Oct 1946, sub: Interpretation and Application of Special Branch Decisions on Denazification Cases, file 4/135-1/9. Both in OMGUS, LAB.

In the end, American denazification methods satisfied neither those Germans who demanded a thorough reckoning with former Nazis nor those advocating a quick rehabilitation of minor offenders. The handling of each case on an individual basis—the making of judgments according to personal histories—was designed to ensure fairness but was also cumbersome and time-consuming, and even a favorable case would take months to complete. In the meantime, the accused were tormented by uncertainty, and those who failed the process sulked over the “injustice” of a fate determined by outsiders.¹⁸

Benign Dictatorship

Denazification comprised just one element in a larger system of Allied direction that encompassed the command of labor, the subjection of Berliners to foreign justice through military courts, and control over speech and expression. The freedom of individuals to choose their occupations and employers—an integral tenet of Anglo-American ideology—was impracticable in postwar Berlin, as it was in wartime Britain. Only a labor draft could raise armies of workers from a city of women, children, and old men, and only a command system could channel their deployment. Army engineers began conscripting labor on 2 July. During the following three months, the Americans requisitioned workers through district labor offices in the U.S. Sector. In an order to the Magistrat on 12 October, the Kommandatura centralized control under the Main Labor Office. The order obligated all men from the ages of fifteen to sixty-six, and all women from sixteen to fifty, to register for work. The authorities were to penalize noncompliance by refusing ration cards, and those who ignored an Allied labor summons would face punishment before military courts. The Kommandatura stipulated priorities for allocating labor. Work for the Allied forces took precedence, but city reconstruction projects followed closely in importance. If drawing workers from the unemployed failed to meet requirements, the Magistrat would take workers from low-priority enterprises, particularly in the service sector.

The system gave both the occupation powers and the Magistrat the means to mobilize and to pay a nominal sum to all able persons to clear rubble, dig ditches, repair streets, or mix concrete. Designed to fill urgent collective needs, the system imposed heavy private costs. Zehlendorf was a prime example.

¹⁸ For a typical German complaint to this effect, see Ltr, Bishop Otto Debelius, Superintendent of the Protestant Church, Berlin-Brandenburg, to U.S. Secretariat, Allied Kommandatura, 2 Mar 1948, file 4/10-3/30, OMGUS, LAB.



An example of destruction in Berlin; the graffiti reads “Better dead than slave.”

Heavily affected by American demands for skilled and semiskilled labor, its civilian economy suffered severely from the loss of able-bodied personnel.¹⁹

In the judicial arena, residents of the U.S. Sector charged with crimes against American property or personnel, as well as violations against U.S. or Allied ordinances, had to answer to U.S. military courts. For lesser violations, such as theft, curfew violation, or falsification of the Fragebogen, the military government established summary courts in each district. These bodies consisted of one officer, who could impose fines no greater than \$1,000 or prison sentences no longer than a year. More serious offenses, including possession of weapons, illegal manufacture of war materials, abduction, and murder went before either an intermediate or a general court. The intermediate court employed multiple officers—the number could vary by case—of whom one had to be a lawyer, and could impose fines no greater than \$10,000 or prison sentences not exceeding ten years. The general court contained at least three members, of whom one was a lawyer, and could

¹⁹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1946, pp. 7–10, file 5/35-3/11, OMGUS, LAB; Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 28–32, 126, 162; Dir BK/O(45)(156), Allied Kommandatura to Governing Mayor, 12 Oct 1945, sub: Anweisung an den Direktor des Hauptarbeitsamtes Berlin (Instruction to the Director of the Main Labor Office, Berlin); Dir BK/O(45)(156), Allied Kommandatura to Governing Mayor, 17 Dec 1945, sub: “Verordnung zur Deckung des Bedarfs an Arbeitskräften für lebenswichtige Arbeiten” (Order for Meeting Labor Requirements for Critical Work). Both in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:645–49.



Berliners attempt to move on with their lives.

impose any sentence, including the death penalty. Few cases ever appeared before the general court, which pronounced a sentence of capital punishment only once. The intermediate court heard the most notorious case, involving the sale of fake penicillin, and punished the ringleaders with ten years in prison and heavy fines.²⁰

²⁰ Mil Government Courts Handbook, Legal sec., Detachment A1A1, Feb 1945, file 4/135-1/7, OMGUS, LAB; Four Year Rpt, 1 Jul 1946–1 Sep 1949, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 54, Historians files, CMH; Memos, Wesley F. Pape, Ch, Legal Br, for Col Frank L. Howley, 6 Dec 1946, sub: Penicillin Trial; Pape for Howley, 4 Dec 1948, sub: Death Sentence Imposed by MG Court. Both in file 4/40-1/10, OMGUS, LAB.

Despite guarantees of Anglo-American civil rights and the presence of German legal experts to advise on German procedure and punishment, the military system remained an alien implant for the nearly 8,000 Berliners it tried. Some people stood before the panels for offenses unknown to German law—as when the Americans decided to punish the sale of liquor to U.S. soldiers. The lack of stipulations and precedents produced uneven sentencing. Whereas, in certain cases, persons caught possessing a carton of American cigarettes went to jail for six months, other such parties were imprisoned for a year. Some penalties appeared unnecessarily harsh—four months in prison for acquiring six cans of commissary food, or three months for possessing a few one-dollar bills, are but two examples. The military courts exposed defendants to vagaries and arbitrary rulings outside the scope of German justice.²¹

Also part of the American effort was a desire to educate Berliners, to elevate their character, and to instill within them a sense of American concepts and values. The chief tool in the hands of the American reeducators was their power to license the media. No newspaper, journal, or publishing house could operate in the U.S. Sector without obtaining a permit from the military government's Information Services Control Section. Before making a decision, the section's officers gathered extensive information on the political history and beliefs of the applicants prior to a final interrogation. After issuing a license, the controllers continued to scrutinize published works to ensure that the licensees printed no Nazi or militaristic propaganda or criticized the occupation powers. The controls were so pervasive that the section even approved individual printing jobs.²²

By the end of July 1946, the U.S. authorities had licensed fourteen book publishers, eleven periodicals, and one newspaper. They also controlled Berlin's largest printing plant, the *Deutscher Verlag* in Tempelhof. Along with the daily newspapers, the enterprise printed around 60 percent of the books and 50 percent of the periodicals published in the three Western sectors of Berlin. Publishers also depended on the military government for allocations of paper. Remaining in the good graces of the control officers was critical to doing business.²³

The most significant of all the licensing decisions was the selection of a publisher for the first U.S. Sector newspaper. In a process started in July 1945, some one hundred applicants vied for the permit. In mid-September, after screening the Fragebogen and conducting intensive interviews, the Americans decided on a group headed by the publicist Erik Reger. Reger's partners included Walter Karsch, a literary critic; Edwin Redslob, a former civil servant responsible for culture; and Heinrich von Schweinichen, a businessman. The men represented a range of political views. Reger was a nonsocialist

²¹ MFR, "note to self," n.d., sub: Review of Sentences in Military Government Court Case, Encl to Memo, Pape for Legal and Court Ofcers, 14 Apr 1946, file 40/40-1/1, OMGUS, LAB.

²² Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 118–19.

²³ Four Year Rpt, 1 Jul 1946–1 Sep 1949, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 72–74.

progressive; Karsch, a left-wing Socialist; Redslob, a Liberal Democrat; and von Schweinichen, a conservative Democrat. Their paper, named *Der Tagesspiegel* (Daily Mirror), published its first issue on 27 September.²⁴

While leaving editorial decisions to Reger, American officials “scrutinized” the journal following each issue to ensure that it contained no Nazi or militaristic propaganda, or any criticism of the occupation powers. The most significant control, however, came before the fact. The American press officers determined the character and policies of the publication when they vetted the applicants. Reger presented a perfect choice to head the journal. While anti-Communist, he opposed the right with strident fervor, rejecting all strains of conservative nationalism and accepting the doctrine of Germany’s collective guilt. Later, when von Schweinichen rebelled against Reger’s antinational attitude, the Americans summarily revoked the businessman’s license and placed him under surveillance.²⁵

Alongside the media, education was the second key to changing German character. A far-reaching transformation of public instruction awaited 1948, when the Americans, Soviets, Communists, and Social Democrats together enacted sweeping school reform. In the meantime, the powers concerned themselves with vetting curricula and instructional publications. When the Magistrat issued instructions on the reopening of schools in June 1945, it disallowed the use of any materials produced during the Third Reich. As a result, no textbooks were available for the teaching of basic subjects; for reading lessons, only German literary classics or newspapers published after the Nazi collapse were permissible. At its first meeting on 13 August, the Kommandatura Education Committee decided that all textbooks introduced into Berlin’s schools required its approval. Subsequently, the committee agreed on nine textbooks prepared under American supervision and seven prepared under the Soviets. Afterward, the process of obtaining unanimous approval for each volume became increasingly tedious. The Americans and Soviets squabbled over a textbook submitted for approval by the school office, *Du und die Welt* (You and the World), which contained an allegorical treatment of the Russian

²⁴ Memos, Brig Gen John L. Whitelaw, Deputy Ch of Staff, Berlin District, for Brig Gen Robert A. McClure, Ch, Information Services Control sec., U.S. Forces, European Theater (USFET), 17 Sep 1948, sub: Recommended Licensees for German Newspaper in U.S. Sector, Berlin; A. J. Aronson, Press Liaison Ofcr, for Sutherland Denlinger, Acting Ch, Press Control sec., 17 Sep 1948, sub: Berlin License. Both in file 5/240-2/9, OMGUS, LAB. See also Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater*, pp. 155–62.

²⁵ Memos, Luther Conant, Ch, Press Control Br, OMGUS Zone, for Julius Bellos, Ch Security Ofcr, 25 Jan 1946, sub: Scrutiny of *Der Tagesspiegel*, file 5/243-3/21; K. A. Greenough, Information Services Control sec., for Maj John Bitter, Ch, Theater and Music sec., 16 Apr 1946, sub: Report of Press Section, file 4/9-11/9; Lt Col F. M. Leonard for Heinrich von Schweinichen, 24 Jun 1946, sub: Withdrawal of Licence, file 5/243-3. All in OMGUS, LAB. Evidence of surveillance directed against von Schweinichen is contained in Telephone Intercept Rpt, 30 Jun 1947, file C/47/14217, Historians files, CMH. For an excellent treatment of von Schweinichen’s dismissal, see Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater*, pp. 163–65.

Revolution, emphasizing the theory of class struggle. The committee eventually approved it after agreeing to put a note beneath the title explaining that the story was a “fairy tale of old Russia’s struggle for freedom and democracy.” The overall teaching of history, however, remained suspended.²⁶

All this time, Allied policy toward Berlin’s administration remained stern and aloof. The members of the Magistrat were accomplished and diligent. Indeed, few city governments ever accomplished so much under unprecedented hardships. The Kommandatura depended on the Magistrat to execute Allied orders, to operate city services, and to organize reconstruction. However, the Allied rulers could prove both imperious and unhelpful. Beyond food and coal, they provided material aid only by exception. The Kommandatura issued instructions, but all responsibility for implementation rested with the Magistrat. If resources were inadequate to meet an Allied demand, the German officials had to decide how to overcome the scarcity. In dealing with this separation of power from practical responsibility, the Germans had little recourse, for protest would only spur mistrust. “We are the defeated,” declared the city treasurer, “and the Allies are the government of the Reich above us.”²⁷

Living as Conquerors

In casting themselves as conquerors rather than liberators, the American occupation forces readily embraced the ancient practice of exacting tribute. Thus, the defeated Germans would not only pay to be garrisoned but would maintain the occupational establishment in a standard of life befitting the victors. The American occupation forces would, indeed, live well.

From the standpoint of living well, the U.S. Sector was the best of the four Allied areas. The sector contained many of Berlin’s finest residential areas including Dahlem and Zehlendorf. A good portion of it had escaped the crippling destruction caused by Allied bombing of the more heavily industrialized sections in the eastern part of the city. Sufficient industrial and military installations were also available to provide suitable facilities for large military headquarters.

²⁶ “Anordnung des Magistrats zur Wiederaufnahme des Schulunterrichts” (Order of the Magistrat on the Restarting of School Instruction), 11 Jun 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:506–08; Six Months Rpts, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 79–80; 4 Jul 1946–1 Jan 1947, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 74. See also Memo, Education and Religious Affairs Br for Local Government and Political Affairs Br, 17 Oct 1947, sub: Intelligence Report, file 4/13-2/15, OMGUS, LAB.

²⁷ The Allies provided DDT to counter the spread of typhus fever; they also imported limited quantities of medical supplies, mostly of German manufacture. Six Months Rpts, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 86–88; and 4 Jan–3 Jul 1946, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 94–96, 99, Historians files, CMH; Min, “Ausserordentlicher Magistratsitzung” (Extraordinary Meeting of the Magistrat), 19 Sep 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:713.



Allied leaders gather in front of the new headquarters in Berlin, following the first meeting of the Allied Control Council, (left to right) Sokolovsky, Murphy, Montgomery, Zhukov, Eisenhower, Koenig, and Political Ambassador Semenov.

All things considered, it was probably the sector of Berlin, as it existed on 1 July 1945, best adapted to the needs of an occupying force.²⁸

By 30 September, U.S. forces controlled approximately 4,500 structures in the American Sector. Because Zehlendorf was both rich and lightly damaged, it felt the heaviest burden of the requisitions. Roughly one-quarter of its citizens lost their dwellings during the first three months of the American occupation. Requisitions continued, and one year later, approximately 35 percent of the area's dwelling space was in American hands. Persons whose homes the Americans had designated for requisition received only 72-hours' notice to empty their dwellings of those belongings needed for survival. If they missed the deadline—due, for example, to absence when notice was delivered—they could be barred from further entry, unable to gather mattresses, sheets, or pots and pans. In contrast with British and French practice, U.S. nonfraternization policies prohibited the billeting of personnel with German families. Thus,

²⁸ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, p. 4.

Germans had to vacate entirely any residence selected for American use, instead of merely sharing rooms.²⁹

Even the lowliest soldiers shared the bounties. Theodore B. Mohr, who arrived in Berlin as a 20-year-old signals technician with the 82d Airborne Division—and later became chief of personnel security for the Berlin Command—recalled lodging with his company in a Steglitz apartment house, where, despite his humble rank, he enjoyed sole occupancy of a one-bedroom dwelling. The men of one regiment, he added, had the particular fortune of residing in the so-called *Marinesiedlung* (naval settlement) built during the 1930s on the shores of a lake, Schlachtensee, to quarter high-ranking naval officers.³⁰

The leaders of the occupation took over the homes of Berlin's elite. Some residences belonged to bankers, lawyers, and industrialists, others to Nazi potentates. Colonel Howley chose a lavish villa. General Clay—described by a close friend, *Newsweek* correspondent James P. O'Donnell, as a man content with enough money to “pay for a bill, to buy a drink, to buy an automobile, to pay his club debt”—took a World War I-era replica English manor house, replete with a large formal garden. For General Eisenhower's use in Berlin, Clay selected an impressive house on the exclusive Schwanenwerder and ordered the expulsion of all neighboring residents, around ninety people, from the area. Middle-ranking officers also enjoyed fine quarters. Four bachelor majors shared a palatial dwelling on the Pacelliallee in Dahlem, once home to Emil Georg von Stauss, the chairman of the Deutsche Bank and a prominent contributor to the Nazi party. Other officers shared the modern villa erected by Hitler's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Maginnis occupied a refurbished and newly furnished four-room apartment in Schöneberg. In all cases, the district governments provided housekeepers and maintenance services, in addition to paying the rent. High-ranking personages living in large homes received a full complement of household personnel, much in the fashion of the German plutocrats whom they supplanted.³¹

²⁹ Memo, Col John Arrowsmith, District Engr, Berlin District, for Ch of Staff, 24 Sep 1946, sub: Open Letter to Bürgermeister of Zehlendorf, file 4-135/2-9, OMGUS, LAB; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 69–72; Min, Conf of CG with District Officials, 4 Sep 1946, file 4/135-3/10, OMGUS, LAB.

³⁰ Interv, William Stivers with Theodore B. Mohr, 27 Apr 2012, Historians files, CMH.

³¹ Interv, John Backer with James P. O'Donnell, 8 Mar 1980, Lucius Clay Project, Columbia University, Oral History Research Office (OHRO), New York, N.Y. For a history of Clay's house, currently the official residence of the Moroccan ambassador to Germany, see “*Talking with visitors and whatnot*”: *US-General Lucius D. Clay and his Berlin Residence*, ed. Florian Weiss (Berlin: Allied Museum, 2006); Floyd L. Parks Diary Entry, 5 Aug 1945, box 1, Parks Papers, AHEC; Interv, Brewster Chamberlin with General (Ret) Maxwell D. Taylor, 4 May 1981, Rep 37, Acc 3103, LAB; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 72–78.



General Clay's quarters in Dahlem

For Zehlendorf's prosperous citizenry, the American sequestrations were hard blows.³² A report on public attitudes toward U.S. occupation policy, prepared by the Information Control section of the military government in November 1945, revealed a widespread sense of victimization among those forced to leave their dwellings. People with no Nazi past had been disillusioned with the Americans, the report asserted:

Property owners whose homes are requisitioned find it difficult to understand why they are being penalized, claiming that there are still enough houses occupied by Nazi families to quarter all troops in the American sector. Actual victims of the Nazi regime . . . are even more at a loss to understand why they should be put out of their homes by American troops. A favorite form of masochism seems to be to stand outside one's dwelling with tear filled eyes and bewail the strange ways of fate. Says one 25 year-old girl, who was never politically active, "Better another 10 years of war than this." She is presently sleeping in an armchair in the home of a friend, having no access to her bed or other furniture. In apartments where 5, 6 or 7 persons are crowded into the space formerly occupied by one or two, nerves are taut and complaints against American requisitioning most violent. Requisition receipts issued by American authorities are considered practically worthless. . . .

³² According to a building census conducted in April 1946, dwellings in Zehlendorf contained an average 4.2 rooms per unit, compared 3.0 rooms in Berlin as a whole. Main Statistical Office, *Berlin in Numbers*, p. 186.

“They cart away our furniture from our homes. Do you think we’ll ever see it again? We aren’t that naive,” represents a fairly typical attitude.³³

In a letter addressed to the “Military Government” on 15 August 1945, Zehlendorf’s mayor, Werner Wittgenstein, decried the “desperate situation” caused by requisitions “carried out in a way the population has greatly to suffer.” He continued to complain of evictions and the seizure of furniture in monthly meetings between military government officials and district mayors. Shortly before the Berlin elections in October 1946, he passed on to the U.S. troop commander an anonymous letter complaining of an American “war without weapons” that would drive people toward communism.³⁴

Reaping the Spoils

The victors enjoyed not only fine homes, but the rich amenities of Berlin’s upper class. Diners in the officers messes ate with silver utensils from gold-rimmed porcelain plates, drank from crystal wine glasses, and were served by waiters from silver dishes. When wives and dependents began to arrive in April 1946, this form of socializing diminished, replaced by magnificent house parties, vividly described by German-American journalist Curt Riess:

There were enormous quantities of Manhattans and martinis, creme de menthe and old French cognac, Scotch whiskey and the best French champagne. There was the best Russian caviar, there were oysters, there were enormous steaks. And for some fifty guests, with three servants engaged especially for the evening, and a bartender—the cook and maid were already there—all of this cost about ten dollars, that is, cigarettes in the amount of ten dollars.³⁵

Official entertainment, the traditional lubricant of diplomacy, quickly entered the pulse of normal life, as every unit endeavored to outdo the other in offering hospitality through constant events, large and small. On 12 July, less than two weeks after setting up camp in the Gr unewald, Howley invited his British, French, and Russian colleagues to a cocktail party at his villa to celebrate the establishment of the Allied Kommandatura. At the end of the month, the U.S. military government in Berlin organized its first big reception, inviting all notables from Clay and Murphy on down, including high officials

³³ Rpt, Information Services Control sec. for CG, Berlin District, 19 Nov 1945, sub: Weekly Political Summary, in Six Months Rpt, 4 Jan–3 Jul 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, vol. 8, p. 3, Historians files, CMH.

³⁴ Ltr, Werner Wittgenstein to OMGUS, Berlin District, 15 Aug 1945; Mins, Conf of GC with Berlin District Officials, 4 Sep 1946; Third Monthly Mtg of U.S. Sector Buergermeisters and Chs of Policy with OMGUS, Berlin District Officials, 9 Oct 1946; Ltr, anonymous to Wittgenstein, 25 Aug 1946. All in file 4/135-2/9, OMGUS, LAB.

³⁵ Quote from Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater*, p. 26.



Dinner at the Berlin officers mess

from the British, French, and Soviet administrations. All occupation powers extended themselves in acts of mutual extravagance. Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov's celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution in 1946 was the most memorable of all affairs. As Maginnis recorded in his diary, "The tables groaned with the weight of buffet delicacies, wines, and spirits. Set at intervals down the long table were handsome, cut glass decanters full of vodka. Here indeed was the festive board of the conqueror, and the Allied world of Berlin was there in full panoply of medals and ribbons." By mid-January, the burdens of social life had begun to wear on Maginnis. "Colonel Howley had a big cocktail party," he noted to his diary on 12 January 1946. "Three strenuous nights in a row were too much for me, so I took it easy."³⁶

The defeated Germans paid for most of these celebrations as "costs of occupation." While the Army paid its dollar expenditures—military and civilian salaries, supplies and equipment procured in the United States, petroleum, and food imports—from appropriated funds, the so-called internal costs of the city's occupation—mark-denominated expenditures made in Germany for supplies, facilities, and services—were charges on Berlin. These ranged from the employment of German workers, furniture, and housing; through disbursements for official entertainment, clubs, and sporting facilities; to the requisition of goods for sale in the post exchange. The single greatest charge was for personnel.

³⁶ Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, p. 328, 279, 292, 295, 305, 313, and 329.

By the end of September, American authorities were employing almost 27,000 Germans at Berlin's expense, to service scarcely more than 35,000 U.S. officials and troops. These employees comprised general laborers, construction and utility workers, domestic help, and clerical personnel. The Adjutant General and Finance sections relied on German female labor to handle virtually all of their clerical and accounting work.³⁷

During their first month of occupation, July 1945, the Americans filled their needs through primitive confiscation. They specified what they wanted in orders to district officials—be it buildings, labor services, or materials—and those officials had to meet the demands. In August, the Berlin District's finance office implemented a system of "requisition payments." American officials would order the district mayors to make monetary payment for requisitioned goods. This led, in turn, to the keeping of financial accounts, using the Reichsmark (RM). The Soviets, who at first made cash payments with confiscated Reichsmarks, adopted the U.S. system in January 1946. During the first period of financial accounting, from August 1945 through December 1946, U.S. Sector expenses amounted to RM201.9 million, compared to RM100.8 million for the British Sector, RM88.9 million for the Soviet Sector, and RM30.5 million for the French Sector. In addition, the Magistrat paid reparations charges of RM17.5 million to the Soviets and RM6.5 million to the British. The Americans accounted for 45 percent of all expenditures, even as their sector comprised only 30.1 percent of Berlin's population. The Soviets, whose sector contained 38.2 percent of the population, consumed 24 percent of the occupation expenditures; the British, with 18.2 percent of the population, spent 18.2 percent; the French, with 13.4 percent of the population, spent 6.8 percent. Much of the disparity is explained by the costs of reconstructing and maintaining the buildings occupied by the Berlin Kommandatura and the Allied Council Council—quadripartite expenses charged to the U.S. account. By the end of 1945, the four powers together were consuming nearly one quarter of the Magistrat's budget.³⁸

The Black Market

In an atmosphere where confiscation was the rule, the boundaries of legality were barely distinguishable and readily breached. Freed from the deadly

³⁷ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 129–30; Table, HQ Berlin District, Consolidated Strength Return as of 30 Sep 1945, Folder Strength Lists, Box 1, Rcds of HQ, European Theater of Opns, U.S. Army (World War II), RG 498, NACP.

³⁸ Table, U.S. HQ, Berlin District, Finance Br, Occupation Costs for the Period Ending 31 Dec 1946, Historians files, CMH; Memo, John F. Kilduff, Ch, Finance Br, for Howley, 10 May 1948, sub: Finance Branch, box 446, RG 260, NACP; Monthly Rpt, Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, Finance and Property Control, sub: Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Berlin, sec. 2, app. A, file 5/37-3/1, OMGUS, LAB.

seriousness of war, many officers, enlisted men, and civilian officials sought quick wealth, and Berlin's black market offered it with little risk.

Profits from the exchange of Allied currency offered the favored means of enrichment. Each power paid its troops in Allied military marks, which they printed from identical plates. In a Berlin without internal barriers, American soldiers could sell cigarettes, watches, cameras, chocolates, and other easily disposable commodities to other Allied troops—particularly Soviets, who thirsted for watches and cameras—for large sums of this currency. The Americans converted the proceeds into dollar instruments, normally postal money orders or war bonds, for remittance to the United States. Because Army finance offices would exchange Allied marks at an official rate of ten to one—set on the basis of legal prices—huge gains accrued through arbitrage. For example, a carton of cigarettes purchased in the post exchange for \$2 could fetch 1,600 Allied marks on the street. By trading this money at the Army finance office, a soldier would realize \$160, yielding a profit of \$158 on his \$2 “investment.” The trade in watches was even more lucrative. One U.S. soldier recalled realizing \$5,000 from a sale of ordnance watches—declared surplus by the company supply sergeant, with whom he split the proceeds—to a Soviet captain in East Berlin. As a result of such dealings, by the third week of July dollar remittances had reached seven times the total earnings of U.S. personnel in Berlin.³⁹

U.S. commanders soon considered the black market a serious enough threat to military order and discipline that they designated the issue a priority for the provost marshal and military police. Because the principal black market trading areas were located along sector boundaries, police raids had to be coordinated between the sectors. In the earliest such raid, in late July, Allied and German police swept up, along with German civilians, ten U.S. soldiers and fifteen Soviet officers doing business at the Brandenburg Gate. In mid-August, General Parks authorized fifteen Soviet patrols to enter the U.S. Sector for a 36-hour raid to apprehend absentees and other persons wearing Red Army uniforms illegally. In the same month, U.S. and Soviet police initiated joint patrols in the U.S. Sector. After these patrols ceased in December, at the behest of police commanders who regarded them as an inefficient use of resources, Soviet police remained attached to American military police battalions for assignment to incidents or patrols as circumstances dictated.⁴⁰

General Parks sought to stem the outflow of black market profits by issuing provisional instructions to limit transmittal of funds by the sum of a soldier's salary plus 10 percent. Orders published on 9 August required unit commanders to approve such transactions by all persons below the rank of major. The immediate effect of this directive was indicated by the fact that, during the last

³⁹ Interv, Stivers with Mohr, 27 Apr 2012.

⁴⁰ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1946, p. 35.



German police round up black marketeers in front of the Reichstag building, March 1946.

three weeks of August, only half as much money was transferred out of the theater as had been sent home during the first eight days of the month.⁴¹

A new system, announced in November 1945, relied on exchange control books. All dollar balances derived from legal sources appeared in these ledgers, and no sums exceeding those balances could be sent to the United States. Effective for a short period of time, the system soon sprung leaks. Many personnel falsified entries in their exchange control books or acquired more than one book. The Mackay Radio Corporation inaugurated an ingenious “flowers by cable” scheme. Americans could order “flowers” in Berlin for delivery by hometown “florists,” who would deliver dollars instead. The exchange of military marks for dollars continued to account for large discrepancies between earnings and disbursements. Not until mid-September 1946, when Army authorities abolished further use of the Allied marks, did controls really begin to work.⁴²

⁴¹ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 130–35.

⁴² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1945, pt. 3, ch. 6, pp. 20–24; and 1 Jan–31 Mar 1946, pp. 11–12. All in file 5/35-3/11, OMGUS, LAB. Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 1 Jul–30 Sep 1946, pp. 6–9, file 5/35-3/13, OMGUS, LAB; Interv, Stivers with Mohr, 27 Apr 2012.

In addition to reaping profits on the conversion of currency, Americans conducted a barter exchange with Germans, trading such items as cigarettes, coffee, soap, and old shoes for artwork, antiques, crystal, silver, porcelain, jewelry, carpets, cameras, and fur coats. The articles used in trade came from both government stores and parcels—usually containing cigarettes—mailed from the United States. When the Americans returned to the United States, the Army shipped their treasures home with their household goods.

Most activity on the black market was small scale, taking place in fleeting encounters between individuals standing on dark corners, but some individuals encountered substantial businesses. Three who got caught—a lieutenant colonel, a major, and a civilian—were employed in the economics division of the military government for Germany. After a two-month inquiry, Army criminal investigators determined in November 1946 that the men had acquired precious metals, stones, furs, and paintings, valued at over two million marks; had conspired to remove safes known to contain such metals and jewelry from the British and Soviet sectors; had purchased forms and machinery parts for a plastic factory to be built in France; and had aided in the smuggling of watches from Switzerland into Germany, along with numerous other offenses. A smaller and more typical offender was a lieutenant colonel, also a member of the military government. When investigators searched his billet in August 1946, they found stacks of items from the post exchange—candy, soap, and toiletries—a large quantity of American cigarettes, and a significant collection of German photographic equipment, silverware, and jewelry.⁴³

As a last resort to stem the burgeoning black market activity, Clay's staff set up a competing market, the "Berlin Barter Center," in an effort to divert the business into legal channels. The center opened for business in August 1946. German "sellers" brought in durable objects—silverware, crystal, paintings, porcelain figurines, stoves, radios, carpets, and clothing. Appraisers evaluated the objects on the basis of prewar prices, adjusted for depreciation, and issued certificates in the amount of "barter units." Americans brought in consumables—usually coffee, toiletries, cigarettes, and food—that appraisers also valued in barter units. The two sides then spent their certificates in the official barter store, which was soon stocked with "a fine quality of merchandise" in "new or in excellent condition."⁴⁴

Although Germans traded on terms more favorable than those obtained on the street, Americans reaped handsome gains from barter center transactions.

⁴³ Rpts, Criminal Investigations Division (CID), 7 Nov 1946, sub: Investigation BC 731, 18 Sep–7 Nov 1946; CID, 20 Aug 1946, sub: Investigation BD 593, 5–20 Aug 1946. Both in box 4, Rcds of Executive Ofc, Ch of Staff for Investigations, Political Emergency and Occupation, RG 260, NACP.

⁴⁴ Msg, Clay to USFET, Personal for General I. D., Brig Gen Edward H. White, 2 Nov 1946, sub: Barter Market, file 1945-46/70/14, OMGUS, BAK. See also Memo, Lt Col G. H. Garde for Staff, Jul 1946, sub: Establishment of OMGUS Barter Center. Both in file 1945-46/70/14, OMGUS, BAK.

Whereas one carton of cigarettes fetched 100 barter units, a Meissen figurine cost 46, a crystal vase 33, and an electric stove 105. Clay's financial adviser, Jack Bennett, condemned the barter center as morally wrong, and a committee convened to examine its workings recommended shutting it down. However, as Bennett put it, Clay "hemmed and hawed." "Our houses are not furnished adequately," Clay explained in a memorandum sent to the comptroller's office in Frankfurt, "and this market represents the only opportunity for our people to obtain essential articles for reasonable household comfort." The general admitted to misgivings over the center but accepted it as "the lesser of two ills." As for moral objections: "What is moral in an occupied country is difficult to determine. I expect the German thinks he is getting a better exchange in the controlled Barter Market than in the forced rent of his house for American occupancy with a mark rental paid by the German Government which is of little value to him." Bennett believed that Clay succumbed to pressure from "the women"—above all, his wife Marjorie—and recalled hearing him say, "Well, you know, so many of the wives over here and people who have lived overseas and away from home . . . like to feel that there is something in these countries where they are forced to live that they can do—and they go shopping. That's just an outlet."⁴⁵

Violence and "Depredations"

The black market was a relatively benign form of indiscipline, for the conversion of Allied marks was a crime against institutions rather than people. Even if the barter trade with Germans was crassly exploitative, it was voluntary. Much worse happened in Berlin than the illegal or unethical exchange of goods. American troops had already cut a swath of pillage through western Germany, taking radios, food, bicycles, crucifixes, doors, cooking utensils, and cattle, and by the time of Germany's collapse, in the words of U.S. Army historian Earl F. Ziemke, "looting had become an art." Looting fever had not abated when U.S. forces reached Berlin, and the American Sector, with several of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods, afforded special opportunities.⁴⁶

The first troops entering Berlin, the 2d Armored Division, were well prepared for their mission, and delinquencies were few. In describing their conduct, an official report emphasized "the high standard of military conduct and discipline . . . the individual and organizational pride of many units in their combat records, the privilege of being among the first American troops in Berlin and the heavy schedule of military duties."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Memo, General Lucius D. Clay for Brig Gen Edward H. White, Ofc of Comptroller, USFET, 2 Nov 1946, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:276–79; Interv, Backer with Jack Bennett, 9 May 1981, Clay Project, OHRO.

⁴⁶ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, p. 147.

⁴⁷ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, p. 53.

When these troops left at the end of August, however, discipline deteriorated. With the war over and troops eager to return home, it was becoming more difficult for unit commanders to keep a firm leash on their soldiers. Additionally, many of the victors possessed a sense of entitlement and sought compensation for the deprivations they had suffered throughout the conflict. The newly arrived 82d Airborne Division promptly loosed its spirits on the civilian population. "With respect to the stalwarts of this outfit," wrote one American official, "feelings run from antipathy to revulsion to dread. 'They are a rough bunch,' is the general comment, 'they plunder, steal, molest women, get drunk too easily.'" In less colorful words, the official report for the period contrasted the lawfulness of the armored troops with the misconduct of their successors, whom Germans regarded as "inferior troops." The departure of the airborne troops in mid-October brought little relief. Until the beginning of 1947, American "depredations"—ranging from the theft of requisitioned goods to rape, violent inebriation, assault, and robbery—rose to alarming proportions, arousing what one intelligence officer termed "disgust and disrespect" toward U.S. forces, and raising the specter of "protective resistance" against their "marauding and ravages."⁴⁸

For American officers billeted in upper-class homes, the removal of fine furnishings was a popular and generalized method of taking booty. By September 1946, the practice had become epidemic. "Unlawful acquisition of private property by U.S. personnel in Berlin has assumed such proportions as to embarrass this Command and to reflect discredit on the United States," wrote an angry General Clay. "To condemn . . . others for looting, while at the same time recognizing no law ourselves, exposes the U.S. forces to accusations of hypocrisy." The private property in a German home "does not become the property" of the personnel living there, Clay admonished. Still, while forbidding outright theft, he did allow officers to acquire articles through "mutually satisfactory terms with the private owners," in essence, allowing officers to exploit the owners' desperation to strike unequal bargains.⁴⁹

Clay's admonishment had limited impact. As the mayor of Zehlendorf reported in September 1946, when Germans regained their residences, they found them empty of contents. It was difficult to prevent departing officers from sending objects home as household effects, and if they had friends in the shipping branch, falsified manifests could "prove" innocence should anyone complain.

⁴⁸ Rpt, Information Services Control sec. for CG, Berlin District, 19 Nov 1945, p. 6; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 53–54; Memo, Col Thomas J. Koenig, Ofc of the Director of Intel, for Ch of Staff, Ofc of Deputy Mil Governor, 4 Apr 1946, sub: Depredations of United States Military Personnel, file 1945-46/42/14, OMGUS, BAK.

⁴⁹ Memo, Clay for All Personnel, U.S. Gp, Control Council, 9 Sep 1945: sub: Looting and Removal of Personal Property, file 1945-46/42/13, OMGUS, BAK.

The best that could be done was to grant claims for loss or damage—the easiest solution, because the costs were chargeable to the Magistrat.⁵⁰

Enlisted soldiers, particularly those housed in barracks, lacked the means for such genteel theft and therefore plundered using cruder methods. Street muggings, break-ins, and armed robbery were their main methods. Some ingenious individuals disguised themselves as military police, forced their way into homes on the pretext of conducting investigations, and confiscated goods as “evidence.” In October 1945, a few soldiers of the 82d Airborne Division even launched criminal forays into the Soviet Sector village of Kleinmachnow, just beyond the boundary of Zehlendorf. Responding to reports of “brutal robberies, beatings, and rape,” U.S. commanders established road blocks and then patrolled the village with Soviet permission.⁵¹

The rampant senselessness of the violence shocked and perplexed Clay’s senior staff. In addition to rape, soldiers also seemed to make sport of “just beating up Krauts.” Even German policemen, poorly clad and scarcely armed, became targets of brutal attacks. In the words of Clay’s intelligence chief, Col. Theodore J. Koenig, “The type of incident now being caused by United States troops is marked by unprovoked and wanton brutality, brawling, drunkenness, thievery, and acts humiliating the local authorities.” A review of individual incidents, he continued, provided an “arresting” description of the problem, and eliminated any “argument that these disorders can be explained away on the basis of homesickness, boisterous pranks or even fundamental hatred of the Germans.”⁵²

Figures prepared for Clay in July 1946 revealed the extent of the problem. A comparison of military crime in Berlin and in the Military District of Washington showed a rate of “serious crime” in Berlin—assault, homicide, rape, property destruction, burglary, and theft—nearly *thirteen times* the rate in Washington: seventy-seven incidents a month per 10,000 troops in Berlin as opposed to six incidents in the U.S. capital. The Office of the Provost Marshal tabulated 1,184 serious violations reported by military police from January through October 1946. Arrest statistics show that military police detained 1,890 Americans from April through June, followed by 978 from July through September. These numbers take on added meaning when measured against the U.S. troop population in the city. At the beginning of January 1946, U.S. military personnel in Berlin numbered some 14,000 “tactical” soldiers plus

⁵⁰ Min, Conf of General Cornelius E. Ryan with Berlin District Officials, 4 Sep 1946, file 4/135-3/10, OMGUS, LAB. Keep in mind that the document title is “Minutes of Conference with General Ryan”

⁵¹ Reports on investigations of thousands of American crimes are contained in boxes 894–897, Reds of the Public Safety Br, Rpts on Investigations 1946–1948, RG 260, NACP; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 3, ch. 6, pp. 45–46.

⁵² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, Ofc of Provost Marshal, 20 Dec 1946, sub: Operations for period 1–31 Oct 1946, box 2, Opns Rpts, 1945–1946, Reds of Berlin District, RG 498, NACP; Memo, Koenig for Brig Gen Charles K. Gailey, Ch of Staff, 4 Apr 1946, sub: Depredations by United States Military Personnel, file 1945-46/42/12, OMGUS, BAK.

another 2,600 assigned to the military government for Germany. At the end of September, the number had dropped to less than 10,000 tactical soldiers alongside 1,500 serving with the military government.⁵³

Black Soldiers in Berlin

As a conqueror of Germany, America brought its own significant racial problems to Berlin. The U.S. Army in 1945 remained a racially segregated organization, with all the discrimination that entailed. Black soldiers in Berlin were treated by white Americans more like the defeated Germans than as members of the victorious coalition. The Army slighted them, consigned them to segregated quarters, and relegated them to menial duties.

The contradictions became apparent as soon as “majority” Americans began to express feelings toward ethnicity and race. In a report written in November 1945, an official of the Information Services Branch, whose job was to follow German public opinion, pointed to “American ambassadors of racial hatred”—officers and men who vented “anti-semitic and anti-negro utterances . . . usually to their German girlfriends.” Such men, he asserted, put a “blot on the American reputation for decency and fair play.” Their “virulent” statements reminded Germans of the “National Socialist racial theory” that had led the country to ruin.⁵⁴

Owing to the large supply of good housing in the American Sector, the Army real estate office had no problem finding quarters for U.S. troops until a difficulty arose in September. When two black quartermaster companies arrived in the city, their assigned barracks were not fit for occupancy, and they spent their first night sleeping in trucks. After working for a day to renovate the building, they were ejected entirely because the military government had claimed it for another use. The chief of staff, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Ransom, directed that these troops and all future black units be “provided with living quarters and recreational facilities in an area separate from, but of a standard equal to, those of the white units.”⁵⁵

Many white officers, looking to substantiate the troublesome behavior of the black soldiers, pointed to the differential incidence of venereal disease among blacks and whites. Although infection was rampant among all groups,

⁵³ Memo, Koenig for Clay, 6 Jul 1946, sub: Comparative Figures on Troop Disorders, file 1945-46/42/14, OMGUS, BAK; Rpt, Lt Col Franklin E. Winner, Asst Provost Marshal, for Col Bryan L. Milburn, Commanding Officer (CO), HQ, Berlin Cmd, 20 Dec 1946, sub: Report of Operations for period 1–31 Oct 1946, Encl to Sum of Violations Reported by Mil Police, box 1, Provost Marshal History and Rpt of Opns, 1945–1946, RG 498, NACP; Rpts, HQ, Berlin District, 28 Dec 1945, sub: Consolidated Strength Return, 26 Dec 1945; HQ, Berlin District, 5 Oct 1946, sub: Consolidated Strength Return, 30 Sep 1946. Both in box 1, Strength Lists, 1945–1946, RG 498, NACP.

⁵⁴ Rpt, Information Services Control sec. for CG, Berlin District, 19 Nov 1945, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 84–85.

the records showed significantly higher rates for blacks throughout 1945 and 1946. Over the period of July through December 1945, U.S. medical authorities in Berlin reported average rates of infection—expressed as the number of cases per thousand troops per year—of 900 for blacks and 240 for whites, while figures for March through August 1946 showed rates for blacks and whites of 780 and 200, respectively.⁵⁶

How did Berliners regard black soldiers? In January 1946, the opinion survey section had its German researchers interview members of the public to get an answer from the citizens themselves. The attitudes voiced in these interviews contradicted the suppositions of many American officers.

What Berliner did not think with horror of the propaganda at the time of the occupation of the Rhineland with its evil rumors, when the first Negroes entered Berlin. And what is current public opinion? The Berliner is very pleasantly disappointed. The deportment of the Negroes is generally considered as very friendly, polite and helpful. The young girls, who are especially popular with them, are idolized, treated with chivalry and by reason of the Negroes' goodheartedness, showered with presents, treated and provided with food, sweets, etc. A visit to the licensed Negro restaurants and clubs, which women may enter only in the company of Negroes, would convince everybody, that he is in the company of gentlemen of the old school. Every troublemaker or unwelcome guest is evicted by his own comrades. The German children are enchanted by the black men, who sweeten their lives with American chewing gum and chocolate and have won their hearts completely. . . . The men are treated decently and copiously supplied with cigarettes and services and odd-jobs. Taken by and large, public opinion and personal conviction expressed that . . . the Negro is considered the fairest soldier among all Occupational Troops.⁵⁷

The full report, quoting from a wider compilation of interviews, reinforced these conclusions. One woman noted that her three children had lived in fear when black soldiers first moved into Neukölln, but “they now love them more than any of their uncles.” A former prisoner of war recalled his captivity. He was sometimes handled roughly, but black soldiers always treated him with great consideration. “The Negroes were very much kinder as guards than their white comrades.” Whenever the Berliners and black soldiers had a personal conversation, interviewers found, the position of blacks in the United States always came up. A German employee on an Army construction project recounted, “Many of them have told me that in America Negroes are regarded as human beings of secondary importance, and they therefore appreciate it to

⁵⁶ Opns Rpts, Medical sec., Berlin District, May–Dec 1945, box 4, Opns Rpts “S”, Berlin District, RG 498, NACP; Hist Rpts, HQ, Berlin District, 1 Apr–30 Jun 1946, pp. 87–88; HQ, Berlin District, 1 Jul–30 Sep 1946. Both in file 5/35-3/14, OMGUS, LAB.

⁵⁷ Memo, Public Opinion Survey Dept, Information Services Control sec., for Staffs, 15 Jan 1946, sub: Report by German Interviewer, file 4/8-3/16, OMGUS, LAB.

be regarded as equals by the Germans.” A resident of Zehlendorf stated, “After talking with them a few times many told me that they have a lot of sympathy for us Germans because in America they are being treated by the white Americans the same way we Germans are treated by them right here.”⁵⁸

Their experience in Berlin is emblematic of the irony that black soldiers faced over the next twenty years as they served in Germany. Black soldiers stationed there often experienced more personal freedom than they could in many places in the United States. It would be several more years before the Army would begin to resolve the segregation issues within its own ranks.⁵⁹

Groping for Solutions

American commanders were not unaware of the dramatic decline in discipline and the corresponding rise in crimes and serious incidents. In a 26 April 1946 press conference, theater commander General Joseph T. McNarney observed that the reasons for shortcomings in troop morale and discipline were well known. The massive redeployments and frequent changes of station for individuals and units had impaired morale and the sense of teamwork. Furthermore, he said, the rapid turnover in personnel tended to break down respectful relations among soldiers and comrades. Inexperienced replacements had not yet developed the sense of unit cohesion that made for a well-disciplined organization. Left unsaid was the fact that the war was over and the single-minded determination that had forged effective combat units was gone. Most simply wanted to go home.⁶⁰

More to the point, a young American stationed in Berlin published an article in the *New Republic* that addressed the issue on a more personal level. He asked his readers to imagine themselves as an 18-year-old removed entirely from his parents supervision, given an almost unlimited supply of money, granted a power over women equal to that of Clark Gable, fed a steady diet of propaganda and stories calculated to motivate his desire to overcome the enemy, and now placed among a defeated people who had lost all moral standards. At times it seemed more remarkable that so many U.S. soldiers retained some level of discipline and moral conduct than others who strayed.⁶¹

U.S. military leaders in Berlin recognized that the key to restoring morale among the troops was to give them meaningful work to do and to restore some level of military training to rebuild unit cohesion and to get their young men

⁵⁸ Rpt, Public Opinion Survey Dept for Staffs, Jan 1946, sub: Berlin Population and U.S. Negro Troops (short quotes), file 4/8-3/16, OMGUS, LAB.

⁵⁹ Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom: The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 83.

⁶⁰ Rpt, Historical Div, European Command (EUCOM), 1951, sub: Morale and Discipline in the European Cmd, 1945–1949, Historians files, CMH.

⁶¹ Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*, p. 200; Franklin M. Davis Jr., *Come as a Conqueror: The United States Army's Occupation of Germany, 1945–1949* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 112.

thinking like soldiers again. For the bulk of the troops, those making up the security force, primary duties consisted mostly of roving patrols and static sentry positions. In each of the neighborhoods making up the American Sector, three-person jeep patrols covered established routes once every two hours. In September, the Berlin District headquarters increased the number and variety of installations assigned to the 82d Airborne Division for protection. Security forces now guarded all food storage installations; ammunition dumps; engineer supply points; ordnance service stations storing gasoline; water works and utility plants; post exchange warehouses; Red Cross, WAC, and VIP billets; signal installations; prisoner-of-war, displaced persons, and war criminal camps; German banks; and hospitals containing persons of interest to the Counterintelligence Corps.⁶²

It quickly became apparent to the Americans that the Berliners posed little threat to their safety or to the security of the facilities they guarded. Roving bands of displaced persons and the occasional Russian or U.S. looter did, however, present a much greater risk. Stockpiles of food or weapons offered a tempting target to such groups. With that in mind, the 82d Airborne Division headquarters scheduled periodic practice alerts to test the ability to respond to those concerns. Each of the four major subordinate units, the 325th Glider Infantry, the 504th and 505th Parachute Infantry, and the division artillery, maintained alert forces that could be deployed to deal with potential problems. The exercises tested each guard section's ability to assess the nature of the threat and to respond with a level of force appropriate to the situation.⁶³

Despite the lack of any significant military menace, commanders also made an effort to revive training programs and to restore some level of combat readiness to their units. The 82d Airborne Division headquarters scheduled parachute jumps and glider flights so that its personnel could maintain proficiency in those skills. Troops from the various engineer units assigned to the command practiced their trades on a daily basis as they repaired roads and bridges, surveyed and cataloged real estate, and rehabilitated requisitioned buildings and prepared them for the upcoming winter. Senior leaders encouraged small-unit commanders to fill troops' idle time with training on local small-arms ranges or with tactical drills.⁶⁴

⁶² Memos, Maj John D. Gray, Adjutant Gen, for Distribution, 20 Oct 1945, sub: Patrol, Entry 37042, 82d Abn Div Memos, 1945–1946, RG 338, NACP; Col James R. Pierce, Asst Ch of Staff, G–3, for Distribution, 25 Sep 1945, sub: Policy on Use of Security Forces as Guards, Entry UD 659, OMGUS, Berlin District, G–3 Rpt of Opns, RG 498, NACP.

⁶³ Memos, Gray for Distribution, 7 Sep 1945, sub: Notes on Practice Alert—4 Sep 1945; Gray for Distribution, 1 Nov 1945, sub: Notes on Practice Alert—29 Oct 1945. Both in Entry 37042, 82d Abn Div Memos, 1945–1946, RG 338, NACP.

⁶⁴ Memos, Pierce for Distribution, 24 Sep 1945, sub: Glider Flights, Entry UD 652, OMGUS, Berlin, Orders and Memos, 1945–1946, RG 498, NACP; Arrowsmith for CG, Berlin District, 31 Dec 1945, sub: Engineer Operations Report, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1945, Entry UD 659, OMGUS, Berlin, Engr sec., RG 498, NACP.

Commanders also recognized the need for recreation programs and other diversions to engage the soldiers during their off-duty time. Surveyors determined that a large number of movie theaters in the U.S. Sector were relatively undamaged, with equipment in working order. After a few repairs to windows, roofs, and heating systems, six theaters were put back into operation shortly after the U.S. occupation began. In addition to American movies, entertainment at these theaters included United Service Organizations (USO) shows and performances by troupes of Army personnel and by civilians living in Berlin. By 30 September, eight USO shows, including those of Bob Hope and Jack Benny, had played to U.S. troops in Berlin. American Red Cross representatives also established thirteen clubs for enlisted men and one for officers, all of which the command reported to be heavily patronized.⁶⁵

Athletics had traditionally served as a diversion and as an outlet for pent-up energy among idle U.S. troops. In Berlin, the district headquarters encouraged participation in both formal and informal sporting programs. The U.S. Sector contained twenty-three athletic fields which the command assigned to various units for their use and maintenance. A target range used during the 1936 Olympic Games was renamed the Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose Sporting Range and opened for small-arms fire at a variety of fixed targets and electrically operated moving targets. The security forces established their own sports programs as well, with the 82d Airborne Division Baseball League featuring eight teams playing a round-robin schedule. Throughout the first six months of the occupation, American officials worked to open up additional facilities, including a golf course, indoor gymnasiums, and swimming pools, all in the hopes of raising morale and keeping the troops out of trouble.⁶⁶

A far more sensitive issue, but one that offered the greatest potential for improving troop behavior among the Germans was the easing of the policy of nonfraternization. During its initial assembly period, the Berlin District headquarters had reiterated the SHAEF prohibition of any kind of friendly contact, official or unofficial, between Allied personnel and Germans. On 2 July, even before the command arrived in Berlin, SHAEF had amended the policy to allow friendly contact with small children, but specifically banning association with German women under any circumstances. For an organization made up almost exclusively of 18- to 24-year-old males, far away from home, this proved to be an unrealistic and wholly unenforceable restriction. On 14 July, the commander, U.S. Forces, European Theater (USFET), announced that the policy would be further modified to allow conversation between Allied personnel and German adults in public places and on the streets. Finally, on 30 September, Headquarters, USFET, removed all restrictions on association with

⁶⁵ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 106–08.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 109–11; Memo, Office of the Division Commander for general distribution, 18 Aug 1945, sub: Divisional Baseball League, Entry 37042, 82d Abn Div Memos, 1945–1946, RG 338, NACP.

Germans except those forbidding billeting with German families and marriage between German nationals and U.S. military personnel. Allowing U.S. soldiers to have contact with the female population of Berlin had the obvious positive effect on troop morale. Perhaps more significant, however, was the implicit recognition that the Berliners were human beings, worthy of acknowledgement. Soldiers could begin to look on the city's citizens more as individuals and less as part of a great faceless enemy.⁶⁷

Ultimately, however, senior leaders recognized that there were simply too many troops in Berlin given the task at hand. At the end of July, the force numbered almost 30,000 men, including more than 17,000 with the 2d Armored Division and its attached units. Even with the reduction in troop size brought on by the relief of the 2d Armored Division by the smaller 82d Airborne Division, troop strength in Berlin remained near 28,000 through the summer.⁶⁸

Just as the over two million air and ground troops on the European continent far exceeded all requirements for controlling Germany, a division was too large for Berlin. As early as July 1945, Maj. Gen. Harold R. Bull, the chief of plans and operations of USFET, proposed to assign only one regimental combat team to Germany's capital. In September, in line with the need to create a structure specifically designed for an extended occupation, the theater planning staff recommended the establishment of new police-style organizations in the U.S. Zone, the Bremen Enclave, and the Berlin District. To be formed chiefly from existing reconnaissance and mechanized cavalry troops, the units would retain their designations but be known operationally as District Constabularies. Unlike the combat troops, the constabulary soldiers would receive special training in military government laws and ordinances as well as police tactics. In addition, constabulary troops would be trained on raids and searches, the examination of documents, and cooperation with the Soviets. Highly mobile and lightly armed, their main mission would be to deter civilian disorder by constantly patrolling their areas in armored cars, thus maintaining the visibility of American arms. As needed, they would support local military governments, assist the German police, and respond to emergencies.⁶⁹

On 16 October, the War Department directed General Eisenhower to develop proposals for the long term. He revealed his thoughts a week later in messages to the War Department and his major commanders. American authorities, he stated, would exercise control over Germany and Austria through a United States Constabulary. Supported by residual combat units, it would serve as a type of state police in the occupied territories. The provisional

⁶⁷ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 119–21; Memo, Maj Charles E. Bowen, Asst Adjutant Gen, for Distribution, 30 Sep 1945, sub: Fraternalization, Entry 37042, 82d Abn Div Memos, 1945–1946, RG 338, NACP.

⁶⁸ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 2, ch. 4, pp. 123–24.

⁶⁹ Hist Rpt, Historical sub-sec., G-3, U.S. Constabulary, 3 Oct 1945–30 Jun 1947, sub: The Establishment and Operations of the U.S. Constabulary, pp. 13–16, CMH Library.



A patrol of the 16th Constabulary Squadron passes the guard gate of the squadron's headquarters for the day's tour of duty in the American Sector.

District Constabularies would provide a “tryout” of the system, and their experiences would help planners determine manpower needs for the permanent organization. In the meantime, the coming winter would test the assumption of continued German quiescence and show how quickly the tactical forces could be demobilized.⁷⁰

The Berlin District Constabulary took shape at the end of November. When the 82d Airborne Division departed in the middle of the month, the headquarters of the 16th Cavalry Group, previously attached to the airborne troops, remained in the capital to serve as the nucleus of Berlin's District Constabulary. Because the group's two squadrons had left with the 82d Airborne, the Berlin District cannibalized manpower from the relieving organization, the 78th Infantry Division, assigning its reconnaissance troop, two regimental antitank companies and a cannon company, as well as a company from the 771st Tank Battalion, to the constabulary under its Headquarters and Headquarters Troop (HHT). Thus, in a manner typical of the patchwork composition of Army units during demobilization, the newly arrived division—itsself lacking one of its regiments

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 18–19.

in Berlin—became the main source of constabulary manpower. The 16th Cavalry Group's new Provisional Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, known to some as the 78th Infantry Division Provisional Squadron, began patrolling Berlin within four days. Then, in May 1946, the provisional unit's personnel were used to form the more permanent 16th Constabulary Squadron. Although the squadron was not under the command of the U.S. Zone Constabulary, it was informally affiliated with the HHT, 4th Cavalry Group, Mechanized, on occupation duty in Austria.⁷¹

Like most of the other constabulary squadrons, the 16th consisted of a headquarters company and five line companies, outfitted with M8 scout cars and .30 cal. machine gun mounted jeeps. Unique to the Berlin squadron, however, was the presence of a thirty-man horse platoon, used for ceremonial duty as well as occasional patrols through the Grünewald Forest. Small teams of scout cars and jeeps patrolled along eight fixed routes every two hours.⁷²

The 78th Infantry Division officially relieved the 82d Airborne Division early in November 1945. Those parts of the division not assigned to the constabulary assumed the responsibility for guard duties and service tasks. Soldiers of its 309th Infantry guarded installations in Zehlendorf, men of the 310th Infantry manned posts in Schöneberg, Kreuzberg, Neukölln, and Tempelhof, and the division artillery stood watch in Steglitz.⁷³

To the Berliners, however, the changes were mostly cosmetic. The practice of patrolling the U.S. Sector with armored cars began within days of the arrival of the 2d Armored Division in July, so the District Constabulary was simply conducting familiar operations under a different guise. Likewise, sentry duty—unyielding in its tedium—had been a constant of the soldiers' existence since their earliest hours in Berlin. At this point, the "police type occupation" was largely a shift in nomenclature rather than substance.

At least initially, the departure of the 82d Airborne Division troops seemed to have little effect on the disciplinary problems in Berlin. In fact, the troops of the 78th Infantry Division rivaled their notorious predecessors in the commission of criminal acts. As any real threat of hostilities continued to fade, troops became more and more anxious to return home and discipline continued to deteriorate. According to figures compiled by the provost marshal, American soldiers committed 113 serious crimes in January 1946, 137 in February, 238 in March, 258 in April, and 350 in May before reaching their peak of 403 in June.

⁷¹ William M. Tevington, *The United States Constabulary: A History* (Paducah, Ky.: Turner Publishing, 1998), p. 35.

⁷² Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Cmd, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, pp. 36–37, Entry A1 1780, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, History of Activities, 1947–1948, RG 260, NACP.

⁷³ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, and 1st Abn Div, U.S. Army, 8 May–31 Dec 1945, pt. 3, ch. 6, pp. 4, 10–26.

These figures encompassed neither unrecorded crimes, which were known to be substantial, nor thousands of lesser infractions.⁷⁴

The introduction of a police-type occupation, therefore, not only left major problems unresolved but coincided with the surge in military indiscipline. The rectification of this situation would prove critical not only for the reestablishment of order and cohesion in the U.S. security units in Berlin, but also for the political success of the occupation. For until the Army imposed order in its own ranks, any political goals the Americans might hope to achieve in Berlin would remain elusive.

⁷⁴ Table, Sum of Violations Reported by Mil Police, Encl to Memo, Lt Col Franklin E. Winner for Col Bryan L. Milburn, 20 Dec 1946, sub: Report of Operations for period 1–31 Oct 1946, box 1, Provost Marshal History and Rpt of Opns, 1945–1946, RG 498, NACP.

6

THE OCCUPATION TRANSFORMED

Policies, conduct, and attitudes began to evolve in 1946, a decisive year of transition for the U.S. occupation. The mission of the occupation shifted from punitive control to restoring democracy, large troop reductions smoothed the planes of friction with the local population, military discipline greatly improved, and the military command became an adjunct to civil rule. For Berlin, it was a year of political transformation. The tenuous party peace was shattered, and political adversaries aligned themselves along an ideological divide. Although enjoined by Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay to remain aloof, the American military government changed the rules and took sides. The Germans, formerly objects of suspicion and contempt, became not only partners or targets of enticement, but actors in their own cause.

The year was also a decisive one in the history of the Cold War. In early 1946, East-West relations outside Berlin were deteriorating. The Soviets stalled the withdrawal of their wartime occupation force from northern Iran, pressed Turkey to concede joint control over the Dardanelles, and backed Yugoslavian claims to Trieste. Civil war erupted in Greece between Communist-led insurgents and a monarchist government supported by Great Britain and the United States. Addressing an audience in Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated that “an iron curtain” had divided Europe, attributed the American atomic weapons monopoly to God’s will, and exhorted the United States to join a “fraternal association of English-speaking peoples” to manage the world’s affairs. In mid-March, the United States sent the battleship USS *Missouri* to the Eastern Mediterranean in a flexing of muscles.¹

As these events unfolded, officials in Washington blamed the Kremlin for the world’s conflicts and defined the Soviet Union as the enemy. Dispatched from Moscow on 22 February, George F. Kennan’s famed “Long Telegram” exemplified that attitude. Then chargé d’affaires at the U.S. embassy, he

¹ Text in *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947: A Historical Problem with Interpretations and Documents*, ed. Walter LaFeber (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), pp. 136–39. For summaries of these early Cold War conflicts, see Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–1975* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), pp. 30–41; Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945–1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 218–45; John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 282–315.

attributed the Soviet Union's behavior to traditional Soviet paranoia and to Marxist ideology, ascribed to it purely "negative and destructive aims," and denied the possibility of accommodation.²

Remarkably, throughout 1946, Berlin—apart from Vienna, the only place where the powers directly interacted—remained a scene of cooperation. Looking back on the period, American officials recalled it as one not only of "quadripartite control on a relatively smooth basis," but an "era of seeming 'good feeling.'" In contrast to Kennan, Col. Frank L. Howley had benign words for the future enemy. Contrary to prevailing misconceptions, the colonel wrote in July 1946, the Soviets "cooperated on 95 percent of all issues." Neither devils nor angels, they were "hard bargaining, hard playing, hard drinking, hard bodied, and hard headed. If you are soft, you'd better stay away from them. If you are competent, informed, fair and 'fearless', you'll get along fine."³

In the final reckoning, the transformation of the occupation in Berlin stemmed from the city itself. Although it is easy to see the shift from punitive control chiefly as a tactic to gain German allies in the emerging Cold War, impulses for change also originated in Germany's capital. They came from American troop commanders riveted on the task of restoring order to their units, from officials of the military government nurturing the growth of a municipal democracy, and from the Germans themselves, intent on recovering political freedom.

Reorganization and Entrenchment

A year of experience with the occupation in Berlin and the simultaneous reduction in troops brought about by the rapid redeployment of U.S. forces in Europe prompted a reassessment of the U.S. Army's posture in Berlin. The occupation force that had entered Berlin in July 1945 had consisted of two major elements. One, the U.S. Group Control Council—designated as the Office of Military Government for Germany (OMGUS) on 1 October 1945—was organized as the U.S. element of the planned quadripartite government for all of Germany. It formed the supporting staff of the deputy military governor, General Clay, and had the responsibility of formulating and promulgating overall U.S. policy for military government and of negotiating with the representatives of the other occupation powers on policies, laws, and directives to put into effect throughout Germany. It had no direct responsibility for the military occupation or for the government of the city of Berlin. The other element, Headquarters, Berlin District, was in charge of the occupation troops and military installations in the U.S. Sector of Berlin. The commanding general, Berlin District, was responsible

² Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, p. 100. For a copy of the cable, see Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950*, pp. 546–59.

³ Four Year Rpt, 1 Jul 1945–1 Sep 1949, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 14, box 611, Rcds of Adjutant General's Ofc, 1917–1958, RG 407, NACP; Six Months Rpt, 4 Jan–3 Jul 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 7–8, Historians files, CMH.

to the commanding general, USFET, on all military and organizational matters in Berlin. He was, however, responsible to the deputy military governor, who was also the commanding general, OMGUS, on military government aspects of the occupation in Berlin. As independent commands, both OMGUS and Headquarters, Berlin District, were responsible for their own supply, house-keeping, and general administration.⁴

During the same period, General Clay managed to strip the theater headquarters of its military government functions. By early March 1946, Clay had transferred virtually all elements of military government from the theater command in Frankfurt to OMGUS in Berlin. With the directors of several state military governments in the American Zone controlled from Berlin, the Frankfurt headquarters ceased operation. The theater general staff retained a civil affairs section to maintain liaison with OMGUS but exercised almost no further authority in the realm of military government.⁵

In October 1946, coincidentally with the change in designation of U.S. Forces, European Theater, to European Command, the Berlin District merged with the OMGUS' Headquarters Command to form Berlin Command, which became the only U.S. administrative headquarters in the city. Berlin's military government detachment, which had formerly come under the old Berlin District, was attached to OMGUS under the designation, Office of Military Government, Berlin Sector. Meanwhile, the tactical units now also operating under the banner of the Berlin Command, continued to perform the housekeeping duties of the U.S. Sector.⁶

The Office of Military Government, Berlin Sector, had also undergone significant changes. The rapid demobilization of U.S. forces in Europe was taking its toll on U.S. personnel strength in the city. In July 1946, Colonel Howley reported that, of the 150 officers who had originally come into Berlin, only four remained, including himself. His current staff numbered seventy-seven, of whom only twenty-eight were Army officers. Also, the six neighborhood detachments had been phased out and only one military government court remained in operation. All enlisted personnel in the U.S. military government were gone, replaced by civilians, both German and American.⁷

The most significant turnover, however, involved the continued rotation and redeployment of security forces assigned to occupy Berlin. In early spring of 1946, the 78th Infantry Division was relieved by the 3d Infantry Regiment and the newly formed 16th Constabulary Squadron. In November, the 3d Infantry was, in turn inactivated. The command passed the responsibility for security in the U.S. Sector of Berlin to the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry

⁴ Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, Entry A1 1780, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, History of Activities, 1947–1948, RG 260, NACP.

⁵ Clay, *Decision in Germany*, pp. 60–61; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 424–33.

⁶ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army and the Occupation of Germany*, pp. 424–33.

⁷ Six Months Rpt, 4 Jan–3 Jul 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, Historians files, CMH.

Division, to which it transferred surplus officers and men of the 3d Infantry. By the end of the year, the battalion consisted of 51 officers and 1,141 enlisted personnel, organized into a headquarters company and four rifle companies, lettered I, K, L, and M.⁸

Thus, by the end of December 1946, the strength of the Berlin Command had dropped to 6,706 out of an authorized strength of 8,000. With redeployment at its height, many units struggled to maintain the bare necessities of the occupation. The turbulence involved in the high rate of personnel turnover also played havoc on mission accomplishment. The command shipped home 46 officers and 2,280 enlisted men during the last two months of 1946, while receiving 20 officers and 554 enlisted replacements. To help offset shortages, commanders initiated recruiting drives throughout their organizations, prompting 115 reenlistments.⁹

Gradually, the security forces in Berlin began to restore basic military training as part of the troops' daily activities. Although USFET prescribed a set training program for all of its units in June 1946, the 3d Infantry was unable to fully comply due to its daily requirement to supply approximately 600 men for various security patrols and outposts. Beginning in July, however, the regimental commander, Col. Herbert J. Vander Heide, began efforts to raise the standard of training throughout the regiment and to restore some level of operational efficiency.¹⁰

In August, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 3d Infantry Regiment participated in two weeks of intensive field training at the Hammelburg Maneuver Area, a former *Wehrmacht* training site in northern Bavaria. Prior to departure, soldiers fired their weapons at qualification courses using local small-arms ranges in the U.S. Sector. Each rifle squad and platoon also conducted at least one combat firing problem. At Hammelburg, commanders concentrated on individual instruction and tactical training of small units. Included in the training schedule were squad and platoon tactical problems, combat and night patrols, first aid and field sanitation, marches and bivouacs, map reading, infantry tank team demonstrations, orientation, and organized athletics. Weapons training included range practice with the pistol, carbine, rifle, and Browning Automatic Rifle; instruction in grenade and rocket launchers; mortar and machine gun problems and field firing; demonstrations of mortars and mines; and weapons cleaning and inspection. A continued loss of officers and enlisted men due to the pending inactivation of the regiment terminated the field training before all units had participated.¹¹

Because of the nature of its mission, the other major security unit in Berlin, the 16th Constabulary Squadron, had fewer opportunities for training. Soldiers

⁸ Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, 1 Apr–30 Jun 1946, RG 498, NACP; Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd; Training Survey Rpt, Occupation Forces, HQ, EUCOM, 1 Jul 1946–30 Jun 1947, Historians files, CMH.

⁹ Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd.

¹⁰ Training Survey Rpt, Occupation Forces, HQ, EUCOM, 1 Jul 1946–30 Jun 1947.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

new to the organization received a detailed orientation course and training on the duties of the unit, but daily responsibilities prevented the squadron from meeting most of the theater's training requirements. The squadron did initially send small contingents to Hammelburg with the 3d Division, but mission requirements curtailed even that minimal level of participation.¹²

In addition to a return to some traditional military training, units in the command also began to settle into a more familiar routine in garrison. The command continued to develop recreation and welfare facilities that would improve troop morale. By mid-1946, opportunities for troop recreation had expanded far beyond the small collection of movie theaters and athletic facilities that had been available to soldiers during the early days of the occupation.

Clubs for both officers and enlisted men, run by either the Red Cross or the units themselves, grew in diversity and in number. In addition to the obligatory alcoholic beverage services, the clubs offered a variety of pursuits, including sightseeing tours; instruction in the arts, handicrafts, and photography; and collections of records and musical instruments.¹³

Athletics also continued to offer diversions to off-duty soldiers, both for participation and observation. The Berlin Command football team, composed of enlisted men and officers from almost every unit in the city played an eight-game schedule with other commands across Europe. Ten teams participated in a regimental-level basketball league sponsored by the Berlin Command Special Service Athletic Office. The Sportpalast on Potsdamer Strasse provided a venue for ice skating and ice hockey, and was the scene of several German civilian ice shows in which American personnel were invited to participate as well as observe. By the end of 1946, the command's sports program had become so extensive that the annual historical report lamented that only a lack of funds had precluded the establishment of a fencing program, despite notable interest shown by some American personnel.¹⁴

For many officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), the most significant factor in improving morale was the introduction of dependent wives and families in theater. By early 1947, 240 families had arrived in the U.S. Sector of Berlin. The Berliner, an American passenger train, operated on a daily basis between Frankfurt and Berlin carrying dependents who had transferred from the Bremerhaven train. For families with very small children, air passage was also available between the United States and Tempelhof Airfield in Berlin. In November and December 1946, enrollment in the Thomas A. Roberts Dependents School reached 488 students, a clear indication that U.S. forces in Berlin were settling in for the long haul.¹⁵

¹² Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd; Training Survey Rpt, Occupation Forces, HQ, EUCOM, 1 Jul 1946–30 Jun 1947.

¹³ Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Restoring Military Order

If the command were to attain any reasonable level of stability, however, leaders had to come to grips with the disciplinary problems that still plagued the occupation. Moreover, the lawful and correct treatment of civilians in Berlin was a necessary condition for achieving a minimal but critical objective: German acceptance of American authority. During the first half of 1946, even after the departure of the notorious 82d Airborne Division and the formation of the District Constabulary, that goal remained unfulfilled.

In mid-March 1946, the Berlin District commander, Maj. Gen. Ray Barker, exclaimed to his staff that he was “tired of hearing American soldiers spoken of as ‘Russians in pressed pants’” and demanded action. Admittedly, his analysis of the problem was remarkably narrow. Barker attributed the misconduct to liquor and to indifferent leadership on the part of NCOs. “Without the active effort of NCOs who are closest of all to these men,” the general declared, “we are going to get nowhere, but if the NCOs cooperate things will change for the better.” He directed his battalion commanders to reprove the sergeants for their laxity and to impress on them the “disastrous results of their actions.” At the same time, he ordered stringent controls on the consumption of alcohol, including firm limits on the number of servings and an end to free drinks.¹⁶

In the eyes of Maj. Gen. Frank L. Keating, who succeeded Barker on 1 May, the problems went beyond drunken privates or NCOs delinquent in their duties. Instead, he saw pervasive dereliction and his reproach was harsh. He castigated his officers for shirking their responsibilities, spending too much time behind their desks, and neglecting the men in their units. Offices were untidy and poorly kept, he declared, and personnel were sloppy, dirty, and ill-dressed. Military courtesy had lapsed, and many men did not even know how to salute. Unit commanders had neglected to communicate directives restricting the use of firearms; as a result, guards and military policemen were shooting people, both civilians and Soviet soldiers, without cause or warrant. Worst of all, the incidence of assault on civilians was higher in Berlin than anywhere else in the U.S. Zone. The general demanded prompt improvements in standards of dress, restoration of military courtesy, stricter controls on alcohol, late-night bed checks, immediate reduction in rank for attacks on civilians, trial by court-martial over unjustified use of firearms, and the meting out of “exemplary punishment.” He held his officers responsible for correcting the situation and threatened them with consequences if they failed.¹⁷

Keating’s deputy, Brig. Gen. Cornelius E. Ryan, reinforced the commander’s edict in his own meeting with unit leaders. As part of a mid-August briefing,

¹⁶ Min, Unit Cmdrs’ Mtg, HQ, Berlin District, 12 Mar 1946, box 2, Ch of Staff Diary, 1945–1946, Rcds of Berlin District, RG 498, NACP.

¹⁷ Mins, Staff Confs, 10 May 1946; 27 May 1946; 8 Jun 1946; and 22 Jun 1946; Unit Cmdrs’ Mtgs, 16 May 1946; 23 May 1946; 31 May 1946; 13 Jun 1946; 22 Jun 1946; and 18 Jul 1946. All in box 2, Ch of Staff Diary, 1945–1946, Rcds of Berlin District, RG 498, NACP.



U.S. military police motorcycles on patrol

Ryan reminded the commanders that they had professed support for Keating's policy, "but lately conditions are such that this does not seem to be the case." Turning up the pressure, Ryan warned that he would be calling each commander into his office to determine exactly what that officer was doing to carry out Keating's orders.¹⁸

Keating's pressure on his commanders, and the increased emphasis on discipline throughout the command bore fruit. After the highpoint of 403 recorded crimes in June 1946, the number fell to 275 in July and 133 in August, before settling at 167 in September and 164 in October. The decline from the June peak is partly attributable to the continued reduction in the number of troops in Berlin from 11,400 in June to 7,400 at the end of October. Nonetheless, despite the reverses in September and October, crime since June had still declined at a faster pace than had the overall troop population. Although the situation was far from ideal—crimes such as assault, rape, theft, and armed robbery

¹⁸ Min, Unit Cmdrs' Mtg, HQ, Berlin District, 15 Aug 1946, box 2, Ch of Staff Diary, 1945–1946, Rcds of Berlin District, RG 498, NACP.

continued well into 1948—commanders had brought much of the indiscipline under control.¹⁹

Other observations indicated that the command emphasis was having a positive effect. One of the best measures of the problem, venereal disease, declined sharply. By the beginning of 1948, the annual rate of infection was only ninety cases per thousand, and it continued on a downward path. Also, the purported problem with black soldiers virtually vanished. When General Clay became theater commander in March 1947, he assigned black soldiers in Berlin to duty as the OMGUS honor guard. After this elevation of status, the incident rate among blacks fell below that for whites—“an indication of what discipline, training and morale can accomplish,” as stated in the minutes of a commanders’ conference.²⁰

The progress, even when relative, induced a measured change in Berliners’ perceptions of the occupational forces. In late December 1945, a poll of American Sector residents had revealed a declining regard toward U.S. soldiers. When asked whether American behavior toward the Germans had improved or worsened since the early days of the occupation, only 10 percent of the respondents credited the Americans with improved behavior as opposed to 27 percent who believed that conduct had deteriorated. That 45 percent had seen no change was hardly reassuring given the collapse of discipline after August. The answers to a question about American popularity with the Germans repeated the pattern. Whereas 15 percent of those polled believed that American soldiers had become more popular in recent weeks, 27 percent believed their popularity had diminished, while 36 percent judged them equally popular.

A survey completed just over two years later registered a notable shift. About 54 percent of the respondents held that American behavior had improved since the end of the war, and while 33 percent felt it had remained the same, only 4 percent perceived deterioration. At the same time, 65 percent thought the U.S. soldiers had become more popular with the German population, as

¹⁹ Table, Sum of Violations Reported by Mil Police, Encl to Memo, Lt Col Franklin E. Winner, Asst Provost Marshal, for Col Bryan L. Milburn, CO, HQ, Berlin Cmd, 20 Dec 1946, sub: Report of Operations for Period 1–31 Oct 1946, box 1, Provost Marshal History and Rpt of Opns, 1945–1946, RG 498, NACP; Strength Rpts, 4 Jul 1945–29 Oct 1946, box 1, Dir, Memos, Orders and Rpts, RG 498, NACP; Ch of Staff Diary Entry, HQ, Berlin District, 10 Oct 1946, box 2, Ch of Staff Diary, 1945–1946, Rcds of Berlin District, RG 498, NACP. Detailed crime reports through 1948 are contained in boxes 894–97, Rcds of the Public Safety Br, Rpts on Investigations 1946–1948, RG 260, NACP.

²⁰ Rpt, Surgeon’s Br, n.d., sub: Cmd Venereal Disease Rate, 3 Jan–25 Jun 1948, box 59, Berlin Cmd, RG 260, NACP; Min, EUCOM Cmdrs’ Conf, 23 Sep 1948, file 1948/125/4, BAK; and see also Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 404.

compared to 23 percent who felt the popularity had remained the same and a meager 6 percent who felt it had diminished.²¹

As a result of the concerted effort to restore discipline—coupled with the rapid shrinkage of the force—the problem of troop misconduct ceased to be a threat to the goals of the U.S. occupation. Unlike the Red Army’s rampages, which left an indelible stain on the Soviet occupation, American offenses were more sporadic than endemic, affected fewer people, and were more readily extinguished from memory. Moreover, the many Berliners who found it useful to decry the crimes of Red Army troops in order to elicit Western sympathy, as well as to detract from Germany’s brutality toward Bolsheviks and Slavs, could expect no such advantages by deprecating Americans, who were, after all, potential sources of food, cigarettes, and other valued favors.

Demilitarization of the Occupation

After a year of the occupation, the size and structure of U.S. forces reflected the change in military priorities in Europe. The withdrawal of soldiers from Berlin was part of a rapid demobilization of America’s Army in Europe that saw the troops stationed on German soil dwindle from 1,622,000 in May 1945 to 162,000 by the end of 1946. Alongside demobilization, a second process was running on a parallel track. Within the occupational establishment, a shift of organizational focus and power was taking place. The tactical commands, which stood at the top of the hierarchy in the spring of 1945, steadily yielded ground to the military government.

The scaled-down Berlin Command was now less than one-fourth its earlier strength as the Berlin District. Its job, in the parlance of the times, was to “keep house” in the U.S. Sector. In line with its diminished size, its commanding officer was a colonel. Col. Bryan L. Milburn’s initial business was to carry out additional reductions in strength and to rid his ranks of “inept” and “low score” soldiers. By the beginning of 1947, the command comprised around 6,300 men—a strength maintained, with only minor deviations, over the next forty years. These soldiers provided logistics, communications, transportation, engineering, security, and police services for OMGUS and the military government of the American Sector. Less than one-third of them, roughly 1,800 troops, bore arms. Of those, one-half belonged to the 16th Constabulary Squadron, while the other half saw duty in the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment. According to a rough division of labor, the constabulary conducted patrols, aided in arrests, and launched periodic black market raids; the infantry

²¹ Public Opinion Survey Rpts, Information Services Control sec., HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, 21 Dec 1945, sub: Survey of Attitudes Towards the Occupation, file 4/9-3/2, OMGUS, LAB; and no. 110, 15 Apr 1945, sub: Bremen Attitudes Compared with Berlin and AMZON, box 159, Historical Div files, Rcds of the EUCOM, RG 338, NACP.

guarded installations.²² The steep cuts in personnel automatically alleviated frictions with the local population. Alongside troop misconduct, requisitions of dwelling space and furniture had constituted the major daily irritants affecting American relations with civilians in the U.S. Sector. With the garrison reduced to a fraction of its original size, it became possible to quarter enlisted soldiers exclusively in barracks, thereby returning both dwelling space and furnishings to German use. As a result, by the spring of 1948, the U.S. authorities had relinquished over 50 percent of the buildings under requisition in September 1945, despite additional demand for family housing when American dependents began arriving in April 1946.²³

At the same time, the garrison evolved qualitatively. By early 1947, virtually all enlisted soldiers in Berlin belonged to the regular Army, thereby creating a more stable force with better trained men. Already, over the course of the previous year, an American settlement had grown up around the OMGUS headquarters and the post exchange. The arrival of families in the spring of 1946 had been key to this development. Soon the Americans replicated a pattern of life similar to that of a choice post in the United States. Under the influence of watchful wives, the new community embraced the middle class respectability of women's clubs, church-going, and child raising. Basketball competitions, little league baseball, and roller skate dancing were additional hallmarks of a self-contained colony a half-hour distant from the center of Berlin. The most serious offenses of most of its inhabitants were provincialism and seclusion from local life.²⁴

Turning Berlin to the West

By late 1946 the Army had greatly diminished its footprint in Berlin. Although a cliché, the term is nonetheless apt in the sense that the Americans were, indeed, stepping on fewer toes and knocking over fewer objects. But was that all? Most narratives of German-American rapprochement tell a story of increasing positive interactions between U.S. soldiers and the civilian population. They emphasize how informal relationships between ordinary Americans and Germans transformed antagonism into affinity.

Tangible evidence of burgeoning relationships is ambiguous. A survey of U.S. soldiers stationed in Germany in September 1945—a similar study for Berlin does not exist—confirmed one obvious supposition. The soldiers' main interest was young women. When asked how many hours they had talked with Germans during the preceding seven days, 49 percent of the respondents

²² Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, pp. 4–8, 16–22, 36–38, file 5/33-3/6, OMGUS, BAK; Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, 1 Apr–30 Jun 1946, pp. 17–20.

²³ Min, Third Monthly Mtg of U.S. Sector District Bürgermeisters and Ch of Staff with OMGUS, Berlin District Officials, 9 Oct 1946, file 4/135-2/9, OMGUS, LAB; Memo, Ch of Building, Housing, and Requisitioning Service, for Ch, Economics Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, 26 May 1948, sub: 18 Months Rpt, file 5/35-3/6, LAB.

²⁴ Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, pp. 20, 132.



Two U.S. soldiers came to the Tiergarten in Berlin with the intention of trading watches, but their attention was diverted by two Fräuleins.

confessed to having spent over two hours conversing with “girls.” Interest in the remaining population was considerably less. Twenty-nine percent of the soldiers reported having passed the same amount of time with older German people and only 15 percent with young men. The divergences were greater among those reporting over ten hours of “conversation:” 24 percent spent that time with young women, as opposed to 7 percent with older people and 3 percent with young men. Inasmuch as the question regarding women was phrased “During the past 7 days (and nights),” the researchers assumed “that the estimates of time spent with girls include contacts other than those of a purely conversational character.”²⁵

²⁵ Rpt, Research Staff sec., Information and Education HQ, Theater Service Forces, European Theater, Series on the American Soldier in Germany, What the American Soldier in Germany Says About Germany and the Germans, Study no. 1, Nov 1945, file 4/8-3/2, OMGUS, LAB.

Of greater significance are the figures documenting the lack of contact. A large minority of soldiers, 44 percent, said they spent no time whatsoever with German women. Fifty-nine percent reported no discussions with older people and 75 percent had none with young men. Correspondingly, the soldiers' experience in Germany provided feeble impetus for a change of attitude. Although 29 percent of the respondents said they regarded the Germans more favorably since being in Germany, 52 percent reported no change, and 14 percent reported holding less favorable views. Thus, German-American "fraternization" was slow to take hold, as each side retained a sense of wariness. Its role in transforming attitudes was, therefore, initially limited.²⁶

The other side of the coin was the impact of American acquaintances on the Germans. Here, too, the evidence indicates little significant effect. In a study completed in November 1946, researchers discovered that 80 percent of their respondents in the American and British sectors of Berlin never had relations even as meager as one conversation with an American. Thirteen percent said they had talked at least once with an American since the beginning of the occupation, while only 7 percent claimed to know an American "well" or "fairly well." In a survey conducted just over one year later little had changed. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported no acquaintance with Americans since the end of the war. Of the remaining 25 percent, roughly half saw Americans only by chance or at work—in offices, motor pools, or construction sites—and only 5 percent professed to know Americans "very well." Those who did know Americans were unrepresentative of Germany as a whole. As the survey team noted, they tended "to be drawn most heavily from the upper classes, socially, educationally, and professionally." That these people might seek to regain dominance in Germany by currying favor with the new masters is self-evident. However, their basic attitudes remained unswayed. "People who know Americans," reported the research team, "do not differ from those who do not in believing, more often than not, that National Socialism was a good idea, certain races are more fit to rule than others, and that the Germans are not responsible for Hitler."²⁷

When asked to compare the occupation policies of the four Allies, Berliners expressed a fairly wide range of opinions. A majority of 69 percent believed that no significant differences existed in the way each of the four powers administered the occupation. Of that group, 28 percent identified the competing political ideologies and 17 percent indicated that Soviet misconduct had made life insecure. Only 8 percent specifically identified the Western Allies as more humane while 3 percent stated that the Soviets were "all round better." Nonetheless,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Rpts, Surveys Br, Information Services Control sec., no. 27, 13 Nov 1946, sub: German-American Relations in Germany, Frequencies of Group Contacts, box 158; and no. 94, 24 Feb 1948, sub: Contacts Between Germans and Americans, box 160. Both in Historical Div Files, Rcds of the EUCOM, RG 338, NACP.

almost 60 percent of those polled agreed that the four Allies would be able to work together in the reconstruction of Germany and Europe.²⁸

The first—and at the time, only—official program of Army contacts with civilians had similarly limited impact. Known as German Youth Activities (GYA), it began in April 1946 with a headquarters directive instructing Army commanders to appoint “mature” field grade officers to maintain liaison with the education sections of the regional offices of the military government and with local youth committees. The aim of the action was to put Army athletic and recreational facilities at the disposal of German youth. Through sponsorship of healthy games and competitions, soldiers would convey the values of sportsmanship and fair play, thereby imparting democratic norms and demonstrating that soldiering was not tantamount to militarism. In addition, intellectually capable personnel would join in efforts to “indoctrinate” German youth with “proper ideals.” Through such actions, military personnel would help to foster democratic culture as well as combat juvenile delinquency. At the same time, the men—beset by boredom and a “numbing let-down after the fighting”—would have something to keep them “interested and out of trouble.”²⁹

Transmitted in the name of General Joseph T. McNarney, General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s successor as theater commander and military governor, the directive generated disparate responses. Some soldiers—mainly junior officers and enlisted men—reacted enthusiastically. Yet, many commanders displayed indifference, others rendered mere lip service, while still others blankly opposed “kraut-loving” actions. American journalists either overstated the extent of the assistance—intimating that the Army was providing clothing and food—or derided it as a “baseball and coca cola program.”³⁰

In view of the uneven results, McNarney summoned representatives of the major commands to a meeting in Frankfurt on 7–9 August 1946. Like so many issues for the Americans in the occupation, command emphasis made a significant difference. The general proclaimed youth assistance to be a primary mission of the occupation forces, “perhaps more important than any one job we today can do.” He made participation mandatory for all military communities and outlined how the program should function. Taking issue with the nearly exclusive focus on sports, he called for a more rounded program that included

²⁸ Rpt, Surveys Br, Information Services Control sec., no. 12, 21 Feb 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, Historians files, CMH.

²⁹ Dir, G-5 Div, HQ, USFET, to CGs of U.S. Forces in Europe and Directors of Mil Government of German States, 6 Apr 1946, sub: German Youth Activities, box 148, Rcds of Berlin Cmd, RG 260, NACP; Transcript, Statement of Lt Col Robert G. Hall, Ch, German Youth Activities (GYA) sec., EUCOM, before Fourth Training Conf, 26–29 Apr 1949, sub: Three Years of GYA, file 4/13-2/16, OMGUS, LAB.

³⁰ The characterizations are found in an unsigned and undated report on the Army youth center on Stubenrauchstraße in Zehlendorf, file 4/13-1/33, OMGUS, LAB; Transcript, Statement of Hall, 26 Apr 1949, sub: Three Years of GYA.

cultural activities alongside athletics. The Army's objective, declared McNarney, was to instill democracy into Germany's future leaders.³¹

Although McNarney's commitment to the program was genuine, he had an additional reason to push the effort when he did. Throughout the summer, American newspapers had been recounting tales of immorality, drunkenness, and high living among American personnel in Europe, and the general himself became the butt of criticism. McNarney and his staff were eager to counteract this bad press and, as the Army's chief of German Youth Activities later noted, "Many astute officers . . . realized that a program of worthwhile and badly needed assistance to German young people would be valuable in combating the unfavorable publicity."³²

In early October, a comprehensive directive appeared establishing a formal program of assistance to German youth. In contrast to the initial focus on sports, its new centerpiece became Army-sponsored clubs offering, in addition to athletics, a broad variety of recreational and cultural pastimes—films, lectures, discussions, English lessons, handicrafts, performing arts, games, and dances. Every post had to outfit at least one building to house these activities, and commanders would assign officers and enlisted personnel to direct and supervise the clubs on a full-time basis. In December 1946, more than 20,000 German youths attended Christmas parties in which some 800 military and 400 civilian personnel of the American community participated directly.³³

By early 1947, nine clubs were operating in Berlin, generally under the auspices of a squadron or battalion. In accordance with the headquarters directive, some forty soldiers—usually, one officer and three or four enlisted men—ran them as their sole assignment. Reflecting soldiers' predilection for outdoor sports, part-time involvement of military personnel fluctuated between virtually none during the winter months to as much as 400 in the summer, when baseball instruction was a chief avocation. German membership in the clubs varied between 500 and 2,000 youths from eight- to twenty-five years old. Monthly participation of individuals during 1947 ranged between 8,500 and 19,000, with 12,000–13,000 representing the norm. Participation sometimes exceeded club memberships because certain events, such as films or dances, were open to nonmembers.³⁴

The question of whether the program reached few or many young Berliners is unanswerable by numbers alone. The population cohort served by the clubs—8- to 25-year-old inhabitants of the U.S. Sector—comprised roughly 166,000 persons. Thus, even the larger participation of 19,000 individuals represents a

³¹ Transcript, Statement of Hall, 26 Apr 1949.

³² Ibid.

³³ Dir, G-5 Div, HQ, USFET, to CGs of U.S. Forces in Europe and Directors of Mil Government of German States, 5 Oct 1946, sub: GYA, box 148, Rcds of Berlin Cmd, RG 260, NACP; Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946–30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd.

³⁴ Monthly statistics on participation in the Army youth clubs are located in file 4/12-3/1, OMGUS, LAB.

significant minority of the age cohort. It is clear that the program did not reach a broad majority of American Sector youth—not to mention the some 548,000 youths of Greater Berlin.³⁵

Participation, moreover, was socially very narrow. Similar to persons who pursued contacts with Americans, those who participated in GYA generally belonged to the favored classes. The location of the sponsoring units determined the location of the clubs, and because no units were located in the poorer districts of the U.S. Sector, the clubs served primarily the better-off. As the chief of the military government's education and religious affairs branch lamented in a memorandum to Colonel Howley, "The absence of military units in parts of the American Sector is reflected in the absence of an Army Assistance Program and the program is correspondingly more concentrated in the better residential districts where the need for a program is less acute." "The GYA clubs," as one trade union official regretted in a meeting with U.S. officials, "have never shown an interest in worker youth."³⁶

In the end, notwithstanding McNarney's ideas for using soldiers to instill democracy into Germany's future leaders, the Army assistance effort played only a small role in Berlin's political or cultural affairs. The circle of club members was too small, and other groups attracted more serious adherents. Politically committed young people could join party-oriented organizations such as the Communist-controlled *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth) or the Social Democratic *Falken* (Hawks) as well as three nonpartisan movements—*Europa-Jugend* (European Youth), *Demokratischer Jugendverband* (Democratic Youth Union), or *Bund Deutscher Jugend* (German Youth League)—promoting humanistic and pan-European ideals. Christian Democratic university students established the *Christlich-Demokratische Hochschulgruppe* (Christian Democratic University Group), which became a center of opposition to Communist influence over higher education in Berlin and the Soviet Zone of occupation. Religious individuals joined Christian youth leagues sponsored by the Catholic and Protestant churches. In Berlin, the Protestant leagues were particularly strong, embracing up to 30,000 participants. Finally, those drawn to organized athletics maintained membership in traditional sporting associations—above all, soccer clubs. American efforts to promote baseball—the Army delivered thousands of balls, bats, and gloves

³⁵ Population statistics given in Main Statistical Office, *Berlin in Numbers*, p. 80.

³⁶ Memo, Paul F. Schafer, Ch, Education and Religious Affairs Br, OMGUS, for Col Frank L. Howley, 5 Feb 1947, box 149, OMGUS, NACP; Min, Mtg with representatives of Demokratischer Jugendverband (Democratic Youth Union), Bund Deutsche Jugend (German Youth League), Falken, Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth), and Evangelical and Catholic Church Youth, 23 Mar 1948, file 4/13-1/33, OMGUS, LAB.

to the American clubs at a time when Berlin's soccer teams lacked balls and shoes—attracted few converts among Germany's sporting culture.³⁷

Briefly put, the thesis of change-through-positive-interaction substituted sentimentality for analysis. In fact, rather than melting the Berliners' hearts, the Americans improved their local relationships chiefly by diminishing their presence—their footprint—in Berlin. Before long, however, as the specter of an East-West division began to loom over the city, West Berliners would come to view the U.S. Army as the city's protector and benefactor. This, however, resulted from geopolitical circumstances, not necessarily from personal interactions affecting a sliver of the Western sector population.

Clay Takes Command

In mid-November 1945, Eisenhower had left Germany to take over as Army chief of staff. His departure initiated a power struggle among senior Army leaders vying for control over occupation policy in Germany. Eisenhower's successor, General McNarney, occupied a shaky throne. A general in the Army Air Forces, the new military governor had neither entered Eisenhower's inner circle nor established a political base in Washington. Most fatefully, McNarney did not get along with General Clay.

Soon after Eisenhower's departure, McNarney and his staff resumed Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith's old battle for control of the military government. Clay turned to his powerful friends. In January 1946, he confided to Eisenhower, "I am not too sure General McNarney would not be glad to let me go at any time." Six months later, in mid-June, Clay sent McNarney a curt, one-sentence request for retirement. The issue, simply put, was finances. While McNarney allowed Clay to abolish the Frankfurt office of military government and to take control of the state organizations, the two men clashed over the control of Germany's economic resources. Because Clay was responsible for the U.S. Zone economy, he wished to fend off excessive demands from American forces. He insisted, therefore, that his financial department approve the military's occupation budget. The general staff, however, declined to negotiate its stated "requirements." "The problem," as Clay recounted, "was that we'd get a budget from the Army in the form of an order: *This is what the Occupation forces will require*. And it was always more than I thought the German economy could afford." On 21 August, after the general staff had refused to submit its budget to Clay's experts in Berlin, Clay submitted a formal letter of resignation to McNarney. In a dispatch sent to Eisenhower on 23 August, McNarney explained that he had declined Clay's earlier request for retirement on account of Clay's

³⁷ Memos, Shafer for Education and Religious Affairs Br, OMGUS, 4 Mar 1947, sub: The Development of Youth Organizations Since 1945, file 4/13-2/15, OMGUS, LAB; 20 Nov 1947, sub: Youth Activities, file 783/2, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; and 23 Sep 1946, sub: Material Requirements of Youth Groups, box 147, RG 260, NACP.

ties to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, but now, because that officer had “officially” expressed the wish to go, he must “reluctantly” concur.³⁸

Although aware of Clay’s standing with the secretary of state, McNarney underestimated the deputy’s friendship with Eisenhower. Clay had become an Eisenhower intimate in the late 1930s, when both served in the Philippines under General Douglas MacArthur. In addition, whereas Clay courted the media, the military governor had attracted bad publicity. Journalists blamed him for the disintegration of military discipline and for the alleged moral failings of the occupation. The truth or falsity of such charges is less relevant than the fact that the press was reporting them.³⁹

Meanwhile, Clay was maneuvering. The purported “resignation” contained no request to leave immediately. Instead, Clay promised to stay until McNarney had located a successor. In the meantime, in a letter sent on the day he “resigned,” the deputy took his dispute to Eisenhower. After confessing to feeling “beaten down,” Clay pointed out the “difference in concept between [McNarney’s] Military Government staff and his military staff which is growing into a wider gap every day.” Two days later he showed his letters to General Smith, who was visiting in Germany. Smith obliged by informing Eisenhower of Clay’s difficulty working for a commander who was “very difficult to like.”⁴⁰

Eisenhower posted his response on 27 August. He professed astonishment, while asserting, “I think I understand the conditions and circumstances fully, and all my sympathies are with you.” He asked that Clay save his “suggestion” until late September, when Eisenhower would be coming to Europe. The two men could then talk things over in Berlin.⁴¹

Accompanied by his wife, Mamie, Eisenhower arrived in Berlin in the evening of 29 September. Rather than using the guest residence on the Schwaneninsel, they spent two nights in Clay’s house. There, in a conversation recounted by Clay to his biographer, Jean Smith, Eisenhower announced a

³⁸ Ltr, General Lucius D. Clay to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 25 Jan 1947, Folder 8, box 25, Lucius D. Clay Corresp, Pre-Presidential Papers, Eisenhower Library; Telg, General Lucius D. Clay to General Joseph T. McNarney, 15 Jun 1946, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:230. Quote from Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 228; Ltr, Clay to General Joseph T. McNarney, 21 Aug 1946, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:259–60; Ltr, McNarney to Eisenhower, 23 Aug 1946; and see also Telg, General Dwight D. Eisenhower to McNarney, 28 Aug 1946. Both in Chandler, Galambos and Van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8:1253.

³⁹ Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 76–80; Ltrs, Eisenhower to Clay, 22 Nov 1945; Clay to Eisenhower, 2 Dec 1945; Eisenhower to Clay, 6 Feb 1947; Clay to Eisenhower, 15 Mar 1947; Eisenhower to Clay, 4 Jun 1947. All in Folder 8, box 25, Lucius D. Clay Corresp, Pre-Presidential Papers, Eisenhower Library; Interv, John Backer with James P. O’Donnell, 8 Mar 1980, Clay Project, OHRO; and see also Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 396–97.

⁴⁰ Ltrs, Clay to Eisenhower, 21 Aug 1946, in Chandler, Galambos and Van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8:1252–53; Lt Gen Walter Bedell Smith to Eisenhower, 23 Aug 1946, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:259–60.

⁴¹ Ltr, Eisenhower to Clay, 27 Aug 1947, in Chandler, Galambos and Van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8:1252.

solution to the conflict with McNarney: Clay would take over total command in Europe and McNarney would go to New York to take a newly created post as U.S. military adviser to the United Nations Security Council.⁴²

Little more than a month later, in a 5 November letter, Eisenhower provided McNarney news of “something that *may* happen with respect to your assignment.” “Certain civilian officials of the Government,” he said, “have been urging the Secretary of War that you be brought home to be the Air Force representative to the United Nations in New York, coupling this recommendation with a further one that Clay take over the European job. The recommendation comes from very high sources.” Feigning naiveté, he claimed that he still could not say what action would be taken. However, in view of the important “civilian aspects” of the positions, he had no grounds for “interposing opposition.”⁴³

McNarney foresaw his fate. The term “very high sources” could only mean Secretary of State Byrnes, who was too powerful to oppose, and McNarney’s only recourse was to accept the new assignment. “Realizing that Mr. Byrnes reposes complete confidence in Clay,” he replied to Eisenhower, it was only logical to assume that the secretary would want Clay as “the executor of his policies in Germany.”⁴⁴

It was thus on 15 March 1947 that General Lucius D. Clay—newly awarded a fourth star—took over as military governor of Germany and commander of U.S. forces in Europe. He created an Office of Theater Commander in Berlin. Far removed from the main troop concentrations, it was, as his biographer pointed out, “little more than a personal headquarters for Clay himself,” who promptly delegated operational responsibilities. Lt. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner would command the tactical forces from his headquarters in Frankfurt, while General Keating, Clay’s deputy in Berlin, directed the state and local military governments. Now as America’s uncontested proconsul in Germany, and having assigned the details to his subordinates, Clay concentrated on the formative issues of the occupation.⁴⁵

As a rule, bureaucratic intrigues contribute little to the main course of events, but General Clay’s coup against McNarney was an exception. First of all, at an extremely important juncture in postwar Europe, it consigned authority over U.S. policies toward Germany to a single individual, one whom John Kenneth Galbraith termed, “one of the most skillful politicians ever to wear the uniform of the United States Army.” With perhaps the sole exception of General Eisenhower, no other officer was as capable as Clay of dealing

⁴² Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 397–99. For Eisenhower’s itinerary in Europe, see Chandler, Galambos and Van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8:1312–13.

⁴³ Ltr, Eisenhower to McNarney, 5 Nov 1946, in Chandler, Galambos and Van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8:1362–63.

⁴⁴ Ltr, McNarney to Eisenhower, 16 Dec 1946, in Chandler, Galambos and Van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8:1363; and see also Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 399–400.

⁴⁵ Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 400.

simultaneously with the White House, Congress, the Army staff, German politicians, the Soviets, the Western Allies, and the press.⁴⁶

Finally, Clay presided over the occupation not in Frankfurt—the seat of McNarney’s headquarters and the real center of the U.S. presence in Germany—but in Berlin. This preserved Berlin’s significance at a time when the focal point of American policy and interests was in the West. It also, arguably, would safeguard the city from an American withdrawal in the coming crisis years of 1948–1949.

Restoring Local Governments

The push to impose order on U.S. troops, to reduce their numbers, and to soften the countenance of the occupation assuaged frictions, and conformed to the “just but firm and aloof” dictum of JCS 1067. However, despite a policy of fairness and justice, this was still a military occupation of a defeated enemy. The Americans were still rulers and the Germans subjects. The acceptance of Germans as associates and allies—with substantial rights and quasi-equal standing—resulted from a process that drew the United States into German political debates and led to the intermeshing of American and German aims and interests in Berlin.

The transition to German self-government at the local level began quickly. The Potsdam Protocol, concluded by the Big Three leaders on 1 August 1945, embraced as one of its ten political principles the early “development of local responsibility.” The Allies would establish self-government first through local “elective councils” and, as soon as these had proved successful, introduce “representative and elective principles” at the regional, provincial, and state levels. General Clay shocked his own advisers with the speed by which he put this into effect. He drew ready parallels between the occupation of Germany and the Reconstruction era in the American South. At the same time, he witnessed the rapid demobilization of U.S. forces and doubted that he would be able to recruit a sufficient number of qualified officers to operate a large number of local detachments. Therefore, his only option was to turn the administration over to German officials, even if their credentials were still suspect. Thus, in early September 1945, he directed the staff of his Civil Administration Division to prepare a program for early elections. Completed in mid-September, the American plan provided for elections in phases, beginning with small towns in late January 1946, proceeding to counties and larger towns in April, and ending with cities in May and states in December. On 20 February 1946, just after receiving the returns from the small township elections held in January,

⁴⁶ Quote from Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 2.

Clay instructed the U.S. Sector commandant, General Barker, to demand the immediate reestablishment of elective government in Berlin.⁴⁷

In the months prior to this instruction, the military government of the American Sector had already taken steps toward loosening its control over the district administrations as well as limiting the jurisdiction of the military government courts. As personnel demobilized, the detachment lacked the manpower to maintain teams in each district. As a consequence, the Kreuzberg group disbanded in early December 1945, and the others followed in January. Left in each district city hall was one liaison officer whose duties were to mediate between local officials and the operational sections of the military government, to “keep his fingers on the pulse” of the administrations and to report on the situation in his area. The liaison officers had no supervisory functions; indeed, Col. John J. Maginnis specifically instructed them to avoid behaving like one-man military governments.⁴⁸

At the same time—and for much the same reasons—the American Sector military courts began transferring cases to German tribunals. Beginning in February, the American legal authorities assigned to civilian courts all cases entailing no threat to the security of the Allied powers and in which the penalty did not exceed one year or a fine of DM10,000. Thus, all simple “police court” cases—or those involving violations of labor orders, stealing of relief supplies, or failure to register with local authorities—became matters for German courts. Although both the dissolution of the district government teams and the transfer of military court cases to German hands reduced the military government’s intrusion into the mundane operations of the American Sector, they had few political ramifications. By contrast, Clay’s decision to institute elections presaged a qualitative change in the occupational regime.⁴⁹

Clay instructed the U.S. military government officials to remain above the local elections. In a circular he sent to directors of military government on 23 June 1946, the general stated, “The Military Government official should

⁴⁷ Protocol of Proceedings of the Berlin Conf, 1 Aug 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, vol. 2, *The Potsdam Conference*, pp. 1482–83; Clay, *Decision in Germany*, pp. 87–89; Ltrs, Clay to John J. McCloy, 3 Sep 1945, 1:67; and 16 Sep 1945, 1:77. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*; John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945–1949* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 37, 48–51; Memo, Civil Affairs Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, for Maj Gen Frank L. Keating, 26 Aug 1946, sub: Berlin Constitution, file 1945-46/10/5, OMGUS, BAK; Rpt of Opns, OMGUS, Berlin District, 1 Jul 1945–30 Jun 1946, pt. 1, pp. 43–44, RG 260, NACP; Memo, John J. Muccio, Ofc of Political Adviser, for Robert Murphy, 12 Feb 1946, sub: Establishment of Democratic Government in Berlin, file 752/18, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK. Clay communicated his instructions to Barker in Memo, Milburn, Ch of Staff, OMGUS, Berlin District, for CG, Berlin District, 20 Feb 1946, sub: Establishment of Democratic Government in Berlin, file 752/18, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁴⁸ Dir, Col John J. Maginnis to District Administration Liaison Ofc, 5 Feb 1945, file 4/135-2/9, OMGUS, LAB. See also Six Months Rpt, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 160, Historians files, CMH.

⁴⁹ Monthly Rpt, Feb 1946, Ofc of Director, OMGUS, Berlin District, to CG, Berlin District, file 5/37-3/1, LAB; Six Months Rpt, 4 Jan–3 Jul 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 54–56, 58–59.

be courteous and considerate in his relations with Germans, but at the same time he must remain aloof and must particularly avoid the formation of close individual friendships on a social entertainment basis.” German political and social life was “in a disturbed state,” he explained. The Nazis and their associates were gone, and new groups were rising to positions of political and economic leadership. The duty of military government was to ensure that changes take place “along democratic lines.” On this account, it was essential that military government officials remain completely neutral and avoid any sign of preference for one group or another. “No German must be able to convey to the German people the impression that he is favored by Military Government.” Clay admitted the difficulty of observing such constraints but saw no other way to success. He concluded his message with an instruction to disseminate it to all officers, exhorting those who did not agree to say so openly so that they could be replaced by men willing to work under the policy.⁵⁰

Although Clay’s reasoning was impeccable, circumstances in Berlin were markedly different from those in western Germany. Neutrality was easily practiced in *Länder* (the western states), where the parties in competition were primarily Christian Democratic, Social Democratic, or Liberal. In Berlin, however, a strong Communist Party, supported by the Soviet occupying power, bore the seeds of ideological conflict. As long as the Communists continued to profess a program of liberal-democratic reconstruction and acted in a spirit of the multiparty cooperation, latent divisions were suppressed. As soon as that condition eroded, politics would become a political war in which Americans would inevitably have to take sides. This began to happen in early 1946.

Choosing Sides: Defining Political Parties in Berlin

When the war ended, many Social Democrats—bitter enemies of the Communists during the Weimar years—looked forward to establishing a strong single party of German labor. In their view, the fateful split of the working class movement into two conflicting groups—Social Democrats and Communists—had undermined the anti-Fascist resistance and ushered Hitler to power. After thirteen years of common hardship, they longed to end the “fratricidal” rivalry that had torn the parties apart and to focus on shared goals of social transformation. Thus, as early as 28 April 1945, while the battle in Berlin still raged, the Social Democrat Max Fechner appealed in a letter to Walter Ulbricht to realize the “long yearned for” unity of Germany’s working class. The Social Democrats reiterated their appeal in their party manifesto of 15 June, proclaiming, “The banner of unity must be carried forward as the illuminating symbol of working people! We offer our fraternal hand to all

⁵⁰ Telg, Clay to Directors of OMGUS, Berlin District, 23 Jun 1946, file 1945-46/15/1, OMGUS, LAB.

whose solution is: Struggle against Fascism, for the freedom of the people, for democracy, for Socialism!”⁵¹

Ulbricht gave no response until 19 June. Then, in the first meeting of representatives of the two parties’ central committees, he rejected calls for an immediate merger. Before proceeding toward organizational unity, he asserted the parties required a “long period of close collaboration” as well as the clarification of ideological questions. His reserve was understandable. Because the Social Democrats were numerically superior to their “fraternal” rivals, they could expect to outweigh—and perhaps absorb—the Communists in a new united labor party, especially if the merger took place nationwide. Ulbricht declined to run that risk.⁵²

By late November, however, the ground seemed to be collapsing beneath the Communists’ feet. Despite their significant material advantages, they were losing ground among Berliners in the Soviet Sector. Regarded as extensions of the Soviet administration, they were blamed for food shortages, the dismantling of German factories, crimes of Red Army soldiers, the loss of German territory east of the Oder-Neisse, and simple incompetence. Outside of Germany, the news was equally bad. Communists were losing elections in Hungary and Austria. Contrary to their earlier calculations, it now seemed clear to the Communist leaders in Berlin that a union with the Social Democrats was their only chance to avoid political marginalization.

Joseph Stalin, on his part, saw a union of workers’ parties to be in the best interests of the Soviet Union. On 6 February 1946, he ordered Ulbricht, then in Moscow for “consultations,” to complete the merger by 1 May. The new United Worker’s Party, decreed the Soviet leader, would be called *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* (SED) (the Socialist Unity Party). Even in the Western Zones, where no pretense of unity with the Social Democrats was possible, Stalin wanted Ulbricht to rename the Communist Party.⁵³

Meanwhile, the Communists pressed on with a merger from below, stepping up the pressures on Eastern Zone Social Democrats to unite with the Communists on the local, district, and state levels. After Kurt Schumacher,

⁵¹ Both quoted by Otto Grotewohl, chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) central committee, in a speech before meeting of SPD and Communist Party of Germany (KPD) representatives, 20 Dec 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:797–99; “Aufruf der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands” (Appeal of the Social Democratic Party of Germany), 15 Jun 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:763.

⁵² SPD central committee member Gustav Dahrendorf wrote a long report on the party fusion battle in which he quoted from internal party documents. He sent a copy of it to the office of the political adviser. Robert Murphy sent a translated version to the Department of State. Rpt, Gustav Dahendorf, sub: The Forced Merger of the KPD and SPD in the Russian Zone of Occupation, Encl to Ltr, Robert Murphy to James F. Byrnes, Sec of State, 29 Apr 1946, file 758/1-3, Ofc of Political Adviser, LAB.

⁵³ MFR, Wilhelm Pieck, “Bericht Walter Ulbrichts über eine Beratung bei Stalin am 6.2.1946” (Walter Ulbricht’s report on a consultation with Stalin, 6 Feb 1946), in Badstubner and Loth, eds., *Wilhelm Pieck—Notes on Policy Toward Germany 1945–1953*, pp. 68–69.

the leader of the Social Democrats in the west, refused to call a national party convention—essentially abandoning his Eastern Zone comrades to their fates—resistance flagged. By early February, just as Stalin was giving final directions to Ulbricht, Social Democratic leaders in the East German states had concluded that their only way to survive the Soviet occupation was to accept the Communist “offer.” On 11 February, the central committee, including its chairman, Otto Grotewohl, abandoned its opposition by a vote of eight to three, and declared in a resolution its intention to steer Eastern Zone Social Democrats into a merger with the Communists.

As the fusion battle unfolded, little escaped American eyes. Quadripartite Berlin was an open city in which political leaders could move between sectors and Americans could freely enter East Berlin. The aloofness edict never applied to American intelligence officers, who cultivated contacts with Germans in all camps. The chief of the Berlin Command’s intelligence section, Lt. Col. William F. Heimlich, knew and had friendly relations with two leading Social Democrats, Grotewohl and Fechner, who went over to the Socialist Unity Party.⁵⁴

Heimlich and his officers focused on the fusion struggle from the very first signs of increased pressures in early November. Numerous informants furnished the Americans with inside reports from all areas of the Soviet Zone. The intelligence officers obtained details of high-level meetings between Social Democratic functionaries and Soviet authorities in Karlshorst, discovered the tactics employed by local Soviet commanders to intimidate Social Democrats in the states and provinces, learned of disputes and rivalries among Communists as well as Social Democrats, and followed Communist efforts to effect a “merger from below.”⁵⁵

Ultimately, the question of merging the parties would be placed before the workers themselves. On 30 December, the fusionist-dominated District Committee for Berlin declared its intent to submit the fundamental issue regarding a union of Communists and Social Democrats to the delegates attending a joint convention. Objections from the party ranks grew louder, however, and when Grotewohl, the Social Democrat central committee chairman, appeared before a conference of 1,000 Berlin party functionaries on 1 March 1946, they demanded an explanation for his capitulation to the Communists. As Grotewohl spoke, he was howled down, ridiculed, and vilified. By an overwhelming majority, the delegates repudiated the central committee’s plans to unify the parties through a zonal convention. Instead, they demanded that the issue be decided by the vote of all members in a secret ballot. The proposed ballot contained two questions. The first one asked members whether they favored an immediate merger of the two labor parties, the Communists and the Social Democrats. The second

⁵⁴ Interv, Brewster Chamberlain with Lt Col William F. Heimlich, 4 Aug 1981, Nr 82, Rep 37, Acc 3103, LAB.

⁵⁵ Weekly Intel Sums, HQ, Berlin District, G-2, 22 Dec 1946; and HQ, Berlin District, G-2, 5 Jan 1946. Both in Historians files, CMH; Intel Rpt, Office of Director of Intelligence (ODI), Special Rpt no. 1, Mar 1946, sub: Russian Pressure to Effect a Merger with the KPD in Order to Establish a United Worker’s Party, file 7/39-3/3, OMGUS, ODI, BAK.

asked whether they supported an association of the parties in order to further common objectives and to rule out “fratricide.” Although phrased in words of left solidarity, the second question was designed to increase the antimerger vote, for it permitted members who still desired “brotherly” cooperation to answer “yes” to association after saying “no” to merger.⁵⁶

The demand for a referendum put the U.S. military government into an awkward position. The antimerger functionaries were armed with the conviction that they represented the will of the party, but they had no central office, few telephones, and lacked money and critical resources, such as paper for fliers and pamphlets. At the same time, the fusionists occupied a fully equipped party headquarters, controlled a party newspaper, and enjoyed access to the means of public propaganda in the Soviet Sector. U.S. military government officials feared that, without Western Allied aid, the Communist push for fusion with the Social Democrats would most likely succeed. U.S. neutrality could well result in unwelcome consequences.

Mindful of those fears, the U.S. military government edged into the conflict in limited yet critical ways. With the approval of its American control officer, *Der Tagesspiegel* opened its pages to the antimerger group, which established a secretariat in its offices and used the paper as *Sprachrohr* (their mouthpiece). The military government’s Information Control Division distributed much needed paper for posters, leaflets, and brochures. The British newspaper *Berliner*, an official publication of the military government, and the British-licensed *Telegraf*, provided space in their pages, as did the French-licensed *Kurier*. This allowance did not compare with the assistance the Soviets furnished to the merger proponents, but it was enough to maintain the support of some 58,000 committed party members, who already understood the issues and would not necessarily be swayed by forests of placards and loud noise.⁵⁷

The Referendum

By mid-March 1946, the oppositionists remained uncertain if they should risk holding a referendum, or whether or not the central committee supported a vote.

⁵⁶ “Resolution der Funktionärkonferenz der Berliner SPD über eine Urabstimmung zur Frage der Vereinigung mit der KPD” (Resolution of functionaries conference of the Berlin SPD on a vote of the party base on the question of unification with the KPD), 1 Mar 1946, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:834–36. See also Harold Hurwitz, *Zwangvereinigung und Widerstand der Sozialdemokraten in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Forced Unification and Resistance of the Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone of Occupation) (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1990), pp. 111–13; Telg, Robert Murphy to James F. Byrnes, Sec of State, 14 Mar 1946, in *FRUS, 1946*, 11 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969–1972), 5:709.

⁵⁷ Hurwitz, *Forced Unification and Resistance of the Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone of Occupation*, pp. 118, 146; Memo, Brewster Morris, Ofc of Political Adviser, for Murphy, 5 Apr 1946, sub: The SPD-KPD Merger Campaign, Encl to Ltr, Murphy to Byrnes, 8 Apr 1946, file 748/2, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

On 23 March, their reluctance suddenly vanished following a statement to the press by General Clay. In response to a journalist's question, Clay articulated his position on the referendum, "Our policy with respect to political parties is that as long as it is under the approved platform of neutrality, no political parties will be permitted to merge unless it is done by appropriate expression of the majority of members of the parties." Referring to the Social Democratic central committee, he asserted these "old leaders" had been permitted to "act as leaders" but had never received instructions from party members. Therefore, "[a]s far as we are concerned we don't accept the leaders as representing the will of the party until and unless they have received instruction on merger policy matters either by referendum or by vote of party." With these words, Clay delivered a clear message that the fusionist leadership had no leave to dissolve the Social Democratic Party in the U.S. Sector without authorization from the membership.⁵⁸

Clay's declaration galvanized the opposition. On 27 March, four days after he spoke, antimerger leaders drummed together a meeting at a school in Charlottenburg. They declared that the referendum on the merger would take place on Sunday, 31 March, and established a commission to make preparations. When an emissary from the central committee tried to speak, he was thrashed by angry delegates, and only the intervention of British officers saved him from serious harm.⁵⁹

The central committee strained mightily to sabotage the vote. It ejected oppositionists from the party, dissolved entire precinct committees, and denied the legitimacy of the vote. The Soviets never said whether they would allow the referendum to take place in their sector. Many dissidents—above all East Berliners, but also western sector residents who lived near the boundary to East Berlin—feared for their safety. To dispel trepidations, General Barker issued a stern declaration, which the Western sectors' newspapers published one day prior to the balloting. After restating Clay's position that the United States would recognize no merger carried out without the free approval of the party majority, Barker asserted, "Events of the past weeks indicate that attempts will be made to hinder the free and complete expression of views on the part of the SPD membership. In the American Sector of Berlin steps will be taken to guarantee that each eligible voter who desires to cast a ballot will be able to express himself under appropriate protection and supervision." The British and French gave similar assurances.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Transcript, General Lucius D. Clay press conf, 23 Mar 1946, file 748/2, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁵⁹ "Beschluf der Kreisvorsitzenden der SPD zur Urabstimmung" (Decision of the precinct chairmen on the referendum), 27 Mar 1946, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:871; Hurwitz, *Forced Unification and Resistance of the Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone of Occupation*, 130–31.

⁶⁰ "Erklärung des amerikanischen Stadtkommandanten, General Barker, zur Urabstimmung" (Statement of the American Commandant, General Barker, on the referendum), 29 Mar 1946, as published in *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30 Mar 1946, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:878–79.

On the day of the referendum, almost 24,000 Social Democrats came to the polls in West Berlin—over 72 percent of registered party members. In the Soviet Sector, the polls opened in the morning but shut down after roughly an hour. In doing so, the Soviets claimed that organizers had failed to comply with “mysterious regulations” and had given “unsatisfactory answers” to questions regarding the referendum. The voters inflicted a huge defeat on the fusionists, rejecting “immediate merger” with a “no” vote of 82 percent. At the same time, 62 percent of the voters answered “yes” to the second question, affirming the desire for “association” and avoidance of fratricide. The results of the referendum showed that the majority of the party was still open to programmatic cooperation with the Communists.⁶¹

Despite the mixed messages of the referendum, the insurrection deeply impressed U.S. authorities. U.S. observers in Berlin hailed it as the “first battle” in the campaign to save Europe. An officer who attended the functionaries’ conference of 1 March declared that the oppositionists were “fighting for democracy.” Following the vote, the chief of Army intelligence in Berlin noted a diminishing of the German “proclivity . . . to dispose of their political problems by disinterestedly rubber stamping the activities of a few professional politicians.” Howley viewed the referendum as “the first positive proof . . . that the Germans are not completely sheep from a political point of view.” If they had only “shown such independence against the Nazis,” he regretted to his diary, “there never would have been the costly war which had just finished.”⁶²

Toward Elections in Berlin

In the aftermath of their referendum victory, the antimerger leaders moved quickly to seize the party mantle from the discredited central committee. They called an all-Berlin party convention for 7 April to proclaim their own status as the Berlin “core” of the national party. Meeting at a school in Zehlendorf, the delegates elected executive leadership and debated the party program. The deposed central committee, which could do no more than fulminate, denounced

⁶¹ Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 105; “Die Ergebnisse der Urabstimmung vom 31. März 1946” (The results of the referendum of 31 March 1946), in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:880; Hurwitz, *Forced Unification and Resistance of the Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone of Occupation*, pp. 141–42.

⁶² Rpt of Opns, HQ, Berlin District, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1946, p. 71, file 5/35-3/11, OMGUS, BAK; Memo, Chancellor for Asst Ch of Staff, Intel, Berlin District, 2 Mar 1946, sub: Personal Attendance of Meeting, file 748/3/1946, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Weekly Intel Sum, HQ, Berlin District, G-2, 10 Mar 1946, Historians files, CMH; Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1945–1 Jul 1946, p. 147, box 2, Howley papers, AHEC.

the independents as “party splitters” and “saboteurs of unity.”⁶³

For a brief period in April, two Social Democratic parties existed in Berlin: the fusionists around Grotewohl and the independents. With Stalin’s 1 May deadline approaching, however, the duality soon disappeared. On 22 April, in a convention held at a revue theater in East Berlin, the *Admiralspalast*, the Eastern Zone Social Democrats joined the Socialist Unity Party, a merger of Social Democrats and Communists in the Eastern Zone, thus ending their party’s existence in the Soviet Zone of occupation.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, the Social Democratic independents moved to consolidate their position. Immediately after the convention of 7 April, the newly elected Social Democratic executive committee sent a letter to the Kommandatura requesting recognition. In their meeting of 12 April, the American, British, and French commandants all agreed that the independents reflected the “determined majority” of Social Democrats and deserved approval. Feigning insufficient knowledge, the Soviet commandant, Maj. Gen. Alexander G. Kotikov, balked. The Socialist Unity Party did not yet exist—the founding convention was still ten days away—and he was fearful of authorizing the Social Democrats before having guaranteed the position of the Unity Socialists. General Barker took a Solomonic path. The Kommandatura had merely to accept reality, he said, and should draw up a letter to both party groups stating its intention to let them operate throughout Berlin. Kotikov still



Soviet Berlin Commandant Maj. Gen.
Alexander Kotikov

⁶³ “Aufruf des Vorläufigen Ausschusses der SPD” (Appeal of the provisional committee of the SPD), 3 Apr 1946, 1:881–82; and see also “Programmatische Erklärung des Bezirksparteitages der SPD Berlin” (Programmatic statement of the district party convention of the SPD Berlin), 7 Apr 1946, 1:884–86. Both in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*; “Erklärung des Zentralausschusses zum Berliner SPD-Parteitag (Zinnowwald-Schule)” (Statement of the central committee on the Berlin SPD party convention at the Zinnowwald School), 9 Apr 1946, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, pp. 887–88. See also Hurwitz, *Forced Unification and Resistance of the Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone of Occupation*, pp. 150–55.

⁶⁴ “Entschiessung des Zentralausschusses der SPD” (Resolution of the Central Committee of the SPD), 11 Feb 1946, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:822–24; Hurwitz, *Forced Unification and Resistance of the Social Democrats in the Soviet Zone of Occupation*, pp. 43–46; Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 275–84.

professed lack of knowledge, termed the petitioners “an unknown group of people,” and demanded postponement to a subsequent date.⁶⁵

Two weeks later, the commandants met again. The Socialist Unity Party’s request for recognition had arrived, and Kotikov offered a straightforward deal. The Kommandatura would recognize the city committees of both parties and allow them to work in Greater Berlin. Citing “existing facts [that] must be faced,” General Barker promptly accepted the bargain, which he had offered himself in the previous meeting. In a surprising turn, however, the French commandant, Brig. Gen. Charles Lançon, refused to link the requests for recognition, arguing that they were entirely separate matters. The Social Democrats had already been recognized, he asserted, and their aims and program remained the same; the new leadership had only asked the Kommandatura to authorize a change in the internal organization of the party. The Socialist Unity Party, however, was a different matter entirely. Unlike the Social Democratic Party, it was a new organization. Although it portrayed itself as a fusion between Social Democrats and Communists, it was really just the Communist Party reinforced by a few dissenters among the Social Democrats. To recognize such a “fusion,” Lançon argued, would be to admit the disappearance of the Social Democratic Party, which in fact continued to exist. Furthermore, the Kommandatura had no competence to recognize new political parties. In view of the importance of Berlin, such a decision would have repercussions throughout all of Germany. Therefore, only the Allied Control Council could decide to authorize the Socialist Unity Party.⁶⁶

The British commandant, Maj. Gen. Eric P. Nares, jumped to Lançon’s side. Barker, too, was convinced. Abruptly shifting ground, Barker agreed that they were handling separate issues and rejected Kotikov’s bargain. With Kotikov fully isolated, the stalemate was complete, and the commandants sent the dispute to the Allied Control Council.⁶⁷

Just as the party fusion conflict was entering its climactic phase, Berlin’s occupiers also confronted the question of elections. Although the Potsdam Protocol had prescribed early local elections, and each power agreed in theory that the appointed Magistrat should be replaced with an elected body, the Kommandatura was stymied when it came to setting a date.

Given Communist failures at the polls in Hungary, Austria, and Western Germany, the Soviets had reasons to temporize. After the local government committee debated the issue for nearly three months, it went to the commandants for decision on 26 April, the same day as their dispute over party recognition. The British and French commandants wanted to fix a time in early August, whereas General Barker proposed 7 July. Kotikov replied that the date was too early for the necessary preparations. Elections, he asserted, would have

⁶⁵ Min, Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(46)11, 12 Apr 1946, file 11/148-1/10, OMGUS, LAB.

⁶⁶ Min, Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(46)12, 26 Apr 1946, file 11/148-1/10, OMGUS, LAB.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

to “guarantee a full victory of the democratic elements over the reactionary powers.” However, denazification was still incomplete, and if elections took place before this work was done, they “might bring quite unpleasant surprises.” If his colleagues, nonetheless, insisted on finding a day, despite the many uncertainties, Kotikov suggested a vote on Christmas, a proposal that was both facetious and derisory. Because further discussion was pointless, and could lead only to acrimony, the commandants referred this question, as well, to the Allied Control Council.⁶⁸

At that level, the quarreling stopped. On 20 May, the council’s political directorate decided to recognize the split of Berlin’s Social Democrats, to authorize the Social Democratic Party and Socialist Unity Party on a citywide basis, and to instruct the Kommandatura to ensure that both parties possessed office space in all districts. The French member supported the decision pending approval from his government. When this came on 27 May, the directorate’s recommendations went before the deputy military governors—General Clay, General Vasily D. Sokolovsky, Lt. Gen. Sir Brian H. Robertson, and Lt. Gen. Louis Marie Koeltz—who ratified them straightaway the following day.⁶⁹

With that accomplished, the directorate proceeded to arrange the elections. On 24 May, the Soviet representative on the political directorate had agreed with his colleagues that voting should occur as soon as possible but would not specify a date until the French government had approved the party recognition agreement. Once the French met this condition, it was easy work to arrive at a date by splitting the difference between August and December, thus yielding the month of October. Additionally, the directorate agreed that the Kommandatura should write a provisional constitution for Berlin. The deputy governors approved these recommendations on 3 June, and the council secretariat instructed the Kommandatura three days later.⁷⁰

The discussions in the Allied Control Council at this time reflected the spirit of cooperation that still existed in that group. A tone of friendship and mutual respect governed personal relationships and this clearly affected the work of the council. The political directorate consisted of high-ranking

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ MFR, Donald R. Heath, U.S. Representative to Political Directorate, 20 May 1946; Memo, Warren M. Chase, Ch, Political Br, Ofc of Political Adviser, for Murphy, 27 May 1946. Both in file 748/1-3, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK. Min, Mtg of Political Directorate, Allied Control Council, DPOL/M(46)20, 24 May 1946, file 2/94-3/5, OMGUS, BAK; Dir, Allied Kommandatura to SPD, “Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands” (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) (SED) and Administrative Districts, BK/O(46)248, 31 May 1946, sub: Recognition of the SPD City Committee and the SED in Berlin, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:895–96.

⁷⁰ Memo, Political Directorate for the Allied Secretariat, DPOL/Memo(46)57, 28 May 1946, sub: Berlin Elections; Note, Allied Secretariat to Coordination Committee, Allied Control Council, CORC/P(46)197, 30 May 1946, sub: Berlin Elections; Min, Mtg of Coordinating Committee, CORC/M/46/29, 3 Jun 1946; Memo, Allied Secretariat for Ch of Staff, Berlin Kommandatura, ASEC(46)460, 6 Jun 1946, sub: Measures to be Taken by the Kommandatura with Reference to the Berlin Elections. All in file 2/94-3/5, OMGUS, BAK.

diplomats from the political adviser sections of the military governments; the Soviet member, Arkady A. Sobolev, was in fact *the* adviser to the Soviet administration, equivalent in status to Robert Murphy. As Murphy reported, Sobolev had told him “in different times and different ways” of the Soviet desire for “the friendship of Americans” and expressed gratefulness for “what the United States had done for the Soviet Union.” Clay developed genuine friendships with Zhukov and Sokolovsky, as had Eisenhower before he departed Germany. Of the latter Clay reminisced, “I liked Sokolovsky, I really did. He could quote the Bible more frequently and accurately than anyone I’d known. He was very intelligent. Very interesting. Loved to read English novels, especially Jane Austen.” The Clays and Sokolovskys invited each other as guests to dinner and Sokolovsky attended the wedding in Berlin of Clay’s son. Their work in the Allied Control Council was businesslike and cordial.⁷¹

The council’s first priorities were reparations, trade, and central administrations, and, however important, local disputes in Berlin did not belong to this triad. They appeared rather as distractions, easily composed among reasonable men. The Western representatives dropped Lançon’s arguments against recognizing the Socialist Unity Party; Sobolev and Sokolovsky overruled Kotikov on elections. The chief material interest of the Soviets was to secure reparations from the Western Zones; their chief political interest was to establish central administrations in Germany as a whole. To achieve these aims, Sokolovsky needed American cooperation. “The Soviet representatives are not obtuse,” asserted Murphy. “They know that the American effort has made the Allied wheel go round here, and that it would have stopped moving were it not for the American contribution.”⁷²



Soviet Marshal Sokolovsky, head of the Soviet military government in Germany

⁷¹ Quote from Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 287–88, 262, and 326–27; MFR, John H. Hilldring, 3 Nov 1945, sub: Current Questions in the Military Government of Germany, 1:111–17; Telg, Clay to McNarney, 23 Jul 1946, 1:243–44. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

⁷² Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 121. Quote from Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 286.

Aggressive Neutrality

As the scent of elections filled the air, U.S. officials in Berlin took great interest. The military government's civil affairs branch, as well as the liaison officers to the district administrations, looked for ways that they could influence the outcome. They could not, however, oppose General Clay, whose neutrality edict of 23 June mandated the summary removal of any officer who rejected its principles. At the same time, "interventionists" in the political adviser's office were free to argue and act. In a memorandum circulated in late June, Murphy's labor affairs adviser, Louis A. Wiesner, declared, "[P]olitical neutrality . . . will be disastrous for our aims in Germany . . . because the Soviet Union is actively using the SED to destroy democracy and to conquer Germany." Therefore, he stated, the United States should "vigorously favor those parties which are truly democratic." Berlin, where the competition was keener, required special measures. In addition to a party newspaper, newsprint, automobiles, office equipment, telephones, and other material assistance, asserted Wiesner, the Social Democrats needed "frequent conferences with American officials on the highest levels, those who make policy and can get things done," as well as "our constant vigilance to protect its interests and its members in the Soviet Sector." The drumbeat of these sentiments reached Washington through what Clay termed "a group of officials of military government"—a mild reference to disloyalty. Included in that group, beyond the members of Murphy's staff, were employees of the OMGUS labor affairs division.⁷³

Clay refuted his critics with strongly worded arguments in a memorandum to the War Department on 20 August. If the United States provided all-out assistance to the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in Berlin, he warned, it would take a backward step in "teaching democracy" and weaken complaints against similar Soviet actions. Noting that the Western sectors had a substantial majority of the population, he was not "unduly apprehensive" over the results. If the democratic parties did poorly, it would be due to economic conditions rather than the lack of facilities for their campaigns. Additional assistance to these groups would be "pop-gun tactics compared to the major issues which are involved." He called for "patience and well thought-out remedies" rather than "premature action" provoked by "ill-advised tactics of [the] Socialist Unity Party." In the long run, he insisted, "outward evidence of support by an occupying power" would discredit the parties receiving that support. The situation was "delicate," and instead of taking sides, Americans should be taking "necessary and feasible" steps "to ensure a fair election."⁷⁴

⁷³ Telg, Clay to Directors of OMGUS, Berlin District, 23 Jun 1946; Memo, Louis A. Wiesner, Labor Affairs Adviser, for Murphy, Jun 1946, sub: International Political Implications of the SPD-KPD Merger in the Soviet Sector, file 17/258-3/6, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁷⁴ Telg, Clay to War Department, 20 Aug 1946, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:256–58.

Clay left unmentioned one reason for his equanimity. The American public opinion survey team produced its first forecast of party strength in late May and continued polling until 12 October. The poll's results consistently predicted a massive victory for the anti-Communist parties. In May, the Social Democratic Party was the choice of 35 percent of respondents in the whole of Berlin, compared with 17 percent for the Socialist Unity Party, 14 percent for the Christian Democratic Union, and 9 percent for the Liberal Democratic Party, with 25 percent undecided. The last polling report, issued eight days before the election, predicted a 42 percent share for the Social Democrats, 20 percent for the Christian Democrats, 18.5 percent for the Unity Socialists, and 9 percent for the Liberal Democrats, with 10.5 percent undecided. Thus, at the very time Wiesner fretted over the "disastrous" consequences of neutrality, American officials had every reason to expect a great victory for the non-Communist parties.⁷⁵

Nonetheless, the U.S. military government looked to exert its influence where it could. First, it would level the playing field in a way that benefited the non-Communist parties without directly discriminating against the Unity Socialists. Second, it would let an "independent," licensed press serve as conduits for propaganda instead of official American newspapers.

To further assist, the Americans distributed paper to the three non-Communist parties—not enough to match Soviet deliveries to the Unity Socialists but more than enough to compete effectively. During the party fusion battle, they provided enough newsprint to *Der Tagesspiegel* to increase its circulation from 335,000 to 450,000 and maintained this level throughout the election campaign. They established an afternoon newspaper, *Der Abend*, and gave it enough paper to print 100,000 copies. These papers sided editorially with the Social, Christian, and Liberal Democrats and gave them journalistic platforms to state positions, to rally support, and to launch attacks against the Soviet administration as well as the Socialist Unity Party.⁷⁶ On 5 September 1946, the American radio station RIAS (*Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor*) went on the air as a counterweight to the Soviet-controlled Radio Berlin. Staffed by Germans working under a small American management team, the station provided news and political reporting to the German population in and around Berlin. The broadcasts were studiously balanced—consummate examples of what General Clay meant by "teaching democracy." They featured a regular "round table" of the four parties where party leaders engaged in face-to-face debate. A program entitled "The Parties have the Floor" allotted each group equal time to talk on any topic. "Spoken Election Posters" was a program in which each party could speak for seven minutes on the same topic in a half-hour

⁷⁵ Weekly Intel Sum, HQ, Berlin District, G-2, 31 May 1946, Historians files, CMH; Rpt, Public Opinion Surveys Unit, Intel sec., 12 Oct 1946, sub: Summary of Berlin Survey no. 16, file 4/135-2/3, OMGUS, LAB.

⁷⁶ Rpt, Public Opinion Surveys Unit, Intel sec., 12 Oct 1946. A table showing the *Tagesspiegel's* circulation from September 1945 through October 1946 appears in file 243-3/21, OMGUS, LAB.

broadcast. In “The Voter Asks,” RIAS journalists assumed the role of average voters and posed questions to party representatives. On the evening before the election, RIAS broadcasted the final party rallies and appealed to all voters to go to the polls.⁷⁷

By granting equal say to all parties, RIAS gave the non-Communist parties the chance to speak repeatedly to Berlin’s population. Simple mathematics shows that they received three-quarters of the air time, leaving a one-quarter share to the Socialist Unity Party. RIAS’ general news coverage did not convey exclusively American positions but presented all sides to issues. This objectivity compared favorably with the strident partisanship of Radio Berlin.⁷⁸

Along with *Der Abend* and *Telegraf*, *Der Tagesspiegel* made no pretense of nonpartisanship. From the start of the party fusion battle, it offered itself as a forum for the vigorous anticommunism of Berlin’s Social Democrats, and its chief editor, Erik Reger, denounced the merger as comparable to Nazism. During the campaign, in sharp contrast to the studied, civilized tone of RIAS, *Der Tagesspiegel* filled its pages with brass-knuckled rhetoric, identifying communism with national socialism, stylizing the opponent as an enemy, and stressing the irreconcilability of the non-Communist parties with the Unity Socialists.

At the same time, because the journal was “independent,” it was not speaking as an official organ of the U.S. occupation, and neither its editorial policies, nor the polemics appearing in its pages, were works of the military government. Americans delivered no scripts to Reger. Nor did they censor his articles in advance. Although they prohibited any criticism of the occupying powers, they permitted the paper to discuss and criticize internal German politics, and to *report* criticism of the Soviets, as long as the words came from German lips and constituted “news.” Such liberties, as a member of the information control branch declared, were integral to the learning of “political self-expression and freedom of speech,” and through their exercise, the journal would win popular acceptance as “a truly German paper, and not as an American propaganda sheet.”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Interv, Hist Staff with Gustave Mathieu, U.S. Control Ofcr, Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor, Dec 1946, Encl to Hist Rpt, OMGUS, Berlin District, 1 Jul 1946–30 Jun 1947, app. to bk. 3, box 22; Hist Rpt, OMGUS, Berlin District, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1946, pp. 173–80, box 23. Both in Howley papers, AHEC. Schivelbusch, *In A Cold Crater*, pp. 107–14.

⁷⁸ Schivelbusch, *In A Cold Crater*, pp. 116–22; Harold Hurwitz, *Demokratie und Antikommunismus in Berlin nach 1945: Die Eintracht der Siegermächte und die Orientierungsnot der Deutschen, 1945–1946* (Democracy and Anticommunism in Berlin after 1945: The Harmony of the Victor Powers and the Disorientation of the Germans, 1945–1946) (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1984), pp. 136–38.

⁷⁹ Memo, K. A. Greenough, Information Service Control Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, for Maj John Bitter, 16 Apr 1946, sub: Report of the Press Section . . . on the activities of the Information Services Control Branch, file 5/240-2/9, OMGUS, LAB. See also Schivelbusch, *In A Cold Crater*, pp. 112, 161.

Politics and Food

In mid-August 1946, Colonel Heimlich, still serving as the head of Army intelligence in Berlin, noted the inherent incompatibility of practicing democracy while continuing to rule the Germans as a defeated people. Elections would transfer power to Germany's voters, and the occupiers would have to compete for German favor. "The whole air of Berlin," wrote Heimlich, was alive with "the belief that the tables are rapidly turning to a point where the conquerors will pay court to the vanquished."⁸⁰

With elections imminent, both sides increased efforts to court public opinion. The shift was already observable at the very highest levels of public diplomacy. On 9 July, during a plenary meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris, Vyacheslav M. Molotov read a statement on the German settlement in which he affirmed support for Germany's unification and economic revival. Instead of dismantling German factories, as stipulated under the Potsdam Protocol, the Soviet foreign minister proposed to leave plants in Germany, to increase the permissible level of industry, and to take reparations from current production. The statement, published with considerable fanfare in the Eastern Zone press over the following days, appealed to the broad German opinion. The American response came on 6 September, when Secretary of State Byrnes addressed a meeting in Stuttgart of German civilian leaders in the U.S. Zone. Byrnes advocated early self-government and called for a national provisional government composed of regional representatives. He said the Germans were entitled to the same living standard as other nations in Europe and opposed detachment of the Rhineland and the Ruhr. He derived these positions, sometimes quoting verbatim, from a policy memorandum formulated by General Clay ten days after Molotov's statement in Paris. Thus, after having failed to find common ground between themselves, the foreign ministers were vying for German indulgence with competing visions of rehabilitation.⁸¹

On the battle lines of Berlin's politics, the enticements were more primal. In times of empty stomachs, all sides recognized the political value of food and sought to reap the advantage of gratitude by bringing in extra supplies just before the elections. During the spring and early summer, the Magistrat food office received fruit and vegetables from the Soviet Zone of Germany and distributed them throughout all sectors of Berlin. Stemming from an abundant seasonal harvest that had to be consumed lest it spoil, these imports were supplemental foodstuffs; they exceeded Soviet ration obligations and were not accompanied by any deliveries from the Western Zones. Many Germans, instead

⁸⁰ Weekly Intel Sum, HQ, Berlin District, G-2, 15 Aug 1946, Historians files, CMH.

⁸¹ Min, U.S. Delegation Rcd, Council of Foreign Ministers, 9 Jul 1946, in *FRUS, 1946*, 2:842-47; Address, James F. Byrnes to the Minister Presidents of the U.S. Zone, 6 Sep 1946, in *Documents on Germany, 1944-1945*, pp. 91-99; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 378-87.



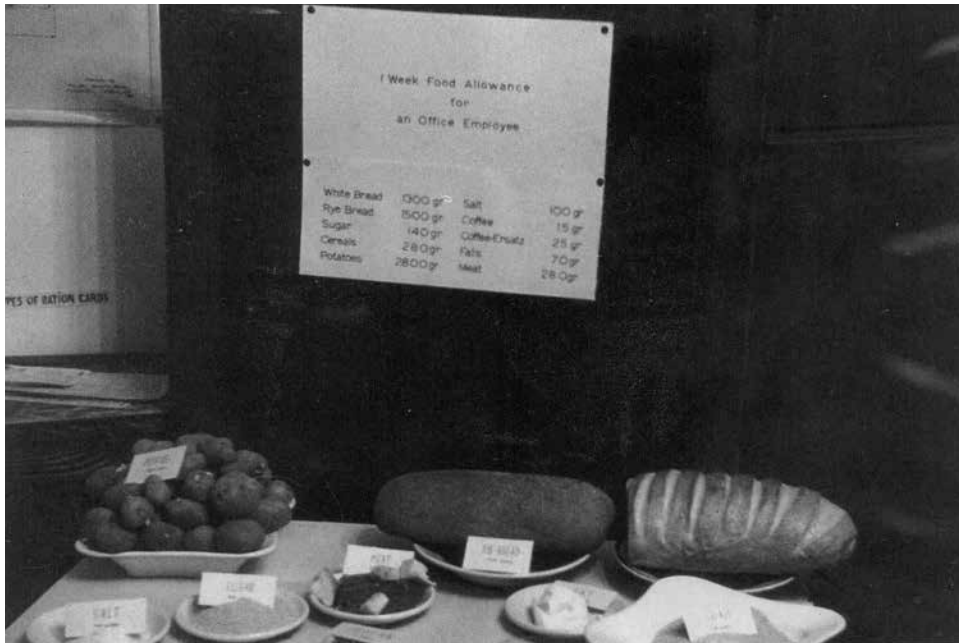
Emergency food distribution, June 1945

of seeing the surge of produce as a result of the growing cycle, interpreted it as an attempt to influence voting and felt little thanks.⁸²

On 19 July, the Soviet administration ordered that distribution of the imported produce be restricted to the Soviet Sector only. The meaning of the action was ambiguous. Although it was one means of showing Berliners how only the Soviets could improve conditions in the city, it also followed the refusal of the American representative on the food committee to make a firm commitment on compensation for these extra foodstuffs. Nonetheless, even if provoked by the U.S. attitude, the Soviet order violated the July 1945 agreement to pool food. Colonel Howley protested at the deputies meeting on the same day and publicized his protest to the pro-Western newspapers, which promptly raised a clamor against Soviet “inhumanity.”⁸³

⁸² Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946–1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 87–92.

⁸³ Memo, Leon J. Steck, Ch, Food and Agricultural sec., OMGUS, Berlin District, for Howley, 19 Jul 1946, sub: Reply to Letter, file 4/135-3/10, OMGUS, LAB. In this memorandum, Steck notes, “The Russian representative on the Allied Kommandatura Food Committee has recently asked for compensation-in-kind for vegetables imported from the Russian Zone and distributed in the US Sector. The US representative refused to agree to the principle of compensation, but suggested that a formal proposal be submitted.”



German weekly rations displayed at the exhibition of U.S. Military Government Progress, February 1946

The Soviets had worked themselves into a corner. As Kotikov fumed to the commandants on 30 July, no one had complained “when we unilaterally—that is, when we alone—imported vegetables into Berlin,” but when those imports stopped, he became the butt of accusations. His only escape was to reaffirm the principle of joint control over the supply of produce. At the same time, the Western commandants agreed to compensate for the Soviet deliveries, and after further discussions in the Kommandatura food committee, the deputy commandants approved a plan for each power to contribute proportionately to the population of its sector. Inasmuch as the Americans had initially resisted compensation, the commitment was a concession to Kotikov. Nonetheless, it was a minor reward, for—thanks to Howley and the Western-licensed press—the Soviets had suffered considerable political embarrassment.⁸⁴

At the same time as U.S. authorities were castigating Kotikov for violating the agreement to pool foodstuffs, they were preparing for the arrival of initial food parcels sent through CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe). These shipments differed from “official” food deliveries in three

⁸⁴ Mins, Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(46)20, 30 Jul 1946, file 11/148-1/10, OMGUS, LAB; Deputy Commandants’ Mtg, BKD/M(46)33, 19 Jul 1946; Deputy Commandants’ Mtg, BKD/M(46)40, 10 Sep 1946. Both in file 11/148-1/1, OMGUS, LAB; Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 121–23.

basic respects. First, as denoted by the term “parcel,” they came as individual packages rather than as bulk commodities. Second, the parcels were private gifts. Donors in the United States paid \$15 to CARE to deliver packages to persons of their choosing; CARE promised to make the deliveries within four months and to provide certification from the designated beneficiaries. Third, through its contract with CARE, OMGUS allowed the organization to operate, extended certain facilities, and consented to its terms.

The first CARE shipments reached Berlin on 10 August. Initially, they consisted of surplus “10-in-1” parcels—designed to provide one meal for ten soldiers—that the Army had assembled for the planned invasion of Japan. The parcels weighed 28.9 pounds, cost \$10 to send, and contained roughly 40,000 calories—a massive supplement to rations when the highest category, reserved for heavy workers and for privileged persons, provided 2,485 calories a day and the lowest 1,248. They were, as Heimlich recalled, “Coveted by more people than anything in history.”⁸⁵

The CARE program unnerved the Soviets. In April, when CARE first came before the welfare committee of the Kommandatura, the Soviet representative objected to a program that bypassed the Magistrat and ignored the pooling agreement. After failing to allay Soviet concerns, the Americans announced at the end of June that they were going to implement the program in their sector; the British and French soon followed. On 30 July, Kotikov affirmed that he too would permit CARE to deliver packages in the Soviet Sector on the condition that the distribution would not be “incidental and un-coordinated but, rather, centralized and planned.” He rejected the idea of founding Berlin’s food supply on charity, because charity ran by “chance,” and charitable organizations could never fill the city’s needs through “casual distributions.”⁸⁶

Because Kotikov’s condition—that the American donations be made part of Berlin’s central food system—could not be reconciled with CARE’s methods, the organization was initially banned from the city’s eastern districts. Even so, the ban proved futile. When shipments began to arrive, Howley set up a large warehouse to receive them. From that location, CARE employees posted cards to the individual addressees, including those residing in the Soviet Sector, notifying them of the package awaiting pickup. As long as the Soviets neglected to block the mail, nothing could stop Soviet-Sector residents from going to the warehouse to get their parcels. Finally, on 10 September, after being outwitted for a month, the Soviets agreed to sanction CARE. They knew, as Colonel Howley remarked in his diary, that they could not keep the packages out of their sector “without placing themselves in a very embarrassing public light.” The best they managed was one concession to the principle of the common pooling of food. While all parcels addressed to specific persons would continue to go to

⁸⁵ Interv, Chamberlain with Heimlich, 4 Aug 1981.

⁸⁶ Min, Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(46)20, 30 Jul 1946. See also Memo, Mildred Biklen, Ch, Public Welfare Br, for Howley, 15 Aug 1946, sub: History of CARE and CRALOG in Berlin, file 3/177-2/11, OMGUS, LAB.

those beneficiaries, parcels with no addressees would be allocated throughout all sectors on the basis of population and distributed according to need.⁸⁷

The Americans were winning the battle over food. The victory, however, was due as much to image as to substance. The alchemy of public relations transformed CARE's packing boxes into political gold.

Materially, CARE offered little succor to the broad German masses. Instead, as Clay had remarked in mid-May, when he was negotiating the organization's contract, it favored a selected few. Recipients were generally individuals with relatives, friends, or acquaintances in the United States or people known on account of their positions—for example, eminent churchmen. These persons were usually among the best off, and as a result, the overwhelming share of parcels sent to Berlin went to people in Berlin's richest districts, concentrated in the American and British sectors. Residents of the American Sector received 7.3 parcels per thousand inhabitants, while those of the British Sector received 5.8. French Sector residents, however, who lived mainly in the proletarian district of Wedding, received only 1.3 parcels per thousand inhabitants. Soviet Sector residents received still less—0.8 parcels per thousand. The only parcels distributed according to need were ones mailed without specific addressees, but they constituted less than 5 percent of the total. The inequity was so egregious that in April 1947 the Western members of Kommandatura's public welfare committee urged the commandants to press CARE to alter its shipments in favor of general relief.⁸⁸

Moreover, as the statistics on per capita deliveries demonstrate, the volume of aid was so small in relation to Berlin's population that CARE had little impact on the overall food situation of the city, even in the most favored sectors of Berlin. Roughly 43,600 parcels arrived in the city from August through December 1946 for a population of some 3,133,000. Although deliveries increased during the following months, CARE never constituted more than a small supplement to the general food supply.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1946–1 Jul 1947, pp. 44–45; Min, Deputy Commandants' Mtg, BKD/M(46)40, 10 Sep 1946, file 11/148-2/1, OMGUS, LAB.

⁸⁸ Telg, Clay to Maj Gen Oliver P. Echols, Ch, War Dept Civil Affairs Division, 18 May 1946, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:206. The statistics embrace the period August through December 1946. See Rpt, Welfare and Refugee Committee, WERE/R(47)10, to the Deputy Commandants, 28 Apr 1947, sub: Operation of CARE, Encl to Kommandatura Rpt, BK/R(47)122, 28 Apr 1947, file 11/148-3/5, OMGUS, LAB.

⁸⁹ Rpt, Welfare and Refugee Committee, WERE/R(47)10, to the Deputy Commandants, 28 Apr 1947, sub: Operation of CARE, Encl to Kommandatura Rpt, BK/R(47)122, 28 Apr 1947, file 11/148-3/5, OMGUS, LAB; Main Statistical Office, *Berlin in Numbers*, p. 75. Over the entire period of military government up to the end of 1949, CARE shipped 739,000 food parcels to Berlin. See Four Year Rpt, 1 Jul 1945–1 Sep 1949, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 95. While impressive at first glance, the number appears less significant upon application of simple arithmetic, which reveals that the average Berliner received 12 percent of one CARE package over four year's time.

In the meantime, critical supplies of staple foodstuffs, chiefly grains and flour, reached Berlin in the form of bulk imports purchased in the United States by the American and British governments. These official shipments dwarfed all charity efforts and afforded the real buffer of survival for the city, providing one-fourth of the Western sector grain supply in 1945–1946 and two thirds in 1947—without counting imported dried milk, canned meats, cheese, and sugar. Also, the one meal a day that the United States furnished to German employees of the military government did much to bolster German morale.⁹⁰ However, this food lacked the psychological impact of CARE. Attempting to explain the disjuncture, General Clay surmised,

Much larger quantities of bulk food, largely grain, brought in with appropriated funds, lost their identity through processing before reaching the consumer. He knew something of the huge extent of this aid but it remained impersonal. On the other hand, when a CARE package arrived the consumer knew it was aid from America and that even the bitterness of war had not destroyed our compassion for suffering.⁹¹

The Western-licensed press seized on the human interest story playing out through the delivery of the CARE parcels. When the first packages arrived, newspapers like *Der Tagesspiegel* and *Telegraf* joined with the new U.S.-licensed women's illustrated magazine, *Sie*, to publicize joyful tales of Berliners, especially the aged, women, and little girls, receiving and unpacking their "treasures." The gifts were no mere "*packete*" (packages) but "*liebesgaben*"—literally, "love offerings," the term applied to parcels sent by Germans to loved ones in the trenches during World War I. Rather than spoil the story by admitting how little was available for general relief, *Der Tagesspiegel* explained how American churches, welfare organizations, and individuals were making "large contributions" of undesignated packages for distribution through German welfare agencies. Photographs of boxes piled high in the CARE warehouse lent the appearance of massive deliveries and concealed the program's negligible contribution to the general stock of food.⁹²

Yet, in times when marmalade was a luxury and peanut butter an exotic good, Berliners were dazzled by the contents of the packages, even by Spam and dried milk. Common people seemed not to begrudge the good fortunes of the "selected few" who laid hands on the goods but craved the bounty for themselves, and they saw America as its only source. CARE cast a humanitarian

⁹⁰ Monthly Rpt, Dec 1946, OMGUS, Mil Governor, no. 18, p. 28; Rpt, OMGUS, Berlin District, Statistical an. to Mil Governor, no. 42, Dec 1948, pp. 87–90. Both in CMH Library.

⁹¹ Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 277.

⁹² Newspaper clippings on CARE are collected in Col Frank L. Howley's Ofc file no. 4/135-2/3, OMGUS, LAB. See also Volker Igen, *Care-Paket & Co: Von Liebesgabe zum Westpaket* (Care Package and Co: From Love Offering to West Packages) (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2008), pp. 16–38, 70–93.

halo on the United States, advertised U.S. prosperity, and showed that the way to plenty lay in association with America.⁹³

The arrival of CARE, two months before the election, opened a fresh channel of aid, as well as the possibility of organizing it systematically. Liaison officers to the district administrations, for example, sent personal packages to mayors and other officials. More organized assistance began in July 1946, when the American Federation of Labor (AFL) decided to fund the regular shipment of packages to pro-Western trade unionists. George Silver, an employee of the OMGUS labor affairs branch, drove the action from Berlin. Silver, who had come to the military government from the Congress of Industrial Organizations, selected 500 labor union functionaries to receive monthly CARE parcels from the AFL. Of that group, 150 were active in Berlin. As Wiesner put it, "George Silver was running practically a one-man CARE operation and distributed mounds of packages and food." Given the overlap between the labor movement and the Social Democratic Party, Silver was aiding the Social Democrats—no coincidence, because Silver himself had once belonged to the American Socialist Party.⁹⁴

This use of CARE for political ends exemplifies the advantages accruing to the United States when combating an impoverished adversary who had few possibilities of mobilizing nonofficial aid. Clay's canon of nonpartisanship never impeded private initiatives. In fact, these actions were more effective than the gifts lavished by the Soviets on the Unity Socialists, for beneficiaries of American assistance did not appear before the voters as "American" parties in the way that the Socialist Unity Party appeared as the "Russian" party.⁹⁵

The Election and Its Consequences

The election campaign recalled the fiercest battles of the Weimar Republic. Led by their chairman, Franz Neumann, the Social Democrats unleashed a flood of invective against the Socialist Unity Party and the Soviets. Typical of their methods were Neumann's statements at a rally in East Berlin on 2 August, when he tore into the Unity Socialists, called for the return of Silesia and Pomerania to German administration, and demanded the restoration of the Social Democratic Party in the Soviet Zone. More cautious members of the party, who were concerned with their ability to administer the city once the

⁹³ For the role of the packages in symbolizing American wealth, see Steege, *Black Market, Cold War*, pp. 38–39.

⁹⁴ Interv, Chamberlain and Jürgen Wetzel with Louis A. Wiesner, 5 Jun 1981, Nr 82, Acc 3103, LAB. See also Michael Fichter, *Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften: Zur Entwicklung der US-Gewerkschaftspolitik in Deutschland, 1944–1948* (Occupying Power and Trade Unions: On the Development of U.S. Trade Union Policy in Germany, 1944–1948) (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982), pp. 122, 215–16; Interv, Chamberlain with Heimlich, 4 Aug 1981.

⁹⁵ For a discussion of the identification of the Socialist Unity Party with the Soviet Union, see Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 284–90.

campaign was over, went unheeded. Because the Christian Democratic Union and the Liberal Democratic Party had sister organizations that were seriously contesting local and state elections in the Soviet Zone, they had to dampen their rhetoric for fear of retaliation. This conceded a tremendous advantage to the Social Democrats, who could attract votes from the centrist and conservative camps by taking the hardest line against the Soviet occupiers.⁹⁶

Although the Soviets hindered the Social Democrats' campaign in the eastern part of Berlin, the election itself, conducted on Sunday, 20 October, under the eyes of quadripartite observation teams, was beyond reproach, and the results, after allocation of the "undecided," matched what the American opinion surveys had predicted. The tally in the whole of the city was as follows: Social Democratic Party, 48.7 percent; Christian Democratic Union, 22.2 percent; Socialist Unity Party, 19.8 percent; Liberal Democratic Party, 9.3 percent. Even in the Soviet Sector, which contained erstwhile strongholds of Communists, the Socialist Unity Party managed only 29.9 percent, compared with 43.6 percent for the Social Democrats. The Soviets had suffered an all-around defeat, calling into question their whole strategy of relying on the Socialist Unity Party to further their interests.⁹⁷

In an upbeat assessment for the secretary of state, Robert Murphy termed Berlin's elections "one of the outstanding examples of quadripartite cooperation and would not have been thought possible a year or even six months ago." He could not have known it at the time, but instead of clearing the path for further cooperation, the restoration of democracy had severely weakened the four-power regime.⁹⁸

The early successes of quadripartite control hinged on the absence of politics in the affairs of the Kommandatura. In January 1946, Colonel Howley described military government as an administration of "specialists" whose job was to control epidemics, clear pollution from the waterways, chlorinate the water, resume utility services, weatherproof homes, and reopen banks. Disagreements, he noted several months later, were among experts, because "when you have

⁹⁶ See political summaries in Telg, Sir William Strang, Political Adviser to Cdr in Ch, Germany, to Foreign Ofc, 17 Aug 1946, C9707, FO 371/55906; Political Intel Rpt, U.K. Intelligence Control Staff, Berlin, British Army of the Rhine, no. 43, 6 Oct 1946, FO 1005/1728. Both in Public Records Office (PRO), National Archives, London, England.

⁹⁷ "Ergebnis der Wahlen zur Stadtverordnetenversammlung, 20. Oktober 1946" (Result of the Election to the City Assembly of Representatives) in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:1139–40. On the same day as the Berlin vote, polling for the Soviet Zone state parliaments yielded an even more remarkable result, as the bourgeois parties, contesting the elections with no protection from the three Western powers, outpolled the SED 49.1 to 47.5 percent. Intel Notes, OMGUS, ODI, no. 27, 26 Oct 1946, file 3/430-2/15, OMGUS, BAK. See also Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 328–29.

⁹⁸ Ltr, Murphy to Byrnes, 1 Nov 1946, file 459/5, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

four experts you have four different points of view.” Politics, however, had little to do with their work.⁹⁹

By the middle of 1946, however, this essential condition no longer held. Disagreements among experts, who argued on a basis of technical facts, yielded to disputes fought on grounds of ideology. The quarrels over party recognition and the timing of Berlin’s elections were harbingers of a politicization of the Kommandatura’s affairs that would make it progressively more difficult to compromise positions and would steadily diminish the areas of practical cooperation. An unintended consequence of the American push for free and open elections in Berlin was the ultimate fracturing of a system that could work only so long as the powers focused on material concerns while downplaying wider principles and ideologies.

Finally, fledgling democracy changed the character of the U.S. military government in Berlin. If the governing maxims of the military occupation were to control a defeated people in the strategic interests of the wartime allies, to mitigate social disruption, and to restore civil government without showing favor in domestic politics, they had become less important by the end of 1946. The military government was now concerned less with controlling the Berliners than with backing one group in its battle with another supported by the opposing power. Instead of punishing the Germans, the Americans had begun to counter the Soviets in acts of competitive beneficence. Whereas politics had once been suppressed in an administration of specialists, politics would now pervade actions and relationships, and place more weight on the political importance of the jointly occupied city.

⁹⁹ Six Months Rpts, 4 Jul 1945–3 Jan 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 8; and 4 Jan–3 Jul 1946, HQ, OMGUS, Berlin District, pp. 7–8.

7

THE FISSURE WIDENS

By 1947, the U.S. Army had achieved most of the military goals originally set for the occupation of Berlin. The process of denazification was as complete as the practical and political realities of the German recovery were ever going to allow it to be. Military government teams and security forces had restored most utilities and services, and the city was on the road to recovery. Daily patrols, guards manning security checkpoints, and the presence of rapid-response reaction forces provided a safe environment in which workers could restore the basic functions of the city. At the same time, the Army had reduced its force structure within the city to the point where it no longer stretched the capability of the German economy to support it. Moreover, U.S. soldiers in Berlin had grown accustomed to the requirements of their occupation duties and had settled into the daily routine of military life in the city. Unit commanders had improved morale and restored discipline to the point where neither issue was going to dominate the concerns of military or civilian leaders in Berlin. Even in the Kommandatura, the delegations had reached a *modus vivendi* that allowed most city business to be transacted with a minimum of political ardor. City elections at the end of 1946 provided only a hint of the political turmoil and conflict that would eventually split the city.

In truth, it was this very equanimity that would set the stage for the year-long battle among the Germans for the political control of the city. To U.S. military leaders, the occupation of Berlin remained an administrative mission. Berlin was simply another city, part of a conquered nation that the Army had to monitor as it found its way back into the good graces of civilized society. But the Cold War had begun. Even before the soldiers understood, the city of Berlin was gaining political importance far beyond its traditional military value. Some civilian leaders, most prominently Winston Churchill, and perhaps even General Lucius D. Clay had begun to understand the political importance that this four-power bastion surrounded in a Communist sea would acquire.

More important for the citizens of Berlin, many of its own political leaders had reached a similar conclusion. The initial battles for Berlin would be political as the various parties struggled for power within the city's controlling organs, primarily the Magistrat and the various offices of city government. These party struggles became proxy battles between East and West for primacy throughout the city. By the end of the year, both sides would begin to understand how

important Berlin had become as a symbol of the conflict between two competing ideologies.

The Occupation Becomes Routine

By the beginning of 1947, most of the U.S. Army's postwar demobilization from Europe was complete. Troop strength in Berlin had bottomed out at slightly more than 6,000, a total it would maintain, except for a small reinforcement during the 1961 crisis, for the remainder of the Cold War. Major units in the city under the Berlin Command included the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry; the 16th Constabulary Squadron; the 759th Military Police Battalion; the 1151st Engineer Group; the 279th Station Hospital; the 549th Quartermaster Group; the 3110th Signal Service Battalion; and the 111th Transport Truck Battalion. Attached to the Berlin Command but assigned to U.S. Forces, European Theater, were the 7706th Armed Forces Network Company, the 3160th and 3112th Signal Service Battalions, the 3264th Photographic Signal Service Company, and the 3341st Signal Service Company.¹

During the month of February 1947, several changes of importance took place within the headquarters of the Berlin Command. These included the establishment of the Office of the Chief of Staff, the reorganization of the Office of the Headquarters Commandant, and the abolition of the Office of the Administrative Officer. The new chief of staff assumed a role as the principle coordinator of the staff with direct supervision over the Judge Advocate General, the Inspector General, and the Visitors Bureau. Up until this time, those functions had been the responsibility of the deputy commander. The Commanding Officer, 7782d Special Troops Battalion, was redesignated Headquarters Commandant of Headquarters, Berlin Command, and the Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS). He assumed responsibility for all immediate administrative and support functions relating to the headquarters and its facilities.²

As guard duties became more routine, the Army leaders in Berlin looked for ways to increase U.S. military visibility within the sector. An emphasis on parades and ceremonies fulfilled that requirement. The command held retreat parades on the lawn of Truman Hall, a mess hall rebuilt from rubble and soon to become the site of the U.S. Army shopping center in Berlin. The fife and drum corps of the 298th Army Band, the 7800th Infantry Honor Platoon (Honor Guard), and the Honor Platoon, 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, rendered appropriate honors for the arrival and departure of visiting dignitaries, represented the command at formal ceremonies throughout the European Theater, and performed for football games at Berlin's Olympic Stadium.

¹ Consolidated Strength Return, HQ, Berlin Cmd, OMGUS, 6 Jan 1947, Entry A11772, Subject Files, 1947-1948, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, RG 260, NACP.

² Activities Rpt, 1 Nov 1946-30 Jun 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, Entry A11780, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, 1947-1948, RG 260, NACP.

The horse platoon with the 16th Constabulary Squadron also conducted demonstrations on the squadron parade ground with music provided by the 298th Army Band.³

The two primary tactical units in Berlin—the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, and the 16th Constabulary Squadron—continued a minimal program of tactical training as their duty schedules and the number of personnel available for training permitted. Headquarters, Berlin Command, called out elements of the two units periodically for practice alerts. Both units also conducted a limited amount of small-arms range firing and emphasized individual and small-unit skills as they were able. In December, engineers completed work on an indoor small-caliber rifle and pistol range, allowing the command to begin indoor competitions. The 16th Constabulary Squadron held additional training every fourth month as they rotated through a special guard detail for German war criminals at Spandau Prison. Engineer units in the city continued their missions of restoring roads, repairing buildings, and developing the support infrastructure for the occupation force. Of particular note was the plan approved by the Berlin Command to rehabilitate and construct an additional nine holes at the American golf course.⁴

The reduction in troop strength of the Berlin garrison also had the effect of limiting the amount of training that the Berlin Command could conduct. With tactical troop strength down to the equivalent of two battalions—the 16th Constabulary Squadron and the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry—the command had just enough soldiers available to carry out the required tasks of the occupation. New missions continued to evolve, such as a requirement to provide guards on trains running between Berlin and the U.S. Zone. Also, a steady decrease in the allocation of gasoline available to the command limited vehicle usage to only essential tasks. As a result, troops in Berlin remained focused primarily on their occupation duties rather than on training for other contingencies.⁵

Perhaps the most significant development for the U.S. Army units in Berlin during this period was the continued growth of the dependent population. As of 4 October 1947, the command reported 1,314 dependent families in Berlin, including 944 minors and 1,395 spouses and adult children. Additionally, the command was processing an increasing number of marriage applications between American personnel and German women. By the end of the year, the Berlin Command S-1 section reported that monthly head counts at military messes had declined throughout the period due to the influx of dependents

³ Weekly Activity Rpt, 29 Oct 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, Entry A11776, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd Rpts, 1947, RG 260, NACP; Quarterly Cmd Rpt, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, S-3 Br, Entry A11780, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd Unit Rpts, RG 260, NACP.

⁴ Weekly Activity Rpts, 24 Nov 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd; 29 Oct 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd; and 4 Oct 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd. All in Entry A11776, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd Rpts, 1947, RG 260, NACP.

⁵ Quarterly Cmd Rpt, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd, S-3 Br.

and the opening of special family messes. The command continued to develop recreational and support facilities to support the influx of dependents.⁶

Preparing the Political Battleground

Conflicts between the four Allied powers over the administration of the larger German occupation would ultimately come to affect the growing East-West schism in Berlin. Increasing frustration and distrust among U.S. policymakers over Soviet motives in Germany permeated Western decision making. Although many differences arose between the four Allies, disagreement between the United States and the Soviet Union over the economic recovery of Germany came to dominate the dispute.

Ultimately, the four wartime Allies wanted a self-supporting Germany. This they viewed as essential to the economic revival of Europe. They disagreed, however, on the actions and policies to achieve that goal as well as immediate postwar priorities. The Soviet Union wished, first and foremost, to collect economic, industrial, and agricultural reparations from Germany to begin its own recovery from wartime devastation. The Western Allies, particularly the United States, expressed greater concerns for the economic costs of supporting German recovery and reigniting its economy. Many American leaders perceived that goods and infrastructure removed from Germany by the Soviets as reparations would have to be offset by a greater level of investment on the part of the United States.⁷

In order to advance the economic and political development of the regions under their control, U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, in late 1946, opened discussions toward bringing about the economic unification of the American and British Zones of occupation. Then, in January 1947, the two powers announced the formation of the Bizone, a combination of the two areas. This supported the American objective, announced by Byrnes, of bringing about German economic unity and increasing the Germans' responsibility for their own politics and economy. The French military government obstructed any interzonal coordination, and the Soviets could not allow any cooperation that might threaten Communist authority in their zone. Nonetheless, the U.S. and British Bizone was the first

⁶ Memo, Lt Col Chester H. Anderson, Executive Ofcr, Ofc of the HQ Commandant, for Historical Ofcr, Berlin Cmd, 23 Jan 1948, sub: Quarterly Report of Operations for the Period 1 Oct–31 Dec 1947, Entry A11771, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, General Corresp, 1947–1948, RG 260, NACP; Weekly Activity Rpt, 4 Oct 1947, HQ, Berlin Cmd.

⁷ Monograph, HQ, USAREUR, Opns Div, 1962, sub: The U.S. Army in Berlin, 1945–1961, Historians files, CMH. For an in-depth discussion of four-power discussions, see Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*; John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); and Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

step in aligning political and economic policies across two zones. It established a nucleus for what would eventually become West Germany.

In light of this development, in July 1947 the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a directive to General Clay, outlining his authority as the new military governor in Germany and stating the objectives of the U.S. government for the occupation. The document superseded JCS 1067 which had established original U.S. policy in Germany in 1945. While the guidance began with the goal of a just and lasting peace, it placed a new emphasis on restoring prosperity throughout Western Europe and stressed the need for an economically productive Germany to attain that end.⁸

The opening paragraphs of the document dealt with the reestablishment of German self-government in the U.S. Zone. It directed Clay to promote the assumption of direct responsibility by German governmental agencies, assuring them legislative, judicial, and executive powers consistent with military security and the purposes of the occupation. While the U.S. government did not wish to impose its own historically developed form of democracy and social organization on Germany, it was equally firm that the Allies impose no other external form of government. The ultimate constitutional form of German political life should be left to the decision of the German people, made freely in accordance with democratic processes.⁹

Most significant, however, especially given the recent formation of the Bizone, were the instructions regarding the economic and financial recovery of Germany. The German people, the document continued, were entitled to develop their resources for the purposes of achieving a higher standard of living. Excessive reparations would limit the economic recovery of both Germany and Western Europe. Clay was encouraged to secure agreements in the Allied Control Council that would treat all of Germany as a single economic unit and that would set common policies in the fields of finance, transport, communications, and foreign trade. In fact, the U.S. government viewed the reorganization of German finances and the attainment of fiscal stability to be the essential element in Germany's economic recovery. Key to this stability would be the establishment of a central authority for the production, issuance, and control of currency across Germany. The latter would be the issue that would most sharply divide the Allied Control Council and would ultimately end four-power cooperation in Berlin.¹⁰

The Uncertainties

These developments in the larger German occupation underscored the importance of the political activity in Berlin. With all four powers in attendance,

⁸ Msg, JCS to General Lucius D. Clay, 11 Jul 1947, sub: Military Government of Germany, Chairman's Files-Leahy, Rcds of the JCS, RG 218, NACP.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.; Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1:350.

the city served as a microcosm for the brewing tensions between East and West in the early stages of the Cold War. With Berlin already emerging as a potential hot spot in the conflict, elections there would bring the conflict even more sharply into focus.

On 28 October 1946, eight days after the Berlin elections that had brought the Social Democratic Party to power, Lt. Col. Frank L. Howley submitted an assessment of these elections to the OMGUS leadership. Its author—Lt. Col. Louis Glaser, chief of Howley’s civil administrative branch—summarized the events leading up to the election, described the conduct of the vote under quadripartite supervision, analyzed the reasons for the victory of the Social Democrats, and discussed the problems facing them due to the ambiguity of their program and their lack of experienced leadership. Glaser wrote these pages in a confident tone; however, in the closing section he suddenly became tentative. Despite “close touch with all four political parties and many private intimate discussions with their leaders,” he deemed it “impracticable” to make a “rational appraisal” of the future because three uncertainties stood in the way.¹¹

The first uncertainty was the attitude of the Soviet Union. Berliners most feared a “definite display of Soviet displeasure,” which might take shape in sabotage of the city administration, in favored treatment of the Eastern sector at the expense of the others, or in a deliberate undermining of quadripartite government. Alternatively, Colonel Glaser said the Soviets might play a waiting game by politically reinforcing the stricken Socialist Unity Party while relying on “education and indoctrination” to achieve their goals over time instead of trying to force their way through coercion.

The second uncertainty was the “disposition” of the Social Democratic Party. Whether it was still “Marxian,” or could even be defined as a worker’s party, was open to question. Anticommunism united it with the Christian Democrats, but if the two groups really stood for anything, Glaser stated, “Such an alliance would be completely artificial.” Berliners had voted against the Soviets rather than for the Social Democrats, so public support for the party was not as strong as it appeared. Nonetheless, the Social Democrats now had to take practical responsibility for running the administration and for maintaining “a delicate balance between quadripartite military government and the desires of the people.”¹²

The final uncertainty, in Glaser’s eyes, was the reaction of the Socialist Unity Party to its political rebuff. It might refuse all responsibility and seek to obstruct the work of the new Magistrat. It might serve as a “loyal opposition” in the City Assembly. Lastly, it might seek an understanding with the Social Democrats. “It is a curious possibility,” wrote Glaser, “but there may be a

¹¹ Rpt, Lt Col Louis Glaser, Ch, Civil Administration Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, to CG, Berlin District, 28 Oct 1946, sub: Berlin Elections, file 495/5, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

¹² Ibid.

sudden cessation of open hostility to the SPD and a re-enunciation of the principle that all the workers are brothers, that they have only mutual aims and ambitions, that they, the proletariat must stand together, even if in different political parties.” Through such a shift, the party might win over the Social Democrats, “at least to the extent of legislative and administrative cooperation,” and eventually widen these inroads to dominate the city government despite its defeat at the polls. Glaser, as well as Howley, perceived dangers arising from a moderation of Communist objectives and the blurring of ideological distinctions. To the extent that the Socialist Unity Party abandoned the rhetoric and “sledgehammer” tactics of hardline communism, it could seek rapprochement with the Social Democrats, build respectful relationships with the other German political parties, and expand its influence through a program of ostensible collaboration.¹³

Glaser neglected to discuss a fourth uncertainty—the attitude and actions of the Americans themselves. Like the Soviets, the Social Democrats, and the Socialist Unity Party, the U.S. military government also had political choices. The path of least resistance would be to seek a *modus vivendi* under which the Americans would push hard issues into the future in order to proceed in the present. They would thus encourage the Germans to establish an administration of experts, devoted to tackling the immediate needs of the population while forswearing politics. Meanwhile, within the *Kommandatura*, they would evade clashes over principle and try to get on with the Soviets through pragmatic give and take. This was the approach favored by most of the Army’s senior leaders, who recognized the military vulnerability of the surrounded city. This solution would respect the fact that Berlin was an enclave in the Eastern Zone of occupation, and that, should they choose, the Soviets could make life exceedingly uncomfortable.

A more ambitious option would be to exploit the astonishing victory of the anti-Communist parties and to turn Berlin into a political fortress behind the Soviet lines. The Americans could encourage the Social Democrats to take maximum advantage of their success, to purge the administration of Soviet-appointed officials, and to coalesce with the middle class parties instead of succumbing to “fraternal” overtures from the Unity Socialists. The goal would be to roll back Communist influence in Berlin as part of the wider struggle for Germany. This was a course of action that appealed to a growing number of political leaders in the United States, who foresaw the coming conflict with the Soviet Union. If this approach led to friction with the Soviet Union, the United States would accept the costs because it was in Berlin for political purposes exceeding the administration of a city bureaucracy. In pursuing such a course, American officials would be taking the offensive on treacherous terrain. Yet, in defying the reality of Berlin’s geography, they could count on German popular sentiment as well as the militance of leading Social Democrats.

¹³ Ibid.

Restoring Self-Government to Berlin

For the Germans as well as for the occupying forces, the next phase of political transition in Berlin would be critical. The new city government would have to be guided by a constitution, specifying the powers to be restored to the elected leaders of the city while also identifying those controls that would still be maintained by the Kommandatura and the Allied Control Council. It went without saying that the nature of the new constitution might also illuminate the political goals of East and West within the city and their vision for the future of the metropolis.

The new city government would initially be based on a “provisional” constitution written by the Kommandatura’s local government committee following the Allied Control Council’s ruling on the Berlin elections. Drafted in scarcely six weeks during June and July, the document marked a high point of quadripartite cooperation but bore signs of haste. To meet a deadline imposed by the October election date—and to avoid having to consult other committees of the Kommandatura on detailed policy issues—the drafting officers omitted many matters that a complete constitution would have covered. The provisional character of their work was especially apparent in its penultimate clause, Article 35, which directed the City Assembly—the *Stadtverordnetenversammlung*—to draft a new, permanent constitution by 1 May 1948. In Glaser’s view, this provision was “probably the most important clause” in a document that, as Howley informed Clay, formed a “sound basis for the elections in October” but was “far from perfect if judged by constitutional lawyers.”¹⁴

When the commandants sent the constitution to the Magistrat on 13 August 1947, they addressed a covering letter to the mayor. The letter termed the reestablishment of constitutional government a “historical event.” The commandants professed “their desire to establish political independence in Berlin, [to] give the population the right to determine by themselves the form of their government,” and to “transmit all powers into the hands of representatives elected by the population.” The constitution would take effect in October, following the elections. At that time, they would “transfer all responsibility for the government of Berlin under the guidance of the Allied Kommandatura Berlin to the population of the city, firmly convinced that democratic development would never cease.”¹⁵

In contrast, however, the very last article of the constitution, Article 36, spelled out the limitations implied under “guidance.” It asserted that “the independent administration of Greater Berlin is subordinate to the Allied

¹⁴ Rpt, Glaser to Cdrs and Leading Staff, OMGUS, Berlin District, and Ofc of Political Adviser, 26 Aug 1946, sub: Berlin Constitution, file 1943-46/10/5, OMGUS, BAK; Memo, Col Frank L. Howley for General Lucius D. Clay, 25 Jul 1946, sub: Proposed Constitution for Berlin, file 2/92-2/23, OMGUS, BAK.

¹⁵ Ltr, Allied Commandants (Kotikov, Keating, Nares, and Lançon) to Arthur Werner, Mayor of Berlin, 13 Aug 1945, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945-1951*, 1:1101.

Kommandatura” and that “all legal enactments which are accepted by the City Assembly, as well as ordinances and instructions issued by the Magistrat, must conform to the laws and ordinances of the Allied powers in Germany and the Allied Kommandatura, Berlin, and be sanctioned by the latter.” The article went on to stipulate that “constitutional changes, the resignation of the Magistrat or one of its members, as well as the appointment and dismissal of leading persons of the city administration can be carried out only with the approval of the Allied Kommandatura.”¹⁶

The limitations were so encompassing that they contradicted the spirit as well as the substance of the commandants’ letter. The inconsistency of the texts made it impossible to grasp on what the occupying powers had actually agreed. As an upshot, the relationship between the Kommandatura and Berlin’s elected government was fraught with ambiguity.

The provisions concerning the installation of the new Magistrat were also unclear. Following the procedures of the preliminary constitution, members of the City Assembly were elected by popular vote. These deputies would then “elect” a Magistrat consisting of the mayor, three deputy mayors, and up to sixteen department heads. It was clear that deputies elected by the people could take their seats in the assembly without the approval of the Kommandatura. However, the constitution said nothing about the Magistrat. Could its members take office once elected by the assembly, or would they require approval from the Kommandatura? In a detailed exposition written for the American leadership at the end of August, Colonel Glaser never mentioned the issue.¹⁷

A close rereading of the stipulations of Article 36 revealed no answer to the question of the installation of the Magistrat. Was this an oversight, or was the omission intended? Why would the Kommandatura assert the right to approve all *resignations* from the Magistrat, and claim as well authority over appointments to “leading” positions immediately below it, while abjuring the same right to oversee the selection of its members? True, the “election” of a Magistrat could be construed as a “legal enactment” requiring the approval of the powers. Yet, albeit plausible, this interpretation was hardly self-evident. It appears that the drafters of the constitution were unwilling to pin themselves down prior to learning the outcome of the election. Only after the results came in would they know how to “clarify” the ambiguities of the constitution. If the Socialist Unity Party did well, the Soviets could propound self-administration;

¹⁶ Article 36, Provisional Constitution of Greater Berlin, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:1111.

¹⁷ Rpt, Civil Administration Br to Cdrs and Leading Staff, Berlin District, 26 Aug 1946, sub: Berlin Constitution, file 1943-46/10/5, OMGUS, BAK. The fact that the constitution appeared in four languages (English, French, German, and Russian) added to the difficulties. In order to simplify the drafting, the local government committee agreed that the German version would be legally definitive.

if it failed, they could demand strict control. On their side, the Western powers could follow the same script in reverse.

Directly after the elections in October 1946, the political parties had begun negotiations over the distribution of offices in the new Magistrat. Through a peculiarity of the provisional constitution, all parties seated in the City Assembly had a right to representation in the Magistrat unless they chose to decline. The Socialist Unity Party immediately resolved two of Glaser's uncertainties about its future course by announcing its intention to take part in the administration. It thus would neither refuse responsibility nor play the role of loyal opposition. At the same time, one of the party's cochairmen, Max Fechner, suggested a resolution to Glaser's third uncertainty—his party's relationship with the Social Democrats. In a statement to party functionaries on 24 October, Fechner called for rapprochement. "It would not serve the common goal," he said, "if the two workers parties fight among themselves instead of using their majority for the good of the people."¹⁸

Fechner, recently a Social Democrat, was expressing the views of many comrades who had retained social democratic principles and identities even after they embraced—or acquiesced in—fusion with the Communists. In the aftermath of the Socialist Unity Party's defeat in Berlin, party officials engaged in bold, unsparing discussions regarding the causes of their defeat, their conduct toward the Social Democrats, and the values and practice of political democracy.¹⁹

The press reported Fechner's statement, as well as other rumored offers of Socialist Unity Party cooperation with the Social Democrats. U.S. military government intelligence analysts took this prospect of a rapprochement seriously. They believed it to be in the best interests of the United States to maintain the schism between the two parties. To make peace with the Socialist Unity Party would be to invite more Communists to the governing table in Berlin. The Americans moved with alacrity to exorcise that specter. Officials within the Civil Affairs Branch sought to isolate the Unity Socialists by fostering a center-left coalition between the Social Democrats and the Christian Democratic Union. The Social Democrats, however, felt entitled to the richest fruits of victory, while the Christian Democrats believed they were being slighted over posts. "The people of Berlin would not want to see the domination of the SED replaced by

¹⁸ Max Fechner's statement to party functionaries, 24 Oct 1946, quote from Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:1149.

¹⁹ Harold Hurwitz, *Die Stalinisierung der SED: Zum Verlust von Freiräumen und sozialdemokratischer Identität in den Vorständen 1946–1949* (The Stalinization of the SED: The Loss of Free Space and Social Democratic Identity in the Party Executives 1946–1949) (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997), p. 153.

the domination of the SPD,” fumed the Christian Democratic parliamentary leader, Kurt Landsberg.²⁰

To bring the two parties together, Capt. Ulrich E. Biel of the military government’s Civil Administration Branch called a gathering on 3 November 1947 to help them come to terms over the distribution of posts in the Magistrat. The affair began at 2100. In addition to Biel, the American participants included Robert Murphy’s vehemently pro-Social Democratic labor adviser, Louis Wiesner, and Glaser’s deputy, Lt. Col. William F. Heimlich. The French and British military government each sent one representative; four top leaders appeared from the Berlin Social Democratic Party, and three from the Christian Democratic Union, including Ernst Lemmer, cochairman of the zonal party. Although Heimlich outranked Captain Biel, Biel ran the meeting, expressing “personal opinions” on the assignment of offices in the new Magistrat, and the discussion focused on his proposals. The British and French officers declined to comment on the grounds that the composition of the Magistrat should be entrusted entirely to the City Assembly.²¹

It is impossible to gauge exactly what impact the captain’s personal opinions had on the composition of the Magistrat. It is nonetheless clear that, in subsequent negotiations over posts, the Social Democrats backed the Christian Democratic Union. When both the Christian Democrats and Unity Socialists laid claim to the social welfare office, the Social Democrats, who commanded such a plurality that no position could be filled without their assent, handed it to the Christian Democrats. In doing this, they not only accommodated a key Christian Democratic demand, but also rebuffed the Unity Socialists’ claim to an office they particularly coveted as relevant to the needs of the working population. Moreover, in subsequent debates in the City Assembly, the Social Democrats defended the right of the middle class parties to name whomever they wished to their allotted offices and condemned the Unity Socialists when they objected to certain Christian Democratic and liberal nominees.²²

²⁰ Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:1149; William Stivers, “Was Sovietization Inevitable? U.S. Intelligence Perceptions of Internal Developments in the Soviet Zone of Occupation in Germany,” *Journal of Intelligence History* 5 (Summer 2005): 53–56; Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 12, 6 Jul 1946, file 7/39-3/3, OMGUS, BAK.

²¹ MFR, HQ, Mil Government, British Troops, Berlin, 6 Nov 1946, sub: American Reception of Political Parties, 75358, FO 1049/2203, PRO. The records of the U.S. military government, Berlin, contain no mention of the meeting. This elicits speculation as to whether Captain Biel’s initiative was an action, like U.S. food assistance to politicians, which American officers were at pains to conceal from General Clay, who had prohibited this sort of effort in his instruction of 23 June 1946 to the directors of the state military governments.

²² Hurwitz, *The Stalinization of the SED*, pp.172–73; “Stellungnahme von Gustav Klingelhöfer (SPD) in der Stadtverordnetenversammlung über die Rolle der Parteien bei der Besetzung politischer Ämter, 5. Dezember 1946” (Statement by Gustav Klingelhöfer . . . in the City Assembly on the role of the parties in the filling of political offices, 5 Dec 1946), in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1151–52. Klingelhöfer was the SPD counselor for economics.

So, through clandestine persuasion, very much in the manner of traditional American smoke-filled room deal making, U.S. military government officials were able to influence the political composition of the fledgling Berlin Magistrat. Although most of the U.S. Army's leaders in Berlin had not yet realized what was happening, a select few were well on their way toward turning the city into a symbol of the looming East-West conflict.

Seating the Magistrat

The interparty negotiations over the Magistrat were finished by late November 1947, and the City Assembly was set to meet for the first time on the twenty-sixth to ratify the parties' selections. Yet the question over whether the new body required approval from the Kommandatura remained unresolved. Because the Soviets held the chairmanship for November, Maj. Gen. Alexander G. Kotikov took it on himself to clarify the ambiguity, purportedly on behalf of all four commandants.

On 25 November, the day before the scheduled meeting of the City Assembly, the Soviet liaison officer at the Magistrat delivered oral instructions for the assembly's council of elders. He authorized the election and installation of the successor Magistrat on 28 November but then added a critical proviso: before assuming their official duties, the newly elected members would have to be confirmed by the Kommandatura. With this peremptory message, the Soviets ignited a dispute, latent in the confusions of the provisional constitution, over the freedom of action of Berlin's new government.²³

In a meeting of the commandants the following day, the Western representatives rejected General Kotikov's contention that members of the Magistrat needed advance confirmation from the Kommandatura. Standing in for Maj. Gen. Frank L. Keating, Colonel Howley first demanded withdrawal of the instruction but later relented on the grounds that the Soviet message was an interpretation rather than an order. Howley added, however, that if "prior approval" were necessary for the seating of the Magistrat, then—in view of the unanimity rule—any one of the powers could block the action and reduce Berlin's executive "from an elected . . . to a puppet body." In general, Howley declared, the Kommandatura should intervene only if the German administration violated democratic principles, acted against the interests of the occupational powers, or displayed incompetence. The new Magistrat, he asserted, "was a duly elected democratic government, which was expected to function in accordance with the wishes of the German people of Berlin. . . . The Kommandatura . . . had granted an election, and had thus shown its confidence

²³ MFR, Otto Suhr, Speaker of the City Assembly, 25 Nov 1946, sub: "Aktentnotiz" (Note for the Files), in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1150.

in the ability of the Germans to operate their own affairs; this should not be denied them.”²⁴

The commandants agreed to send their dispute to the local government committee. On 27 November, the committee returned two papers, one stating the Soviet opinion and the second a combined Western point of view. The papers reiterated the commandant’s positions with two variations. First, the Soviet paper now stressed the need to accept the formal resignation of the former Magistrat as an added condition for allowing the successor body to begin work. Second, the Western Allies qualified their liberal attitudes toward German self-administration, asserting, in the last paragraph of their paper, that “the emphasis on the right of self-determination by elected bodies” did not affect the right of the Allied Kommandatura “to remove any official or public servant, whether elected or appointed” or to alter the framework of the administration when considered necessary.²⁵

When the deputy commandants met on 29 November, the chairman, Col. Alexi I. Yelizarov, struck a conciliatory note. The disagreement had arisen through a misunderstanding, he stated. While the Soviet interpretation of Article 36 was incontrovertible, “it was certainly not obligatory” to invoke it every time. Echoing Howley, Yelizarov continued, “If the laws of the occupying powers were not infringed, there would be no need to apply the provisions of this Article.” The French representative followed with an ingenious formulation designed to satisfy all sides. Inching slightly toward the Soviet viewpoint, he found Article 36 perfectly clear: “The Germans should feel that, while they had certain rights, they were not entirely free in their actions.” The Magistrat should submit proposals on its composition and membership to the Kommandatura so that the latter could disapprove anything that conflicted with its policies. Any failure to *disapprove* these proposals amounted to “implicit approval” by the powers. While withholding commentary on this ingenious logic, Howley embraced the suggested procedure; the assembly would be free to install the Magistrat, but if the Kommandatura found any member to be unsuitable, it could remove that person afterward—a system of “post disapproval.” Yelizarov agreed with Howley’s statement.²⁶

The Soviet deputy’s agreement was surprising. For the practice of post disapproval, as proposed by the French and American representatives, meant that the powers could disapprove the City Assembly’s choices only after the fact. As a result, candidates could take office, and remain there, unless the Kommandatura removed them by unanimous vote. Kotikov, however, had demanded prior approval. The Kommandatura would need to approve the

²⁴ Min, Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(46)32, 26 Nov 1946, file 11/146-1/11, OMGUS, LAB.

²⁵ Rpt, Local Government Committee for Chairman Ch of Staff, Allied Kommandatura, Berlin, 27 Nov 1946, sub: Approval of the Composition and Leadership of the new Magistrat, file 11/148-2/9, OMGUS, LAB.

²⁶ Min, Deputy Commandants’ Mtg, BKD/M(46)51, 29 Nov 1946, file 11/148-2/2, OMGUS, LAB.

assembly's nominees before they entered office, thereby giving each power a right of veto over the Magistrat. Hence, it was virtually certain that Kotikov would rescind Yelizarov's concession.

On 5 December the assembly elected the new Magistrat. The outgoing Oberbürgermeister, Arthur Werner, wrote a letter to the Kommandatura, requesting approval for the resignation of the old Magistrat. In the meantime, however, he refused to let the new administration take over, threatening to expel its members from the city hall if they dared to appear. He was probably following Soviet instructions. As long as the old Magistrat remained in place, the successor could not start work until the Soviets had won their point on prior approval.²⁷

In the commandants' meeting of 6 December, Kotikov again insisted on approving the Magistrat's membership in advance. Citing Article 36, the Soviet commandant now stressed the need formally to accept the resignation of the old Magistrat. Backed by the French and British, Keating replied that the old Magistrat was automatically out of office once its successor had been elected. This said, the commandants referred the issue to the local government committee, giving it three days to make recommendations.²⁸

Up to this point, the commandants had been debating principles rather than the actual membership of the Magistrat. When the local government committee examined individual names, only three emerged as problematic. The Soviets regarded the Christian Democratic candidate for the office of budget and taxes, Otto Ernst, as politically tainted and the Liberal Democratic candidate for postal services and telephone, Karl Delius, as incapable and too old. The third objection arising in the committee concerned the Social Democratic candidate for the office of youth affairs, Erna Maraun. The committee believed that her office, the Youth Department, was possibly superfluous and should be subjected to further examination.

The committee then drafted an order to the president of the City Assembly, Social Democrat Otto Suhr. Its aim was to allow the Magistrat to take office promptly even as fundamental differences remained unsettled. The commandants would "permit" the resignation of the old Magistrat, and it would "immediately" hand over its functions to the new administration, "which has the approval of the Allied Kommandatura." Referring to the three individuals in question, the letter asserted that "[t]he commandants have no objections to the new Magistrat" except in the cases of Ernst, Delius, and Maraun. Ernst, they said, must be replaced, while the decisions on the others were still pending.²⁹

²⁷ Quarterly Cmd Rpt, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1946, HQ, Berlin Cmd, pp. 53–57, Howley Papers, AHEC; Dir, Allied Kommandatura, Berlin, to Chairman of the City Assembly, BK/O(46)438, 10 Dec 1946, sub: Resignation of the Old and Installation of the New Magistrat, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1152–53.

²⁸ Min, Commandants' Mtg, BKC/M(46)33, 6 Dec 1946, file 11/148-1/11, OMGUS, LAB.

²⁹ Rpt, Local Government Committee for the Commandants, BK/R(46)421, 9 Dec 1946, sub: Structure and Membership of the Magistrat, file 19/6, OMGUS, BAK.

The commandants discussed the order when they met in an extraordinary session on 10 December. Representing Keating, Howley termed the recommendations of the local government committee a practical though imperfect solution “to a very difficult problem” and moved to accept them. The need of the moment, he felt, was to place the Magistrat in office and to eliminate confusion. The French and British commandants agreed, at the same time reiterating their objections to the Soviet interpretation of Article 36. The French commandant, however, made a slight bow to Kotikov by repeating the formulation that, in rejecting Ernst and Delius, the Kommandatura was granting implicit approval to the others. The British commandant, Maj. Gen. Eric P. Nares, stressed the need “to compromise in such a way as to permit the new Magistrat to assume office without making the president of the Assembly aware of . . . a difference of opinion between the Commandants.” Disagreements over the constitution “could be settled later.” After some haggling over language, Kotikov assented to the proposals of the other commandants.³⁰

One point remained. Kotikov wanted to add a fourth name to the list of objections: Ernst Reuter. The Social Democratic choice for the Office of Transportation and Public Utilities, Reuter had returned to the city from exile in Turkey only several days before. Undeniably the most proficient and accomplished Social Democratic politician in Berlin—and intellectually far superior to the local politicians who had led the battle against fusion with the Communists—he was an internationally recognized authority on municipal administration and had served as Berlin’s transportation minister from 1926 to 1931. Unlike Delius and Maraun, however, Reuter was provisionally accepted and could enter office immediately while the Kommandatura examined his background.³¹

The commandants incorporated their amendments into a final order, which they sent to the president of the City Assembly on the same day. On purely practical grounds, they had few reasons to prolong the quarrel. Only four nominees were ever in question, and one, Ernst, was deemed objectionable by all sides. The Soviets had acknowledged the results of the election, albeit in bad grace, and even their interpretation of Article 36 was reasonably defensible. The German party leadership had allocated posts by trading and dealing, and the commandants confirmed the great majority of the nominees with little question. Although Kotikov viewed Reuter, a former Communist, with some suspicion, the Soviet commandant allowed him to take up his post—and once installed, he could only be removed by unanimous vote. The Soviet commandant would soon regret this slip.³²

In the end, the commandants had adopted a line of least resistance. They had extemporized over principles and fashioned a makeshift expedient adapted

³⁰ Min, Commandants’ Mtg BKC/M(46)34, 10 Dec 1946, file 11/1461/11, OMGUS, LAB.

³¹ *Ibid.*; and see also Quarterly Cmd Rpt, 1 Oct–31 Dec 1946, HQ, Berlin Cmd, pp. 53–63.

³² Dir, Allied Kommandatura, Berlin, to Chairman of the City Assembly, BK/O(46)438, 10 Dec 1946.

to the occasion. They had shown, as one British diplomat phrased it, “a good deal of give and take and blind eye turning amongst the Allies—a quadripartite machine is unworkable without it.” Because the term of the Magistrat would run for just two years, pending the drafting of the permanent constitution, some hope existed, particularly among the British, that the quadripartite regime could continue to muddle through from case to case, focused on resolving the city’s immediate problems while sidestepping political and ideological controversies. This hope proved illusory, for both the Americans and the Germans had other ideas.³³

The Allies would continue to bicker over the technical terms of the new constitution, the Soviet understanding of prior approval versus the American support for agreement after the fact. The French and the British were less dogmatic on the issue, but generally sided with the Soviets in the interest of maintaining unanimity. With the Western-leaning Social Democratic Party in control of the Magistrat, the Americans became more enthusiastic supporters of self-rule for Berlin and found few reasons to overrule its decisions. The measure of responsibility delegated to German authorities in the U.S. Zone of Germany was considerably less than the Americans were demanding for Berlin. To an ever-increasing extent, the Americans and the Social Democrats were, to cite a German expression, “pulling on the same rope.”³⁴

The Ostrowski Affair

The growing alliance between the United States and the Social Democrats continued to evolve as the newly elected members of the Magistrat began to assume their duties. More infighting and political intrigue took place as the United States and the Soviet Union both tried to solidify their influence among the city’s leadership.

Berlin’s new mayor, the Social Democrat Otto Ostrowski, was an expert in municipal administration—a manager rather than a politician. He was serving as the district mayor of Wilmersdorf in November 1946 when he received his party’s nomination to head the Magistrat. As he stated in his first address to the City Assembly, his main objectives were to improve the administration and to alleviate the hardships of the population, and to achieve them, he sought the cooperation of each party and all four Allies.³⁵

Determined to trim and tighten the bureaucracy, Ostrowski declared his intention of removing up to 300 junior officials who were either redundant or incapable. The majority were members of the Socialist Unity Party, many appointed by the Soviets during the first two months of the occupation. In a

³³ Min, Norman Reddaway for Foreign Ofc, 22 Oct 1946, C15189/8854/18, FO 371/55906, PRO.

³⁴ Telg, Christopher Steel to Ernest Bevin, 20 Feb 1947, C2790/593/18, FO 371/64454, PRO.

³⁵ “Erste Erklärung von Oberbürgermeister Dr. Ostrowski vor der Stadtverordnetenversammlung” (First Declaration of Governing Mayor Dr. Ostrowski before the City Assembly), 2 Jan 1947, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1153.

subsequent address to the City Assembly, he pledged to make decisions purely on the basis of qualifications and performance. Only in the case of “leading positions,” he asserted, would political criteria come into play. To settle these questions, he would seek understanding with the political parties and would not proceed without first extending feelers to the occupying powers. By the end of March, Ostrowski had dismissed approximately one hundred junior officials and transferred another fifty.³⁶

Ostrowski confronted greater difficulties over the handling of “leading” officials. Four deputy counselors belonged to the Socialist Unity Party. Unwilling to provoke a crisis with the Soviets, Ostrowski temporized over removing them, but in mid-February the Social Democratic leadership ordered him to take action by 28 February. However, their positions clearly fell under the jurisdiction of Article 36 of the new constitution. To dismiss the men, Ostrowski needed Soviet consent.³⁷

The new mayor visited Kotikov to ascertain his attitude. Kotikov said merely that Ostrowski should discuss the matter with the cochairmen of the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin, Herman Matern and Karl Litke. A meeting took place on 22 February. Matern and Litke were joined by the head of the City Assembly group, Karl Maron. The Socialist Unity Party representatives agreed to withdraw two of the officials on grounds of incompetence. Although the remaining two—the deputy head of personnel, Martin Schmidt, and the deputy head of education, Ernst Wildangel—were men of outstanding ability, the party representatives offered to sacrifice them as well, provided that the Social Democrats undertook to carry out a “common working program.” The proposed cooperation would extend over a three-month period, during which the Social Democrats and Unity Socialists would cease all polemics in the press and public meetings. Ostrowski said he would place the proposal before his party leadership. The representatives prepared and signed a summary of the meeting. At Ostrowski’s insistence, the talks were labeled “a non-binding discussion.”³⁸

Ostrowski met the next evening with Suhr and party chairman Franz Neumann—a fiery orator and uncompromising adversary of the Unity

³⁶ First Declaration of Governing Mayor Dr. Ostrowski before the City Assembly, 2 Jan 1947, 2:1156; Telg, Steel to Bevin, 20 Feb 1947; Ltr, Political Div, Control Commission, to Foreign Ofc, 31 Mar 1947, PRO; Rpt, Political sec., British Mil Government, Berlin, 29 Mar 1947, sub: Monthly Report, Mar 1947, 123/46/47, FO 1049/838, PRO; Hurwitz, *The Stalinization of the SED*, p. 172.

³⁷ Dir, Allied Kommandatura to the Governing Mayor, BK/O(47)56, 28 Feb 1947, sub: Leading Candidates for City Administration, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1169–70.

³⁸ Memo, K. A. Spencer for Political Div, 6 Mar 1947, sub: Discussion with Dr. Ostrowski, 5 Mar 1947, Encl to Rpt, “[U]nverbindliche Besprechung ueber die Regelung kommunalpolitischer und bestimmter Personalfrage die Stadtverwaltung Berlin betreffend” (Non-binding Discussion over the Arrangement of municipal-political and certain personnel questions concerning the city administration of Berlin), 22 Feb 1947, FO 1049/838, PRO; and see also, Steege, *Black Market, Cold War*, pp. 114–15.

Socialists—and gave them a copy of the protocol. They said nothing at the time, but the next day Ostrowski felt a scorching blast of reproof from the party's executive board. Suhr, Reuter, and economics counselor Gustav Klingelhöfer rebuked the mayor in the strongest terms for negotiating in secret without authorization from the Social Democratic leadership. The real cause for the rebuke, however, was their fundamental rejection of Ostrowski's willingness to cooperate with the Soviets.³⁹

Ostrowski's enemies now pressed for him to resign. On 11 April, after Ostrowski had rejected a voluntary withdrawal, the party introduced a motion of nonconfidence in the City Assembly. In justifying the motion, Neumann condemned Ostrowski for conducting secret diplomacy and lacking the strength to master his duties. Enlisting the unanimous support of the Christian and Liberal Democrats, the Social Democrats passed the resolution by a vote of eighty-five to twenty.⁴⁰

Although rejected by his party, Ostrowski balked. The constitution recognized only two grounds for recall from the Magistrat—violation of the oath of office or incompetence—and had further stipulated that charges be heard by a special commission of inquiry. Because the vote of nonconfidence was an extraconstitutional procedure, the mayor initially refused to submit. Yet by 17 April, his resistance collapsed. Under intense pressure from the Magistrat as well as his party, which threatened to expel him, Ostrowski resigned his office.⁴¹

Ostrowski's removal was a welcome development for the Americans. It extinguished, at least for the moment, their two greatest fears: rapprochement between the Social Democrats and the Soviets and cooperation between the Social Democratic Party and the Unity Socialists. American complicity, however, is harder to trace.

Ostrowski himself was certain of American involvement, pointing in particular to Captain Biel. In his talk with his British contact, K. A. Spencer, Ostrowski asserted that Biel, upon learning of the mayor's discussion with the Socialist Unity Party officials, had called for his removal in advance of the Social Democratic board meeting on 24 February. The British, who reported frequently on American encouragement to the Social Democrats, regarded this

³⁹ Ltr, Ernst Reuter to Victor Schiff, 1 Jan 1949, Rep 200, Acc 2326, no. 174, Ernst Reuter Papers, LAB. Schiff was the correspondent in Rome for the London *Daily Herald*.

⁴⁰ Franz Neumann's statement to City Assembly, 11 Apr 1947, sub: "Begründung des Mißtrauensantrages der SPD gen Oberbürgermeister Dr. Ostrowski in der Stadtverordnetenversammlung" (Rationale of the non-confidence motion of the SPD against Governing Mayor Dr. Ostrowski in the City Assembly), in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1178–80.

⁴¹ Article 9, Provisional Constitution of Berlin, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:1104; Protocol, "Ordentliche Magistratsitzung" (Regular meeting of Magistrat), 14 Apr 1947, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1181; "Rücktrittserklärung Bürgermeister Ostrowskis vor Stadtverordnetenversammlung" (Resignation statement of Dr. Ostrowski to the City Assembly), 17 Apr 1947, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1181.

as credible. According to several accounts, Biel, a principal member of Howley's Civil Administration staff, declared in a note to the board, "The man must go," and conferred repeatedly with party chairman Neumann, calling Ostrowski a "Trojan horse of the Communists."⁴²

In a long statement to the Kommandatura on 22 April, Kotikov denounced American machinations, claiming that the City Assembly had been "inspired and encouraged" by American officials. When Kotikov publicized his charges in the Soviet Sector press, Howley seized the chance to respond. Speaking to journalists on 23 April, the colonel affirmed the American commitment to self-rule—"We have fought to give maximum power to the elected government"—and upbraided the Soviets for limiting the freedom of the German authorities. He attacked Kotikov for having violated an Allied agreement to prevent German newspapers from causing friction between the powers, while professing his own devotion to quadripartite harmony. Responding to Kotikov's accusation that some members of the U.S. military government had been inspiring the Social Democrats, Howley retorted, "That is not true," and proceeded to explain, "Neither Dr. Suhr nor the Oberbürgermeister [Ostrowski] has ever been in the office of General Keating and the number of visits which they have made to my office have been very limited in number."⁴³

It was an artful performance. Colonel Howley had smartly presented the embrace of German self-rule as an act of democratic virtue. Although the British and French had also demanded prior approval of "all enactments," Howley blamed the Soviets alone for shackling Berlin's government. Finally, he had accused Kotikov of using the Soviet Sector press to poison the atmosphere as if the Western-licensed press were not making its own accusations. His blanket denial that Americans had inspired the Social Democrats was especially clever. American military government officials, such as Captain Biel, who often acted without advance permission, were easily disavowable; Keating, whose role it was to represent the United States in the Kommandatura, had little contact with German politicians; and Howley's assertion about the infrequency of his

⁴² Memo, Spencer for Political Div, 6 Mar 1947; Karl J. Germer, *Von Grotewohl bis Brandt: Ein dokumentarischer Bericht über die SPD in den ersten Nachkriegsjahren* (From Grotewohl to Brandt: A Documentary Report on the SPD in the First Postwar Years) (Landshut: Verlag Politisches Archiv, 1974), p. 194; and see also Norbert Podewin, *Otto Ostrowski. Der gelöschte Oberbürgermeister. Ein Schicksal im Berlin des Kalten Krieges* (Otto Ostrowski: the Extinguished Governing Mayor. A Fate in Cold War Berlin) (Berlin: Luisenstadt, 2004), p. 182; Martin Otto, "Ulrich Biel (1907–1996)—graue Eminenz der (West-) Berliner Politik" (Ulrich Biel (1907–1996)—Gray Eminence of West Berlin Politics, in Berlin), in *Geschichte und Gegenwart. Jahrbuch des Landesarchiv Berlin 2011* (Berlin in History and Present. Yearbook of the Berlin State Archive 2011), eds. Werner Breuning and Uwe Schaper (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2011), pp. 295–96; Gerhard Keiderling, *Um Deutschlands Einheit: Ferdinand Friedensburg und der Kalte Krieg in Berlin 1945–1952* (About German Unity: Ferdinand Friedensburg and the Cold War in Berlin 1945–1952) (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2009), pp. 160–62.

⁴³ Min, Commandants' Mtg, BKC/M(47)9, 22 Apr 1947, file 11/148-3/9, OMGUS, BAK; Transcript, Col Frank L. Howley press Conf, 23 Apr 1947, file 4/135-2/9, OMGUS, LAB.

talks with Ostrowski and Suhr evaded mentioning the content of those that did occur.⁴⁴

Howley's diary records separate meetings with Suhr and Ostrowski the morning after the beleaguered mayor, in a midnight session with party leaders, agreed to resign. Ostrowski opened the discussion with a heated defense of his policy of collaborating with all sides. Howley answered with assurances that the United States had no personal objections to him but also no intention of maintaining him in office against the will of the City Assembly. The colonel's talk with Suhr was considerably more sympathetic. After hearing Suhr's explanations, Howley was convinced that the Social Democrats were responding to political exigencies. They had learned from events in France and "did not want to work too closely with the Communists because if they do they will be swallowed up" like the French Socialist Party. Suhr and his allies, Howley believed, were seeking "fighting issues because no party can live unless they have fighting issues and the best fighting issue in Berlin for a great labor party is based on fighting the SED [Socialist Unity Party] dictatorial Moscow plans, stratagem and strategies."⁴⁵

These comments reveal a coincidence of purpose rather than string-pulling by American officials. The Americans "inspired" the Social Democrats insofar as the two sides were pursuing largely identical aims and the Germans could count on American backing in the Kommandatura. Both had made a basic strategic decision to de-emphasize the practical work of government for the sake of opposing the spread of Soviet, or Communist, influence into the Western sectors of Berlin, and because one side could not pursue the fight without the active collaboration of the other, "inspiration" was mutual.⁴⁶

The Deadlock

The Social Democratic leadership had forced the mayor's resignation, but the battle shifted to new ground: who would become the new mayor, supplanting Ostrowski? It seemed clear that the party's selection would be expected to move Berlin even further into the Western orbit.

When the Social Democrats began their move to oust Ostrowski, they had already decided who they intended to install in his place. Reuter was not only their top person in Berlin, but a man of national stature and, owing to the general mediocrity of the local party officialdom, the only palpable alternative

⁴⁴ Keating was always a part-time commandant. His main jobs were, first, overall commander of troops for the Berlin District, and, second, Clay's deputy for the administration of the military government detachments in the German states. For a report on Biel's self-initiated activities, particularly his actions on behalf of a conservative clique formed around his mistress, Marion Gräfin Yorck von Wartenburg, see Memo, Col Peter F. Rodes, Director of Intel, for Maj Gen Frank L. Keating, 5 Feb 1947, sub: Dr. U. E. Biel, file 17/162-1/11, OMGUS, LAB.

⁴⁵ Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1946–1 Jul 1947, pp. 116–17.

⁴⁶ Memo, Spencer for Political Div, 6 Mar 1947.

to the mayor. Reuter had proven his administrative capabilities as head of transportation in prewar Berlin, carrying out in 1928 the consolidation of Berlin's train, bus, and tram companies into an integrated, municipally owned transport system that, at the time, was the largest public transportation company in the world. From 1931 to 1933, Reuter had distinguished himself as mayor of Magdeburg, directing an ambitious housing program in order to improve living conditions and create jobs. Committed twice to concentration camps by the Nazis, he was released on the appeal of the British Society of Friends and the London City Council. After a short residence in the United Kingdom, he went to Turkey in 1936, where he spent a long exile teaching urban planning and consulting with the Turkish government.⁴⁷



Ernst Reuter, Mayor of Berlin, 1947–1953

Despite his opposition to Hitler, his time in concentration camps, and even his respect among certain German Communists, the Soviets distrusted Reuter. Born in 1889, he had begun his political life in 1913 as an instructor in the Social Democratic Party's school of adult education in Berlin. A militant pacifist at the outbreak of World War I, he wrote anonymous propaganda against German policy. Quickly identified, he was pressed into the army. Wounded and captured on the Eastern Front in 1916, he learned Russian in a prisoner-of-war camp, and when the revolution erupted he joined the Bolsheviks. Vladimir Lenin, who had learned of this Russian-speaking German socialist, summoned Reuter to Petrograd, assessed his talents, and named him commissar of the Soviet Republic of Volga Germans. Reuter returned to Germany in November 1918. He joined the Communist Party of Germany, becoming first secretary of its organization in Berlin. During a brief mission to the Soviet Union in 1921, however, he reacted against the nascent dictatorship and left the party, returning to the Social Democrats the following year.

⁴⁷ A political intelligence report of the Civil Administration Branch, dated 4 March 1947, stated: "Reuter (SPD), at present head of the Transportation and Public Works Department, is already talked about as Ostrofski's [sic] probable successor." File 5/38-2/5, OMGUS, LAB.

The Soviets could not be sure what to expect of Reuter but counted on nothing favorable. They were correct in that assessment. In a discussion with Spencer at the end of 1946, Reuter gave the impression of being “now very anti-Russian.” He remained relatively quiet during his first months in Berlin. In a speech before a party convention on 28 April, however, he finally betrayed his feelings in a famous outburst: “Any state which can ascertain with amazing exactitude, a short time after an election, that 99.9 percent of all votes went to one all-saving party is not a human society but an ant heap.” Faced with the near certainty of Reuter’s election in the City Assembly, the Soviets were determined to win their way on the issue of prior approval of members of the Magistrat. Since, under Article 36, the Kommandatura had to assent to Ostrowski’s resignation, the Soviets could block the action until they obtained assurances that the new mayor would meet with their approval.⁴⁸

When Suhr, acting as president of the City Assembly, forwarded Ostrowski’s resignation to the Kommandatura on 17 April, Kotikov’s first reaction, at a commandant’s meeting on 22 April, was to reject the claim that Ostrowski had stepped down “voluntarily” and to denounce the unconstitutional “machinations” surrounding his withdrawal. Brig. Gen. Jean Joseph Xavier Emile Ganeval agreed that Ostrowski had resigned in an action “not fully in accord with the constitution” but saw no way to maintain him in office. The Americans and British hewed to the line that the resignation was the mayor’s voluntary response to his loss of parliamentary confidence and should be accepted without delay. The commandants postponed the decision until an extraordinary meeting on 28 April, when the Soviets laid out their terms. They would accept Ostrowski’s resignation on the condition that the Kommandatura approve the next mayor. Terming Ostrowski’s removal “a forced voluntary resignation,” Ganeval at first backed the Soviet demand for “approval,” but when the Americans and British objected, he dropped the contested word, suggesting instead that the assembly submit its selection to the Kommandatura “in accordance with Article 36 of the Constitution.” The Soviets, however, demanded explicit approval. When General Keating refused to compromise the American principle of “unanimous post disapproval,” the meeting ended in deadlock. The issue then went to the Allied Control Council.⁴⁹

On 31 May, the military governors, who still conducted their business in a civil manner, reached an interim compromise, agreeing to instruct the Kommandatura to accept Ostrowski’s resignation; to designate one of the three deputy mayors, the Social Democrat Louise Schröder, as acting mayor; and to request the Magistrat to elect Ostrowski’s replacement. With this solution, they sought to restore a functioning administration while reserving their positions

⁴⁸ Memo, Spencer for Political Div, Control Commission for Germany, British Element, 31 Dec 1947, sub: Conversation with Ernst Reuter, 03/B/01/01, FO 1012/231, PRO. Quote from James P. O’Donnell, “The Mayor Russia Hates,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 5 Feb 1949, p. 109.

⁴⁹ Mins, Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(47)9, 22 Apr 1947; Commandants’ Mtg, BKC/M(47)10, 28 Apr 1947, file 11/148-3/9, OMGUS, LAB.

on the principle of approval. The instructions, however, stirred confusion. The mayor was elected by the City Assembly, not the Magistrat. When the Soviets insisted on a literal implementation of the instruction—election by the Magistrat—the Kommandatura chiefs of staff sought clarification.⁵⁰

The matter came before the military governors on 10 June. Marshal Vasily D. Sokolovsky's deputy, Lt. Gen. Mikhail I. Dratvin, argued that the Magistrat should choose the mayor from one of its own members. After the Western delegates objected, Clay surprised everyone with a new proposal. First, he asserted that "those acts of the Magistrat in accordance with the Constitution did not require approval from the Allied Kommandatura," but then he declared, "The election of the Oberbürgermeister by the Municipal Assembly should be submitted to the approval of the Kommandatura." With that—a flash from the blue—he resolved the dispute. For their part, the French already believed that the mayor should be approved by the Kommandatura. The British delegate, Lt. Gen. Sir Brian H. Robertson, whose often-stated wish was "to get on with the job and let the principles look after themselves," readily assented. For his part, General Dratvin ceased all talk about the Magistrat electing the mayor and grasped General Clay's deal. The generals then agreed on instructions to the Kommandatura to approve Ostrowski's resignation, to charge Schröder temporarily with the duties of the mayor, and to direct the assembly to elect a new mayor, who would need the approval of the Allied Kommandatura.⁵¹

The British were both confounded and relieved. As Christopher Steel reported to the Foreign Office, Clay had reversed "without any previous warning . . . the attitude taken up by all his subordinates for months past." Yet the British political adviser was scarcely unhappy over the unexpected turn. Not only was the constitution ambiguous, Steel noted, but "[a]s a practical matter it has always been our view, on which we deferred however to the Americans, that in a city governed as Berlin is governed, the Oberbürgermeister at least must be personally acceptable to all powers."⁵²

By contrast, both Howley and the Social Democrats felt betrayed. "It was a great blow to me," Howley recalled in his memoir, "because I had maintained consistently that the Russians would try to control Berlin's elected government by means of the veto and there was no antidote except abolition of that power." The Social Democrats were even more incensed. As Reuter fumed in a letter to a British friend, "This sudden decision of General Clay, the motives of which nobody could explain to us so far, was in our opinion the zero-point in the development of affairs in Berlin, i.e., the point of the utmost compliance toward the Russian claims for dominancy, if you like, a sort of 'Munich' for Berlin." When the Kommandatura communicated the Allied Control Council's decision

⁵⁰ Min, Mtg of Mil Governors, CONLM(47)12, 31 May 1947, file 2/96-2/11, OMGUS, BAK.

⁵¹ Min, Mtg of Mil Governors, CONLM(47)13, 10 Jun 1947, file 2/96-2/11, OMGUS, BAK. Quote from Min, F. J. Leishman for Foreign Ofc, 16 Jun 1947, C8122, FO 371/64457, PRO; Min, Mtg of Mil Governors, CONLM(47)13, 10 Jun 1947.

⁵² Telg, Steel to Foreign Ofc, 19 Jul 1947, C8122, FO 371/64457, PRO.

to the City Assembly, Suhr could scarcely disguise his contempt. The instruction on approval, he told the delegates on 12 June, ran “contrary to the procedure of the City Assembly and to the practices of the Allied Kommandatura” and in his opinion found no justification in the constitution. He encouraged the assembly to debate this “command” in its next meeting.⁵³

Clay refuted the criticisms during a press conference on 4 July, making two factual points. First he noted, in reply to Suhr’s outburst, that the constitution prohibited the assembly from acting against the rules of military government, and “therefore it was incorrect for anyone in the City Assembly to say that the action of the Control Council was contrary to the Constitution.” Second, with respect to Reuter, Clay affirmed that he had always maintained that the elected official required the approval of Military Government before he could take office. This, asserted the military governor, “had been his understanding of Article 36 at the time he signed the Constitution.” When asked whether the American representative on the Kommandatura was unaware of his attitude, General Clay deadpanned, “That was possible.”⁵⁴

Although Clay’s candor was remarkable, he did not unveil his tactical thinking. He had surrendered on the one-time question of approving the mayor in order to permit Berlin’s administration to resume work—a plain necessity, demanding immediate action. At the same time, he had staked his name to the principle that legislative acts of the city government, as long as they conformed to the constitution, did not require the approval of the Kommandatura. In Clay’s eyes, he had conceded on a relatively minor question—the candidate for mayor—in order to pursue the more significant goal of giving Berlin’s authorities greater freedom of action. At the same time, he terminated a fruitless controversy that had plunged the city government into confusion and paralysis.

Reuter’s Election

In view of Soviet animosity toward Reuter, the Allied Control Council’s decision extinguished the possibility that Reuter would become mayor. The Social Democrats now faced a choice: should they provoke the Soviets by electing Reuter nonetheless and daring Kotikov to veto him, or should they find a person the Soviets would accept? Schröder offered strong credentials as a compromise candidate. In fact, at the commandant’s meeting on 28 April, the Soviet commandant had proposed her as acting mayor. Kotikov’s proposal suggested a willingness to make a truce with the dominant party in Berlin if it would nominate a more conciliatory person than Reuter. Although acceptable

⁵³ Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 147; Ltr, Reuter to C. Barber, 27 Apr 1948, Rep 200, Acc. 2326, #123, LAB. Quote from Rpt, Civil Administration and Political Affairs Br, Mil Government, Berlin, 25 Jun 1947, sub: Analysis of Current Situation in Berlin Administration and Political Affairs, file 4/128-2/4, OMGUS, LAB.

⁵⁴ Transcript, Sum Extract from General Lucius D. Clay’s Press Conf, 4 Jul 1947, 723/159/47, FO 1049/843, PRO.



Louise Schröder and the Berlin Magistrat, 1947

to the Soviets, perhaps due to her age, frail health, and mild demeanor, Schröder was no puppet candidate. Rather, she was politically close to Reuter and Suhr. Howley called her “one of the brave women in modern history . . . pleasant but firmly determined in character” and fearless “in the face of Russian threats.”⁵⁵

The French, who regarded Reuter as a poor choice, tried to convince the Social Democrats to nominate a less controversial individual. Yet they expressed their views as advice and made no demands. The Americans, in Glaser’s words, told the Germans “that the United States had no objection to . . . any discussion . . . in a free and democratic Assembly”—an oblique reference to Suhr’s attack on the Kommandatura—and professed no opinion on whom should be elected mayor. Thus emboldened, the Social Democrats submitted Reuter’s name to the assembly on 24 June. After brief debate, the Assembly elected Reuter in a vote of eighty-nine to seventeen. Only the Unity Socialists opposed him, albeit with considerable reluctance. One deputy—rumored to be Fechner—voted in favor and seven were absent.⁵⁶

In Glaser’s estimate, the Soviets were unlikely to relent on their opposition to Reuter. They knew, however, that they would take a political beating if they vetoed a man elected by an overwhelming majority of delegates. Taking the

⁵⁵ Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 149.

⁵⁶ Rpt, Glaser to Col Frank L. Howley, 25 Jun 1947, sub: Analysis of Current Situation in Berlin Administration and Political Affairs, p. 5, file 4/128-2/4, OMGUS, LAB; and see also pp. 2–3; Hurwitz, *The Stalinization of the SED*, pp. 188–90.

lead, the British political staff prepared a trap. If the Soviets carried out their threat to veto Reuter's election in the Kommandatura, the British commandant would first put them on the defensive by demanding substantive reasons for their objections. Then, availing himself of the unanimity rule, he would refuse to instruct the City Assembly to hold a new vote. Instead, Schröder would continue to serve as acting mayor. She "should be as good as anyone else," explained Steel, "and we can try to ensure that Reuter effectively wields the power." This, remarked the British political adviser, was a "traditional Communist tactic and the SPD might do well to copy it."⁵⁷

Oddly, the American commandant—Brig. Gen. Cornelius E. Ryan, who had succeeded General Keating on 14 May when the latter became deputy military governor—failed to keep in step. When the election of Reuter came before the Kommandatura on 27 June, the British commandant, Maj. Gen. Edwin O. Herbert, asserted that the group should not reject an individual who had been elected according to the provisions of the constitution with such a strong majority behind him. General Ryan agreed, as did General Ganeval, even as he branded Reuter a "bad candidate." Resigned to the Soviet refusal, the French commandant proposed sending an order to Suhr informing him of the disapproval and directing the assembly to elect a new candidate. Apparently unaware of the reason to avoid a fresh election, Ryan joined Kotikov in accepting the French proposal. Herbert alone blocked the order. Referring to Ryan's mistake, Sir William Strang grumbled, "The Americans failed lamentably." The disagreement went to the Allied Control Council.⁵⁸

In the Allied Control Council, the Americans played to the proper score. Keating, as Clay's deputy, disavowed Ryan's "opinion," and Clay, following the script of his briefing papers, demanded tangible grounds for rejecting Reuter and refused another election. On 10 July, the military governors agreed on a text for the commandants to communicate to Suhr, stating blandly that the Kommandatura had not found it possible to confirm Reuter as mayor. The communication contained no mention of electing a new candidate. Just as the British had intended, Schröder would continue to serve in the post.⁵⁹

The solution was to Anglo-American specifications—and a political masterstroke. Because the Americans and British had never expected the Soviets to change their minds over Reuter, any debate over the reasons for the Soviet veto was a smoke screen obscuring their true aim of blocking instructions to hold a new

⁵⁷ Rpt, Glaser to Howley, 25 Jun 1947, p. 5; Telg, Steel to Foreign Ofc, 25 Jun 1947, C8676, FO 371/64457, PRO.

⁵⁸ Ryan took over as commandant when Keating assumed the duties of deputy military governor; in addition to serving as commandant, Ryan was the assistant deputy military governor. Min, Commandants' Mtg, BKC/M(47)15, 27 Jun 1947, file 11/148-3/10, OMGUS, LAB; Telg, Sir William Strang to Foreign Ofc, 30 Jun 1947, C8966, FO 371/64457, PRO.

⁵⁹ Min, Mtg of Deputy Mil Governors, CORC/M(47)31, 2 Jul 1947; and see also Briefing, U.S. Secretariat to General Lucius D. Clay, 8 Jul 1947, sub: CORC/P(47)153, Election of the Oberbürgermeister of Berlin. Both in file 2/96-2/11. Min, Mtg of Mil Governors, CONL/M(47)16, 10 Jul 1947, file 2/96-1/11. All in OMGUS, LAB.

election. In this they succeeded. If the assembly had elected a compromise figure who got on with all four powers, Reuter might have receded into oblivion. Instead, he assumed status as Berlin's "elected but unconfirmed mayor"—a constant reminder of Soviet obstruction. Western officials recognized the propaganda potential of condemning Soviet opposition to "the democratically expressed wishes of an overwhelming majority of the German people." Reuter's influence over the city grew rather than diminished. One of the three deputy mayors, the Christian Democrat Ferdinand Friedensburg, observed, "As 'elected but unconfirmed mayor' he represented . . . a non-responsible, but for that reason all the stronger potency." Among both officials and citizens, but especially among the Western authorities, noted Friedensburg, "the feeling prevailed that Reuter was the actual Oberbürgermeister, and they accorded his voice decisive weight, even when he formally did not occupy the top position and bore no responsibility."⁶⁰

In rejecting Reuter, the Soviets came no closer to controlling Berlin's government. To the contrary, they created an archenemy. An examination of Reuter's papers reveals no preoccupation with communism or the Soviet Union during his exile in Turkey, and he had kept relatively quiet during the first months after his return to Berlin. Kotikov's veto of his election, however, made him an implacable opponent of the Soviet Union. "It was only foreseeable," remarked Friedensburg, "that the infuriation of the leading man of the strongest party in Berlin would lead to considerable difficulties for the sometimes necessary middle course between East and West." No prudent person would have courted Reuter's antagonism. Far more than an internationally renowned administrator, Reuter was an inspiring leader, in the same class as Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. A master of political communication, he could speak on the radio in the warm, reassuring tones of the fireside chat. He could also whip up massed crowds with incendiary speeches drawing, among some, unfortunate comparisons to the tone, style, and oratory of Joseph Goebbels. He would now apply these talents toward his one ultimate goal—driving "Ivan" out of Berlin, out of Germany, and out of Central Europe. Reuter became the star to which the Western Allies hitched their collective wagon.⁶¹

Military Government Before the Storm

The Social Democrats had defined themselves through fighting issues. Having won their large majority by campaigning as the most virulently

⁶⁰ The slogan is contained in a message from the Foreign Office to the political adviser's office in Berlin, with the further remark, "You will presumably have no difficulty in getting the British Zone and British Sector press to cooperate to full" in spreading the line. Telg, Foreign Ofc to OMGUS, Berlin District, 28 Jun 1947, C8676/59/18, FO 371/64457, PRO; Ferdinand Friedensburg, "*Es ging um Deutschlands Einheit: Rückschau eines Berliners auf die Jahre nach 1945*" (It was about German Unity: Reminiscence of a Berliner on the Years after 1945) (Berlin: Haude & Spenersche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1971), pp. 159, 198.

⁶¹ Friedensburg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 155–56.

anti-Soviet party, they embraced polarization as their strongest tactic in a war of principle. Thus, instead of playing down ideological differences in order to concentrate on addressing Berlin's material needs, they never rested their political assault. It was important to draw clear lines, to reject weak compromises, and to keep the city's politics on high flame. Self-rule and freedom from allied control were battle cries masking the ulterior purpose of rolling back Soviet power.

The officials of the U.S. military government in Berlin encouraged and supported the Social Democrats. Unlike the British, who believed that the party should concentrate on the practical work of government and, as Robertson said, "to administer Berlin as best [it] can," the Americans never sought to moderate its behavior. The Germans and Americans were "pulling on the same rope," and their aim was political victory, not to muddle through in running Berlin's practical affairs.⁶²

In a sense, the fissures within the Kommandatura confirmed American anxieties at the end of the war. At that time, U.S. officials had feared that the Germans would "bend every effort" to foment discord between the Western powers and the Soviet Union and seek to "swindle" the United States into a "meretricious" friendship with Germany. Discord was now a fact, and America's German friends were stoking conflict in Berlin. Yet these allies were not the "swindlers"—nationalists, militarists, and reactionaries—the Americans had expected to emerge from the ruins to lure the United States into conflicts with the Soviet Union. Instead, they belonged to the world's oldest democratic socialist party. As such, they provided a rallying point of anticommunism untainted by reactionary nationalism, making Berlin's Social Democratic Party of Germany acceptable in a way that nationalist-conservatives could never be. This made it increasingly difficult to recognize when interests were truly separate, because German battles became American battles without a clear understanding on either side of where the conflict might lead.⁶³

⁶² Telg, General Sir Brian Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 7 Jul 1947, C9296, FO 371/64458 PRO.

⁶³ As related in Chapter 5, Murphy had used these words to describe the motives of imprisoned German generals whose musings had been secretly recorded by U.S. intelligence.

8

THE COMMITMENT

German historiography calls 1948 a “*Schicksalsjahr*”—a year of destiny. In the spring of that year, the Western powers laid plans to turn the Western Zones of occupation into a separate state. The quadripartite control regime disintegrated. A separate currency reform, implemented in the Western Zones on 20 June but blocked in the Soviet Zone, unleashed a powerful expansion of West Germany’s economy but sacrificed Germany’s monetary unity. On 24 June, the Soviets retaliated by blockading the Western sectors of Berlin, cutting off food and coal deliveries over the transit corridors. Instead of bending under pressure, the Western Allies supplied their sectors by air. Berlin became the *Frontstadt* (frontline city) of the Cold War, the forward post of containment, and a test of U.S. will. The American soldiers, who had come to Berlin as occupiers, committed themselves to defending the integrity and independence of West Berlin, a commitment that marked Europe’s strategic landscape over the next forty years. For them, 1948 marked the transition of Berlin from an indefensible forward outpost deep in hostile territory to a vital political symbol that had to be held.

Even as the year began, this outcome was only dimly foreseeable. Although Berlin’s mystique as a bastion of freedom had begun to take shape, the substance lay elsewhere. Economically, the city remained a dysfunctional burden on both American taxpayers and the Western Zones. The leadership and organizational infrastructure of the democratic parties were concentrated in West Germany. Aside from Ernst Reuter, the city boasted no figure of national stature. Whereas members of the U.S. military government of Berlin played a significant role in the city’s affairs, General Lucius D. Clay and his senior staff became involved only when the Kommandatura referred its disagreements to the Allied Control Council. The overriding objective of decision makers in Washington was economic recovery in Western Europe. Their primary interest in Germany was the industrial resources of the Rhine and Ruhr Valleys.¹

The American commitment to Berlin, therefore, was historically contradictory. The Allied program of establishing a West German state diminished the significance of Berlin at the same time as it provoked Soviet retaliation. Yet,

¹ For a concise discussion, see Gottlieb, *The German Peace Settlement and the Berlin Crisis*, pp. 194–95.

it was precisely this retribution that thrust the city from the periphery into the center of American interests and strategy.

Genesis of the Conflict

In the winter of 1947, U.S. policymakers decided on measures to restore Western Germany within the context of Western European reconstruction. The Western Allies would consolidate their zonal administrations—previously scattered among five locations—thereby transforming them into quasi-governmental institutions. They would loosen restrictions on West German industry and harness it to a multilateral European recovery effort. Reparations to the Soviet Union would cease and Soviet influence would be contained at the Elbe. The final consequence of these measures—partition—was clear and accepted from the start.²

The Potsdam Protocol, signed by the Big Three leaders on 1 August 1945, had contemplated no such division. Instead, the powers had agreed to treat Germany as a single economic unit. Central departments—headed by German state secretaries—would administer the country's finances, transportation, communications, foreign trade, and industry across zonal boundaries. The Allies would distribute essential commodities equitably between the zones in order to foster economic self-sufficiency. The Allied Control Council would work out a trade program for the country as a whole. Export proceeds would first pay for imports, an arrangement known in short as the "first charge principle." The powers would satisfy reparations claims by removing capital goods; in addition to removals from their own zone, the Soviet Union would receive a share of equipment—primarily from metallurgical, chemical, and machine tool industries—taken from the West.³

Of all these provisions, reparations were the Soviet Union's chief interest and a precondition for cooperation on other matters. The United States emphasized the first charge principle and the economic recovery of the German state. Notwithstanding these divergent priorities, the Americans and Soviets were united in their desire to establish the German central departments.

Even as the Americans and Soviets pushed to establish national agencies, the agreement began to unravel. While France repeatedly vetoed the central departments, the Americans and Soviets engaged in a running dispute over the first charge principle. The crux of their disagreement focused on the U.S. contention that the Soviets should not extract reparations from the Eastern area of Germany while the country's trade balance was negative; the Soviets countered that the first charge principle could only apply when *all* aspects of economic unity were working. France also rejected the U.S. complaints. As the French

² This point of view is best expressed in Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*.

³ Protocol, Proceedings of the Berlin (Potsdam) Conf, 1 Aug 1945, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 59, 54–58, 60–64, 59–60.

and Soviets continued to remove goods from their areas, both the Americans and British sustained the Anglo-American zones with dollar-financed imports. Consequently, on 3 May 1946, General Clay suspended reparations shipments from the U.S. Zone. The target of this action, as he emphasized to his superiors, was Paris more than Moscow.⁴

Facing an impasse, the Americans and British decided in the summer of 1946 to fuse their zones economically. Following agreements in August and September, they created five German agencies: economics, food and agriculture, transport, finance, and communications. Spread among five different cities, these agencies could issue executive directives to the states and administrative agencies of the combined area, which bore the name Bizonia.

The Anglo-American initiatives put pressure on the Soviets to settle differences. After exploratory talks between U.S. and Soviet economics officials in early August, General Clay and Marshal Vasily D. Sokolovsky entered negotiations several weeks later and, by mid-October, had hammered out a comprehensive bargain. The powers would increase Germany's industrial production. Instead of being dismantled, designated plants would remain in Germany to produce for reparations; at the same time, all export earnings from nonreparations plants would first pay for imports. The German central administrations would be established, zonal economic boundaries abolished, and a balanced import-export program instituted for the country as a whole. In brief, in exchange for goods from current German production, the Soviets had met all of Clay's conditions regarding economic unity, import payments, and balance of trade.⁵

However, by the time the Council of Foreign Ministers convened in Moscow on 10 March 1947, Clay's efforts were irrelevant. Planning for European economic recovery was underway in early 1947, and as the American delegation prepared to depart for the Soviet capital, all members agreed that German economic revival was "essential to the economic recovery of Europe as a whole." That meant harnessing German industrial capacities to the requirements of European reconstruction. Because reparations for the Soviet Union would divert German resources from that crucial use, the delegation refused to entertain any deal trading them for German unity. In the delegation's view, it was better to have full control over the western part of Germany, and to integrate it into

⁴ Jean Smith, "The View from USFET: General Clay's and Washington's Interpretation of Soviet Intentions in Germany, 1945–1948," in Schmitt, ed., *U.S. Occupation in Europe After World War II*, pp. 65–85; John Gimbel, "Cold War Historians and the Occupation of Germany," in Schmitt, ed., *U.S. Occupation in Europe After World War II*, pp. 86–102; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 115–16, 211–12; Telg, General Lucius D. Clay to War Dept, 24 Sep 1945, 1:84–85; 1 Oct 1945, 1:88–89; and 4 Oct 1945, 1:90–91. All in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

⁵ This is a drastic compression of events. For details, see John H. Backer, *Winds of History: The German Years of Lucius DuBignon Clay* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983), pp. 149–51, 172–77; Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, pp. 16–18, 29–30, 80–85, and 114–15; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 394–95; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 241–43, 248–50, 286–89.

Western Europe, than to share control with the Soviets over the country as a whole. Given these attitudes, little room was left to negotiate any agreement with the Soviets on the basis of the Clay-Sokolovsky formula. On 7 March, when Clay propounded his views in a preconference meeting with the delegation in Berlin, the new secretary of state, George C. Marshall, disparaged General Clay's judgment, accusing him of "localitis."⁶

The meeting adjourned in deadlock on 24 April. The next day, Marshall landed in Berlin on his way back to Washington. His reason for stopping was to deliver instructions to Clay. First of all, the Anglo-Americans would consolidate the bizonal administrations into a single location in order to create what Clay termed a "machinery of government." At the same time, they would loosen restrictions on bizonal industry to promote self-sufficiency at the earliest date. "Wider economic unity," as Clay related with considerable understatement, "might not take place for years." They would develop the Bizone into a protostate, incorporate it into a plan of European recovery, and shunt aside Soviet claims to reparations and shared influence.⁷

On 28 April, three days after leaving Clay, Marshall reported on the situation in Europe. "The patient is sinking while the doctors deliberate," the secretary declared. These words heralded a frantic month in which State Department planners drew up a proposal to assist European reconstruction. The secretary revealed its substance in a commencement speech at Harvard University on 5 June. Europe's requirements for food and other essential products exceeded its ability to pay, he insisted, and only through outside help could "deterioration of a very grave character" be averted. Within the framework of Marshall's proposal, to become known as the Marshall Plan, West Germany would become the economic motor of Western Europe, France would be placated through \$2.76 billion of aid, and Western Europe would coalesce into an American-led bloc.⁸

⁶ Memos, Benjamin V. Cohen, counselor at the Dept of State, for George C. Marshall, Sec of State, 14 Feb 1947, sub: Important Principles Involved in Austrian and German Peace Settlements, in *FRUS, 1947*, 8 vols., Council of Foreign Ministers; Germany and Austria DAC (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971–1972), 2:165; Cohen for Marshall, 12 Feb 1947, sub: Summary Statement on Important Phases of Austrian and German Settlements for Use in Connection with Meeting of Foreign Relations Committee, in *FRUS, 1947*, 2:162. See also Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 278–88; John Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1978), pp. 148–78; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 413–20; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 286–89; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 416.

⁷ Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 181; and see also pp. 163–80, 182–84; Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, pp. 80–85, 124–28; Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 174; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 426; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 308–12.

⁸ Transcript, Radio address by George C. Marshall, 28 Apr 1948, sub: Rpt on the Council of Foreign Ministers, Moscow Session, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, p. 123; Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks: An Inside Account of the Genesis of the Marshall Plan* (New York: Mariner Books, 1965), pp. 223–24, 239–56. For the text of Marshall's 5 June address, see pp. 281–84.

The Soviets rejected the proposal, including its provisions for economic aid to Eastern Europe. They expressed skepticism of the American proposal and regarded it as a desperate attempt to avoid economic collapse. They feared acceptance would open up Eastern Europe to Western economic and political influence. Vyacheslav M. Molotov insisted that reparations remain the first claim on German resources, and that German industrial capacity not expand lest growth divert resources that would otherwise be available as reparations.⁹

Risk of Conflict

By the end of June 1947, the United States and Great Britain had centralized the formerly scattered agencies of the bizonal administration in Frankfurt and equipped them with legislative and executive powers—clear precursors to a West German state. The de facto capital of West Germany was, from that point, the commercial and banking city on the Main River. For Berlin, the creation of this machinery of government portended decline. After the cession to Poland of Pomerania, East Prussia, and Silesia, the city was no longer the geographical heart of an empire extending to the Memel River. Although the Potsdam Accord still envisioned Berlin as the administrative center of a *functionally* united country, the decision to strengthen the Bizone shifted the true focus of the Western Allies' policies to the West.

As the prospects for unity dimmed, Berlin lost some of its prestige as the German capital. At the same time, the potential military and political risk of remaining in Berlin increased. The Soviets were unlikely to acquiesce in the Anglo-American decisions, and Berlin was an obvious weak point. One hundred twenty-five miles inside the Soviet Zone, the Allied sectors of the city were susceptible to isolation. The Soviets could easily make their residents suffer and expose the Western powers as impotent. As the Potsdam Accord disintegrated, the Soviets felt even more justified in exploiting these vulnerabilities, either to compel a change of policy or to expel the allies from their enclaves. For the Western powers, this begged the question of whether Berlin was worth the risk should the Soviets attempt to render their presence untenable.

Throughout 1947, Soviet exploitation never materialized. Instead of taking coercive steps against Berlin, the Soviets employed political weapons against the Allied powers. Accusing the West of separatism, the Soviets cast themselves as champions of German unity and sought to rally popular support. Following the pattern of the wartime “Free Germany” program, they downplayed communism in order to forge a broad alliance with “nationally minded” Germans among all classes of people.

The Christian Democrats in the Soviet Zone were the chief targets of their appeals. In talks with party leaders, Soviet officers repeatedly extolled Otto

⁹ Daniel F. Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink: The Blockade, the Airlift, and the Early Cold War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), pp. 39–40.

von Bismarck and his policy of friendship between Germany and Russia in the nineteenth century. Meeting in August with the Christian Democratic cochairmen Jacob Kaiser and Ernst Lemmer, Sokolovsky asserted the Soviet system would not “satisfy the German people” and disclaimed the desire for a “Bolshevistic Germany.” He then offered a grand arrangement. If the party embraced Bismarck’s foreign policy, then Germany “should be allowed to rebuild its own economic system.” Carrots were not offered without sticks, however. When Kaiser questioned the growing involvement of the Communists and their Soviet-supported leaders in East Berlin, the Soviets forced him to resign his position as Christian Democratic cochairman.¹⁰

In Berlin, the Soviets rested their hopes on Deputy Mayor Ferdinand Friedensburg. An economist and former senior civil servant for the state of Prussia, the Christian Democratic politician rejected an exclusive alignment with the West and believed that only through a policy of *Ausgleich* (adjustment) could Germans endeavor to free the East from Soviet control. He represented a nonsocialist third force, opposed to communism but committed to preserving German unity while avoiding adherence to any bloc. Addressing the party convention of the Eastern Zone Christian Democrats in September 1947, Friedensburg declared, “We are Western people. Sovietization of Germany is not possible,” but he also admonished his listeners to understand Soviet apprehensions that the Germans “might give themselves away to another power” for the sake of “temporary help” like the Marshall Plan.¹¹

In the meantime, the atmosphere in the Allied Control Council was becoming increasingly frosty. Its meetings became platforms to trade charges and make propaganda. As Clay recalled in his memoirs, “friendly relations and social meetings gradually lessened.” Fewer Russians attended social functions, “and informal meetings between senior representatives came to a standstill.” The Kommandatura, where relations were generally more rancorous than in the council, witnessed an unending battle over Article 36 of the new constitution. The buildup of the bizonal administration in 1947 fueled Soviet antagonism. When U.S. and British officials invited the Berlin Magistrat to send representatives to the bizonal economics agency in Minden to coordinate the purchase of food and consumer goods, the Soviets castigated them for seeking to integrate the Western sectors of the city into the Anglo-American area of Germany. Nonetheless, the Soviets had still put no pressure on Berlin. The next session

¹⁰ William Stivers, “Was Sovietization Inevitable? U.S. Intelligence Perceptions of Internal Developments in the Soviet Zone of Occupation in Germany,” *Journal of Intelligence History* 5 (Summer 2005): 59; and see also pp. 56–64; Mayer Tilman, “Jakob Kaiser,” in *Christliche Demokraten gegen Hitler: Aus Verfolgung und Widerstand zur Union*, eds. Gunter Buchstab, Brigitte Kaff and Hans-Otto Kleinmann (Freiburg, Germany: Herder, 2004), pp. 324–28.

¹¹ Friedensburg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 14–15, 57–61, and 87–90; Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 70, 13 Sep 1947, pp. 9–10, file 3/429-3/7, OMGUS, BAK.

of the Council of Foreign Ministers would meet in London in late November, and all sides awaited the outcome before making their next moves.¹²

There was little chance for agreement, however. Both sides had begun to dig in their heels, unwilling to make major concessions. Despite some proposed Soviet compromises over the first charge principle, Marshall refused to bargain over reparations. After Molotov reacted with a bitter tirade, the U.S. secretary of state terminated the meeting on 15 December. Over the next three days, in bilateral consultations with his British and French counterparts, Marshall emphasized the need for a swift reform of Germany's currency—if possible, on a quadripartite basis—fusion of the French and the Anglo-American zones, and the development of a “political structure” for the Allied area.¹³

All this, as General Clay remarked in an 18 December meeting with Ernest Bevin and Marshall, raised the question of the future of the Western Allies in Berlin. They would obviously suffer difficulties, he warned, but they could put up with minor annoyances and intended to hold out as long as possible. If things became too tough, he continued, they would have to refer the issue to their capitals, but would not do so until the situation had actually arisen. Resources were adequate, he asserted, to carry on in Berlin “for some time.” Although by no means alarmist, Clay's statement was the first open recognition that Western Allied policies would cause trouble in Berlin.¹⁴

Partition Looms

As the New Year approached, Germany's unity was hanging on the thread of its single currency, the Reichsmark. In circulation since 1924, it had remained legal tender in all zones of occupation. Yet, severely debased during the war, it provided no basis for a sustained recovery. Between 1935 and the time of Germany's collapse, the volume of money had increased fourteen times, bank deposits five times, and the public debt thirty-three times. Although rationing and price controls suppressed inflation during and after the war, a vast financial “overhang” undermined confidence in monetary assets. As a result, farmers and businessmen were unwilling to exchange real goods for money that could soon

¹² Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 159; Min, Statement by the Soviet Commandant, 30 Jun 1947, sub: Attempt to Include the U.S. and British Sectors of Berlin in the System of Joint Administration of the British and U.S. Zones of Germany, app. 1, CORC/P(47)172, file 2/100-1/12, OMGUS, BAK; Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 161–62.

¹³ MFR, Robert Murphy, 18 Dec 1947, in *FRUS, 1947*, 2:827. See also Telg, U.S. Delegation, Council of Foreign Ministers, to President Harry S. Truman, 15 Dec 1947, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*; MFRs, Lewis W. Douglas, U.S. Ambassador to United Kingdom, 17 Dec 1947, 2:813–815; Frank Roberts, Private Sec to Ernest Bevin, Britain's foreign minister, 17 Dec 1947, 2:815–822; Roberts, 18 Dec 1947, 2:822–827, 813–29. All in *FRUS, 1947*.

¹⁴ MFR, Roberts, 18 Dec 1948, in *FRUS, 1947*, 2:826.

turn worthless, and either hoarded or diverted products to the black market where prices reflected the true depreciation of the German currency.¹⁵

American financial experts had presented a currency reform plan to the Allied Control Council in June 1946. They recommended a conversion rate of one new Deutschmark (DM) for ten Reichsmarks. To spread the losses of war equitably throughout society, the Allies would impose special levies and transfer payments—the so-called *Lastenausgleich* (equalization of burdens)—on owners of stock, real estate, and other tangible assets unaffected by the monetary contraction. The Soviets endorsed these principles, and agreement was near. However, instead of agreeing on a single currency printing plant in Berlin, as the Western powers desired, the Soviets insisted on operating a second one in Leipzig. This position was unacceptable to U.S. representatives who warned that the Soviets could bring about total economic collapse by flooding the Western Zones with currency.¹⁶

Parallel to the currency discussions in Berlin, on 23 February 1948, representatives from Britain, France, the United States, and the Benelux countries met in London to hold informal discussions on Germany. They gathered under the shadow of the heavy-handed Soviet support of a Communist coup in Prague, a troubling reminder of the potential for Soviet interference in Berlin. The representatives released a communiqué on 6 March, stating that they had agreed that Western Germany should be “fully associated” with the European Recovery Program—the Marshall Plan—and that they had given consideration to an international control of the Ruhr. The communiqué then spoke of a “possible evolution” of the “political and economic organization” of the Western Zones of Germany, encompassing a “federal form of government.” Finally, it stated that the representatives had agreed to coordinate the economic policies of the three zones, thereby foreshadowing a “trizonal” administration. Marshal Sokolovsky responded angrily. On 20 March, after the Western powers refused to give him further details of the London talks, he accused them of “destroying the Control Council and burying it.” In his capacity as chairman, he adjourned the session without suggesting a date to reconvene. This was the last meeting of the four-power body.¹⁷

The first Soviet moves against the Western garrisons in Berlin quickly followed the breakup of the Allied Control Council. Soviet interference with

¹⁵ For a summary, see Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 210. For more detailed accounts by two economists once employed by OMGUS, see Backer, *Decision to Divide Germany*, pp. 118–23; Gottlieb, *The German Peace Settlement and the Berlin Crisis*, pp. 97–100.

¹⁶ Gottlieb, *The German Peace Settlement and the Berlin Crisis*, pp. 112–17; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 380–81; Telgs, Clay to War Dept, 23 May 1946, 1:208–10; Clay to Daniel Noce, 17 Jan 1947, 1:302–03. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

¹⁷ Communiqué, informal discussion of the German Problem issued by France, United Kingdom, United States, and the Benelux countries, London, 6 Mar 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 140–41; Min, Statement of Marshal Sokolovsky Marking the Soviet Withdrawal from the Allied Control Council for Germany, 20 Mar 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, p. 142; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 390–91.

Western movements to and from Berlin began in earnest. First, the Soviets demanded the closure of the American first-aid station on the Berlin-Helmstedt highway. Then they ordered the withdrawal of the U.S. Army Signal Corps teams responsible for maintaining the long-distance cables running through the Soviet Zone to the U.S. Zone. These were the initial steps in what French President Vincent Auriol termed a “small war of pinpricks.”¹⁸

The April “Crisis”

On 30 March, Sokolovsky’s deputy, Lt. Gen. Mikhail I. Dratvin, sent letters to his colleagues announcing new identification and inspection requirements for the transit of all Allied personnel and military freight between Berlin and the Western Zones of Germany. Allied personnel traveling by highway or rail would be required to present identification. Shipments by rail of military freight into Berlin would be cleared upon presentation of manifests, but freight shipped from Berlin would have to be loaded, inspected, and authorized at Soviet checkpoints. All personal belongings, aside from those of official employees of Western Allied citizenship, would be subject to Soviet inspection.¹⁹

General Clay was primed for a showdown. On 31 March, he cabled General Omar N. Bradley, the new U.S. Army chief of staff, declaring that the Soviet regulation would “make impossible travel between Berlin and our Zone except by air,” and expressing his intent “to instruct our guards to open fire if Soviet soldiers attempt to enter our trains.” Bradley later recalled, according to his biographer, “Had I had enough hair on my head, this cable would probably have stood it on end.” Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal convened a meeting with the secretaries of the Army and Air Force, Kenneth C. Royall and W. Stuart Symington, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the recently retired Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Robert A. Lovett, who was acting secretary of state because Marshall was out of the country. Having seen the verbatim text of Dratvin’s letter, Forrestal concluded that “the wording was not as truculent as could be inferred from Clay’s first message.” The group decided to endorse Clay’s proposal, but with a disabling qualification—guards could fire only in self-defense. When Bradley communicated the decision in a teleconference with Clay, the chief of staff prohibited Clay from increasing the size of the security

¹⁸ Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift*, p. 113; David E. Murphy, Sergei A. Kondrashev and George Bailey, *Battleground Berlin: CIA VS. KGB in the Cold War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 55; Memo, Col Robert A. Willard, Cdr, Berlin Cmd, for Ch, Communications Gp, OMGUS, 21 Apr 1948, sub: Maintenance and Operation of Cable FK-41 in Soviet Zone of Occupation, Entry A11771, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, General Corresp, 1947–1948, RG 260, NACP.

¹⁹ Ltr, Lt Gen Mikhail I. Dratvin to Maj Gen George P. Hays, Deputy Mil Governor, Encl to Teleconf, TT-9286, 31 Mar 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:600–601.

force and decreed that guards carry only “normal” arms.²⁰

The next day, Clay and Lt. Gen. Sir Brian H. Robertson tried to send passenger trains into the Soviet Zone. The Soviets demanded to enter the trains but made no attempt to force their way on board when the train commanders refused. Soviet traffic controllers shunted the trains onto sidings, where they remained for several days until they were eventually backed out of the Soviet Zone. Because it was impossible to send trains through to Berlin as long as the Soviets operated the signal system, Clay and Robertson suspended passenger rail service. At the same time, they initiated a small-scale airlift to transport personnel and supplies. Yet Clay was impatient. In a cable to Bradley he revealed that he was giving “some thought” to sending an armed truck convoy over the autobahn. This, he argued, could force the issue, because rail traffic, which the Soviets could easily stop through technical measures, was an inadequate test of their intentions. He pledged, however, to take no such action before consulting the chief of staff. General Bradley responded, “I agree you should not try to force a guarded convoy without further consultation with us.” Bradley later explained the reasons for his reluctance. Even if the Soviets refrained from using armed force, for fear of war, the convoy would still have failed: “The Russians could stop an armed convoy without opening fire on it. Roads could be closed for repair or a bridge could go up just ahead of you and another bridge behind and you’d be in a hell of a fix.”²¹



General Bradley

²⁰ Quote from Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, p. 478; James V. Forrestal Diary Entry, 31 Mar 1948, in *The Forrestal Diaries*, ed. Walter Millis (New York: Viking Press, 1951), p. 408; and pp. 407–08; Kenneth W. Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, vol. 2, 1947–1949* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979), p. 124; Teleconf, TT-9287, 31 Mar 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:606; and see also 2:604–07.

²¹ Telgs, Clay to General Omar N. Bradley, 1 Apr 1948, 2:607; Bradley to Clay, 1 Apr 1948, 2:608. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*. Quote from Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift*, p. 111; and see also Avi Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade, 1948–1949: A Study in Crisis Decision-Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 131.

Clay urged his “thought” on his British counterpart, General Robertson. Like Bradley, the British military governor made a short job of it, stating, “I can see no future in this because a few tanks across the road at a defile will soon bring it to a halt quite apart from the fact that the Russians might get the best of the shooting match.” In any event, in contrast with rail traffic, road traffic was passing through the control points with proper documentation. Robertson was hoping for an agreement permitting unarmed Soviet civilian inspectors aboard the trains before they left the Western sectors—replicating the normal practice on international frontiers. Clay, however, “was quite adamant against any form of compromise.” Robertson described his ally’s attitude as “most pessimistic and bellicose.”²²

Soviet provocations continued. On 5 April, a Soviet fighter, which had been performing maneuvers in the area of Gatow airport, struck an incoming British passenger aircraft, killing everyone on both airplanes. Robertson immediately ordered fighter escorts for British transport aircraft, with Clay following suit. The British general then confronted Sokolovsky personally. “Ill at ease and on the defensive,” as Robertson reported, Sokolovsky expressed regret over the “accident” and offered assurances for the safety of the flight corridors—enough for Generals Clay and Robertson to cancel the escorts.²³

On 12 April, Clay again pushed General Bradley to approve an armed convoy. Since first broaching the subject, Clay had worked his initial “thought” into a rudimentary plan. The British, French, and Americans would each assemble a division at Helmstedt, the western entry point to the autobahn. They would inform Soviet officials that conditions in Berlin called for a reinforcement of the Western garrisons and that, accordingly, three divisions would be proceeding to Berlin. The Soviets, Clay asserted, were bluffing, did not intend war, and were unlikely to block the movement by force. By accepting a small risk, the Western powers could win the present issue through a display of resolve.²⁴

Clay’s bellicosity, however, overlooked the size and readiness of the military forces available to him. In 1948, facing twenty Soviet divisions in East Germany, the U.S. Army in West Germany consisted of scattered elements of the 1st Infantry Division, one battalion of which was already stationed in Berlin. The division’s units were still spread across the U.S. Zone conducting occupation duties and had not trained together since the end of the war. The Army had only just begun taking steps to consolidate some elements of the division to constitute

²² Telg. General Sir Brian Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 2 Apr 1948, C2529, FO 371/70490; and C2543, FO 371/70490. Both in PRO.

²³ The words are Clay’s description of the meeting, based on what Robertson told him. Telg. Clay to Bradley, 6 Apr 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:618; Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift*, pp. 116–17.

²⁴ Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense: The Formative Years, 1947–1950* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 286; and see also Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade*, p. 137.

a tactical reserve. Only the squadrons of the U.S. Constabulary, equipped for police duties, supplemented this force. The other Western forces in Germany were in no better shape. Clay had no divisions to send on his proposed riposte toward Berlin.²⁵

Although American intelligence analysts believed that the Soviet Union was not economically or psychologically prepared to go to war, they also warned that the heightened tension around Berlin increased the possibility that a miscalculation on either side could lead to general conflict. The Soviets maintained 243,000 ground troops in their portion of occupied Germany. A force of four rifle divisions, ten mechanized divisions, eight tank divisions, and six artillery divisions could easily overrun Western units in the theater with just a short period for mobilization. Additionally, any Soviet advance could be supported by an estimated 1,400 combat aircraft stationed in Germany alone. Only potential shortages in fuel and a disrupted transportation network threatened to hamper initial success if the Soviets chose to attack in Germany.²⁶

Taking this force imbalance into account, General Bradley was no more receptive to an expanded version of the convoy scheme than he had been to the initial thought. With characteristic deference, he conceded that Clay was “much better equipped” than himself “to evaluate all the advantages and disadvantages of such action.” Nonetheless, it appeared to him that given the Soviet military superiority around Berlin, “The deployment of our forces in such manner might jeopardize our longer range objectives in the Western Zone and I therefore do not feel that the plan is desirable at this time.”²⁷

The Military Assessment

Despite Clay’s foreboding, the “crisis” was a relatively minor one. As Clay himself reported in a teleconference on 2 April, highway and air traffic conditions were “normal,” German civil freight remained unaffected, and military freight from the Western Zones into Berlin was moving normally with no attempted search. The conflict was over the inspection of passenger trains and military freight leaving Berlin, but with roadways leading into Berlin remaining open and air traffic uninterrupted, Allied forces could continue “indefinitely.” Clay’s concerns stemmed from his anticipation of more serious encounters. The Western Zone currency reform, “followed by [the] partial government

²⁵ Hist Div, EUCOM, Reorganization of Tactical Forces: VE Day–1 Jan 1949, Historians files, CMH; Memo, Maj Gen Ray T. Maddocks, Deputy Director of Plans and Opns, for Admiral William D. Leahy, 16 Jul 1948, sub: Personnel strengths in Germany, Chairman’s Files, Leahy, Reds of the JCS, RG 218, NACP.

²⁶ Rpt, Possibility of Direct Soviet Mil Action During 1948, 2 Apr 1948, CIA ORE 22-48, CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room, Historians files, CMH; Rpt, Col Robert A. Schow, Deputy Director of Intelligence, EUCOM, 1 Mar 1948, sub: Military Estimate of the Situation, box 36, Asst Ch of Staff, G-2, Formerly Top Secret Intelligence Documents, 1943–1959, RG 319, NACP. (With thanks to Dr. Thomas Boghardt at CMH for the latter document.)

²⁷ Quote from Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade*, pp. 137–38.

in Frankfurt will develop the real crisis,” he asserted, and the “present show” was “probably designed by the Soviets to scare us away from these moves.” His solution was to meet the problem “squarely” in order to head off future trouble. The “integrity of our trains as a part of our sovereignty is a symbol of our position in Germany and Europe”; any display of weakness “will lose us prestige important now” and trigger the “next provocation.” Therefore, although the risks of an armed convoy might appear, as they did to General Bradley, disproportionate to the actual difficulties, Clay was looking ahead to the next confrontation—“the real crisis”—and seeking to preclude it through a decisive act of will.²⁸

Bradley also foresaw increasing difficulties. “[W]ill not Russian restrictions be added one by one,” he queried Clay, “which eventually would make our position untenable unless we ourselves were prepared to threaten or actually start a war to remove these restrictions?” Still perceiving the situation in Berlin as a military problem, the chief of staff doubted whether Americans were prepared to start a war for the sake of Berlin and Vienna. He then suggested, though in form of another question, the most direct way out of the dilemma. Once the allies had succeeded in “setting up trizonia with capital at Frankfurt we might ourselves announce withdrawal and minimize loss of prestige rather than being forced out by threat.”²⁹

Clay thought the Soviets were bluffing. “I cannot believe the Soviets will apply force in Berlin,” he stated, “unless they have determined war to be inevitable.” He pressed on with his argument:

Why are we in Europe? We have lost Czechoslovakia. We have lost Finland. Norway is threatened. We retreat from Berlin. We can take it by reducing our personnel with only airlift until we are moved out by force. There is no saving of prestige by setting up at Frankfurt that is not already discounted. After Berlin, will come western Germany and our strength there relatively is no greater and our position no more tenable than Berlin.

If we mean that we are to hold Europe against communism, we must not budge. We can take humiliation and pressure short of war in Berlin without losing face. If we move, our position in Europe is threatened. If America does not know this, does not believe the issue is cast now, then it never will and communism will run rampant. I believe the future of democracy requires us to stay here until forced

²⁸ Teleconf, TT-9341, 2 Apr 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:613. On 15 April, he asserted that the chief difficulty arose from the Soviet “embargo” of outbound freight. Telg, Clay to Bradley, 15 Apr 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:630; Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, p. 54; Teleconfs, TT-9341, 10 Apr 1948, 2:623; TT 9286, 31 Mar 1948, 2:602. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

²⁹ Teleconf, TT-9341, 10 Apr 1948.

out. God knows this is not a heroic pose because there is nothing heroic in having to take humiliation without retaliation.³⁰

Bradley sought to assure Clay that the point of the query was to explore a situation being discussed in government circles. Yet, for all the passion of his response, Clay contributed little to that exploration, for he had declined to address the critical issue: should the United States risk letting itself be trapped into a war over Berlin? Clay's broad-brush scenario of falling dominoes made for stirring rhetoric but offered no answer to the chief of staff's concerns.

The exchange epitomized a dichotomy between two highly capable officers—Clay, a master organizer and logistical genius, and Bradley, Eisenhower's most successful field commander—viewing reality from divergent standpoints. Clay had been to the Soviet Union twice: the first time in August 1945 when he accompanied Eisenhower to Moscow for a celebration of the victory, the second when he attended the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1947. Unlike most policymakers, he had witnessed destruction, backwardness, and poverty firsthand; understood Soviet vulnerability; and was unimpressed by the Soviet advantage in numbers. In a cable to Washington on 5 March 1948, which excited a brief hysteria when leaked to the press, Clay professed having recently developed “a feeling” that war “may come with dramatic suddenness.” Yet he quickly disavowed the message and later confessed that its purpose was solely to influence opinion in the congressional appropriations committees. Clay was therefore tolerant of risk, which he held to be minimal, and was loathe to sacrifice a political position on account of improbable threats. Bradley, however, refused to dismiss military facts. America was unprepared for war, and local disparities favored the Soviets. Berlin was indefensible, and—apart from Soviet intentions—any attempt to resist Soviet pressures through force could unleash war through accident or miscalculation.³¹

Currency in Berlin

For OMGUS financial experts, Berlin posed special difficulties. Fearing for the integrity of the new Deutschemark, they rejected the inclusion of the Western sectors of Berlin in the West German reform. If the West German mark circulated in West Berlin, warned the economist Edward A. Tenenbaum,

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 167–68. Eisenhower, describing the delegation's low-level flight to Moscow, wrote: “From the region of the Volga westward, almost everything was destroyed. When we flew into Russia, in 1945, I did not see a house standing between the western borders of the country and the area around Moscow.” Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, p. 469. Quote from Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 466. Jean Smith uncovered the reason for the uncharacteristic message by putting the question to Clay directly in an oral interview. See Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 467–68. For the views of the JCS, see Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, pp. 141–46, 150–56, and 160–64.



Currency stamped with "B" for distribution in Berlin

substantial sums would disappear into hoards in the Soviet Zone, forcing the German bank of issue to pump increasing quantities of money into the city. When, at some point of time, the Eastern Zone hoarders decided to liquidate their holdings, the "excess" money would reappear in circulation, causing inflation to surge. Robert Eisenberg, an economic consultant to the State Department, noted an added danger. A Western currency in Berlin, he stated, would allow the Soviets to obtain virtually unlimited amounts of Western marks in exchange for banknotes printed in the Eastern Zone. They could use these funds to finance political activities and espionage in the West or to sabotage the West German economy.³²

The experts also dreaded the economic and social consequences of a split currency in the city. A reform in the Western sectors alone would impede trade with the hinterland; close off the access of Eastern sector residents to the cultural, economic, and social life of Western Berlin; and erode the city's common institutions. The "natural outlet" for Berlin's industry, wrote Eisenberg, was the Soviet Zone of occupation. Therefore, a "currency barrier between Berlin and the surrounding area would unfavorably affect the city's food supplies, its

³² Memo, Edward A. Tenenbaum, sub: Berlin and the Financial Reform, Encl to Memo, Jack Bennett, Financial Adviser to the Mil Governor, for General Lucius D. Clay, 9 Dec 1947, file 3/177-2/1, OMGUS, BAK; Memo, Robert Eisenberg for Div of Intel Research, Dept of State, 13 Apr 1948, sub: Problems of Currency Conversion in Berlin, in *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, Michael W. Wolff (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 301–03.

trading capacities, its balance of payments, and the employment of its population.” For Tenenbaum’s colleague Manuel Gottlieb, “no sound economic basis” existed for Berlin’s inclusion in the Western Zone reform. Whereas “some kind of economic life” could reemerge in “the split Eastern and Western halves of Germany, only pauperization and disintegration can be anticipated in Berlin.”³³

Although the advisers agreed on the need to preserve a single means of exchange in all four sectors of the city, they differed on the alternatives. Whereas Eisenberg and Gottlieb preferred to adopt the Eastern Zone mark, Tenenbaum advocated the *Bärenmark* (“Bear” mark, or B-mark), a special, unified currency for the city itself, as a “neutral” solution. Clay chose the former course, proposing in a cable to the Department of the Army on 2 May to negotiate, under Kommandatura auspices, a “monetary union” between Greater Berlin and the Soviet area of occupation. Considering the militancy of his response to the Soviet transit restrictions, Clay’s readiness to incorporate the city into the Eastern currency regime appeared inconsistent. Yet, he believed the key issue to be quadripartite sovereignty, and if the Kommandatura controlled the issue of the Soviet mark, “sovereignty would not be questioned.”³⁴

Breakup of the Kommandatura

From the start of 1948 the atmosphere in the Kommandatura had turned progressively hostile. The representatives spent countless hours in disputes over trivia. In one such altercation, the Americans and Soviets argued over whether Berlin’s schoolbooks should include excerpts from Stalin’s speeches. In another, the two sides traded charges over who had displayed more hypocrisy in banning publications from the sector: the Americans, because they had prohibited the display of posters containing statements by Molotov, or the Soviets, who had removed copies of the James F. Byrnes memoir, *Speaking Frankly*, from bookshops in East Berlin. Lasting up to fourteen hours, meetings became tests of endurance.³⁵

The education committee alone remained an oasis of quadripartite cooperation. All of the powers agreed that Germany’s school system, which divided children into academic or technical courses of study after the fourth grade, was hugely inequitable. Not only were students rigidly separated after the elementary grades, but the academic *Gymnasien* (secondary schools) charged tuition—thereby excluding children from poorer families. The Kommandatura ordered the Magistrat to enact a “democratic” school reform. After months of

³³ Memos, Tenenbaum, sub: Berlin and the Financial Reform; Eisenberg for Div of Intel Research, 13 Apr 1948; Manuel Gottlieb for Lawrence Wilkinson, 27 Apr 1948, sub: Some Notes on the Economic and Financial Problems of Berlin, file 4/135-3/8, OMGUS, LAB.

³⁴ Telg, Clay to Dept of the Army, 2 May 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:643–44.

³⁵ Min, Mtg of Deputy Commandants, BKD/M(48)8-122-23, 20 Feb 1948, file 4/127-3/12, OMGUS, LAB.

discussion and parliamentary action, a coalition of Social Democrats, Unity Socialists, and Liberal Democrats passed legislation in November 1947. The new law established the *Einheitschule* (comprehensive school), a twelve-year, tuition-free program of studies which separated students into academic and technical tracks after the eighth grade. For the American members of the committee, this “progressive reform” led “the way in education.”³⁶

When the legislation came before the committee for approval, the Allied experts invited German officials into the deliberations. The American representatives proposed the only significant change to the law. In order to reduce social cleavages after the eighth grade, they advocated that the academic and technical courses of study be held in the same building and that students from the different courses jointly attend lessons when subjects lent themselves to common instruction. On first hearing, neither the Soviet representative on the committee, nor the Unity Socialist school expert, Ernst Wildangel, knew how to respond to an idea more egalitarian than theirs, but their initial surprise soon turned into approval. In mid-May, after the deputy commandants hammered out compromises on the issues of private schools and religious instruction, they returned the completed legislation, with Kommandatura approval, to the Magistrat. The Berlin school law, a milestone in the history of German social reform, was the most constructive act of four-power cooperation since the writing of Berlin’s provisional constitution. It was also the last.³⁷

Even as the education committee was escorting Berlin’s path-breaking school reform into law, relations between the commandants continued to worsen. Reflecting the growing tensions between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies by early 1948, Maj. Gen. Alexander G. Kotikov and his deputy, Col. Alexi I. Yelisarov, had begun reading long denunciations of Western Allied policy. They generally repeated three allegations: one, that the Western powers had violated quadripartite agreements, above all, the Potsdam Protocol; two, that they were splitting Germany and Berlin; and three, that they were using their presence in Berlin to undermine the Soviet Zone of occupation. On 28 May, the commandants meeting ran past 0100, achieving nothing in hours of recriminations. Kotikov, reported Ambassador Robert Murphy, took “every opportunity to be openly discourteous to his colleagues and to provoke them

³⁶ For Clay’s critical views on the traditional German system, see Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 302. Rpt, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, to Education and Cultural Relations Div, OMGUS, Berlin District, 1 Aug 1947, sub: Progress of the School Reform, file 4/11-3/2, OMGUS, LAB. This evaluation preceded the final passing of the law, but the core features of the reform were known at that point.

³⁷ Rpt, John R. Sala, Ch, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, to Col William T. Babcock, Deputy Commandant, and Col Frank L. Howley, 28 Jan 1948, sub: School Law for Greater Berlin, file 4/14-3/28; Rpt, John P. Thompson, Acting Ch, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, to Education and Cultural Relations Div, OMGUS, Berlin District, 12 Jul 1948, sub: Special Report on Allied Kommandatura Education Committee, file 4/11-3/2. Both in OMGUS, LAB. “Schulgesetz für Groß-Berlin” (School Law for Greater Berlin), 1 Jun 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:546–51.

whenever possible through unnecessary and annoying procedural deviations, and inflammatory statements.” Perry Laukhuff, the State Department’s observer on the Kommandatura—and nominally the political adviser to Col. Frank L. Howley—had already suggested a rationale for the Soviets’ behavior. “Their present tactics,” he speculated in early March, “seem designed to irritate, confuse and tire the other three delegations with the possible aim of trapping them into unwise decisions out of sheer exhaustion and impatience, or to goad them into a precipitant reaction upon which the Soviets could seize as a pretext for breaking up the Kommandatura in a manner favorable to their propaganda.” If Laukhuff’s supposition was correct, the Soviets had a perfect target in Colonel Howley.³⁸

Howley was incensed over the 28 May meeting. It was a “disgraceful thing,” he wrote in a letter to Brig. Gen. Jean Joseph Xavier Emile Ganeval, “and I for one put up with it in order to keep this last channel open.” If the Russians persist, Howley went on, “we will have to work out some other arrangement.” For the moment, he intended to reciprocate their insults. The next meeting, Howley said, should be ended by 1900; he would not stay any longer than that. If Ganeval, as chairman, wanted to carry on, the colonel would leave his deputy. “I don’t mind doing this so far as the Russian commandant is concerned but I am anxious that you understand that no offense is intended toward you or the British Commandant.”³⁹

On 16 June, the Kommandatura convened shortly past 1000. The meeting began with four hours of argument around well-worn issues. After breaking for lunch, the representatives continued their disputes for another two and one-half hours. At this point, according to a U.S. liaison officer observing the discussions, they displayed no unusual signs of either animosity or friendliness. By 1800, they had exhausted all items on the agenda except for “other business.” Speaking first, Ganeval introduced a proposal to increase food rations. The atmosphere immediately cleared. For the next three hours, the representatives offered serious counterproposals and carried on what the officer called “honest and imaginative horse trading.” By 2100, in a “surprise to all,” they had reached agreement. The “delegates’ perfectly sincere efforts” reminded the observer of “old-time” negotiations in the Allied Control Council.⁴⁰

³⁸ Airgram, Robert Murphy to George C. Marshall, 2 Jun 1948, file 802/37, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; and see also Memo, Lt Col Wilbur F. Maring, U.S. Ch of staff, Allied Kommandatura, for U.S. Secretariat, Allied Control Council, 21 Jul 1948, sub: Events Leading up to the Termination of the Allied Kommandatura Operations, file 2/103-2/11, OMGUS, BAK; Airgram, Murphy to Marshall, 3 Mar 1948, file 802/36, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK. Perry Laukhuff drafted this message.

³⁹ Ltr, Col Frank L. Howley to Brigadier General Jean Joseph Xavier Emile Ganeval, 2 Jun 1948, file 4/133-1/22, OMGUS, LAB.

⁴⁰ Memo, J. S. Arouet, Liaison and Protocol sec., U.S. Secretariat, Allied Kommandatura, for Ch of sec., 29 Jun 1948, sub: Allied Kommandatura Commandant’s Meeting on 16 June 1948, file 802/37, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

Howley, who had planned to walk out at 1900, was now two hours behind schedule, but he could not leave while Ganeval was conducting business. Following the food agreement, the French commandant initiated a discussion of trade unions. “The atmosphere grew slightly heavier, although not unusually so,” noted the liaison officer. The British commandant, Maj. Gen. Edwin O. Herbert, proposed to increase wage levels by 20 percent. After a round of futile discussion, Ganeval asked Howley whether he had anything to present. Howley replied that if he did, “he would have the decency not to bring it up at this time of day”—by then, 2315. He urged Ganeval to close the meeting. Yelisarov, representing an “ill” Kotikov, objected. Because the other commandants had enjoyed the opportunity to submit items under other business, he demanded the same privilege, and he therefore presented a typewritten paper on wages and social welfare. This was Howley’s chance. He was tired, needed sleep, and would not listen to any more “tirades.” He would leave his deputy, Col. William T. Babcock, to continue the discussion. Howley rose from his seat and bolted from the room without shaking anyone’s hand.⁴¹

Yelisarov appeared baffled. When his turn came to speak, he claimed that it was impossible to go on with the meeting. After the Soviet political adviser whispered something in his ear, Yelisarov added, “I don’t understand Colonel Howley’s hooligan manners. If Colonel Howley does not apologize, we will not attend future meetings.” He suddenly stood, shook hands with Ganeval and Herbert, and headed toward the door with his entire delegation. When Yelisarov was halfway to the door, General Herbert called after him to fix a date for the next meeting. The Soviet deputy muttered “We won’t,” before Ganeval interrupted to repeat the question. Looking “very helpless,” Yelisarov “made a vague movement with his left hand, and finally walked out of the room.” Ganeval then stated for the official minutes that the meeting had ended due to the withdrawal of the Soviet delegation rather than the departure of Howley.⁴²

In the meantime, Howley, who had claimed to be too tired to remain at the meeting, proceeded to the Berlin press center to brief journalists. As he started to talk, Colonel Babcock phoned to tell him what had happened in the short time after his departure. Howley returned to the journalists and spun his story. The Soviets had been planning for months to destroy quadripartite government in Berlin, he asserted, and this incident might signal the end of the Kommandatura. The Western-licensed press dutifully repeated his account, casting blame on the Soviets and describing Howley’s withdrawal as correct. The *Tagesspiegel* failed to mention the overall confusion surrounding the incident—giving the impression that Yelisarov’s departure was undeniably planned—and asserted that Howley left with Ganeval’s express permission. By contrast, the Soviet Zone

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.; and see also Telg, Robert Murphy to George C. Marshall, 17 Jun 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 9 vols., Germany and Austria (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973) 2:908–909.

journalists made no allusion to a possible end to four-power rule and indicated that discussions could resume when Howley apologized for his conduct.⁴³

In a cable to Marshall, Ambassador Murphy reported, “General Clay who was himself . . . meeting with UK and French representatives re currency and tax reform throughout the night is not happy over Howley’s abrupt action.” In fact, Clay was enraged. Sometime after midnight, he summoned Howley to his home for a tongue-lashing. “You have done a terrible thing,” he said. Murphy and Laukhuff reported to the general after the break of daylight. Clay asked Laukhuff whether he should remove Howley. “Well, on the merits of the case, yes,” Laukhuff answered, “but you can’t do that. In the face of the Russian reaction and the Russian pressure, I think this would be regarded as weakness. I don’t think you dare remove him.” Clay and Murphy agreed, and Howley stayed.⁴⁴

The quadripartite Kommandatura lingered in suspension for another two weeks following the walkouts. The committees continued to meet, and the chiefs of staff still operated the secretariat. Yet, with the rising tension between East and West, there was little chance that the commandants would ever reconvene. The Soviet commandant would not return without an apology from Colonel Howley, and Howley refused to apologize. Rotating into the chairmanship of the secretariat, the Soviet chief of staff formally ended the body on 1 July. By then, a larger crisis had exploded over Germany and Berlin.⁴⁵

The Reckoning Approaches

On 20 April, the Western occupying powers and the Benelux states had resumed their discussions in London on the future of Germany. The concluding communiqué on 7 June substituted the vague phraseology of the March communiqué with hard details. Germany would become a full member in the European recovery organization. An international control authority for the Ruhr would distribute the region’s coal, coke, and steel in the interests of all participants in the recovery program. The minister presidents of the West German states would convene a constituent assembly to write a constitution establishing a federal government. No “general withdrawal” from Germany of the Western occupying forces would occur until the “peace of Europe is secured.”⁴⁶

⁴³ Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 182. For a summary of press reaction, see Telg, Murphy to Marshall, no. 1397, 18 Jun 1948; Telg, Murphy to Marshall, no. 1404, 18 Jun 1948. Both in file 2857/8, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁴⁴ Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 17 Jun 1948; Howley, *Berlin Command*, pp. 182–83; Interv, Richard D. McKinzie with Perry Laukhuff, 23 Jul 1974, Clay Project, OHRO.

⁴⁵ Stenographic Notes, Mtg of Chs of Staff, Allied Kommandatura, 1 Jul 1948, file 4/133-2/8, OMGUS, LAB.

⁴⁶ Communiqué, issued at the conclusion of informal talks on Germany by the Representatives of France, United Kingdom, United States, and the Benelux countries, London, 7 Jun 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 143–46.

This was the boldest statement yet of the Allied intention to terminate the quadripartite regime in Germany. The greatest nightmare of the Kremlin leadership—the integration of a reconstructed Western Germany into an anti-Soviet bloc—was becoming a reality. The Eastern sector press unleashed a propaganda assault, continuing to play the national card in an effort to incite German opinion against the Allies. In its lead headline on 9 June, the official Soviet newspaper, *Tägliche Rundschau*, bannered the cry, “Hidden Annexation of the Ruhr Territory.” “Anglo-American monopoly capital,” it proclaimed, “wants to dominate Europe.” The journal of the Socialist Unity Party, *Neues Deutschland*, denounced the “London Dictate” as “the rape of Germany by Western powers.”⁴⁷

On 18 June, in similar letters to Sokolovsky, the three Western Allied military governors regretted the failure, over many months, to implement an all-German reform of the country’s currency. Inflationary conditions had worsened; economic revival was impossible. The situation was acute and required immediate remedy. Therefore, they were “joining in a currency reform to be made effective in the three western zones on Sunday, 20 June.” Berlin, however, was excluded. In Clay’s words: “These measures are not being made applicable to the United States sector of Berlin in view of the specific arrangements which are in effect for the quadripartite government of the city as a whole.”⁴⁸

Although the reform had been imminent for months, the Soviets were ill-prepared when it came. They had clung to hopes for a quadripartite settlement and had recoiled from attracting the political odium of initiating a split. As a result, their own counterreform had lagged. Notably, they had failed to stock new banknotes to replace the Reichsmark in the event of a sudden changeover in the Allied zones. Therefore, devalued bills held in Western Germany could flood into the East through Berlin, where they still had purchasing power, and no one could distinguish the source. In order to dam the flow, the Soviet administration tightened controls on traffic between East and West. At midnight on 18 June, they blocked all interzonal rail passenger service, along with automotive traffic, horse-drawn carriages, and pedestrian movements from the west. They allowed barge traffic and rail freight shipments to continue, subject to more rigorous inspection and approval procedures.⁴⁹

In Ambassador Murphy’s view, the measures were reasonable as a “natural defensive action to protect the Soviet Zone from an influx of old currency.”

⁴⁷ *Tägliche Rundschau*, 9 Jun 1948; *Neues Deutschland*, 8 Jun 1948.

⁴⁸ Ltrs, General Sir Brian Robertson to Marshal Sokolovsky, 18 Jun 1948, in *Documents on Berlin, 1943–1963*, eds. Wolfgang Heidelmeier and Günter Hindrichs (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1962), pp. 58–59; General Lucius D. Clay to Sokolovsky, 18 Jun 1948, file 4/133-1/19, OMGUS, LAB.

⁴⁹ Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 211; “Mitteilung der sowjetischen Militärverwaltung über Verkehrsbeschränkungen zwischen Berlin und den westlichen Besatzungszonen” (Announcement by the Soviet Military Administration on transport restrictions between Berlin and the Western Zones of Occupation), 18 Jun 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1457–58; Gottlieb, *The German Peace Settlement and the Berlin Crisis*, pp. 189–90.

General Clay agreed. When General Robertson suggested a vigorous protest, Clay demurred. The regulations, he said, were “not immoderate,” and if the situation were reversed “we on our side would have been required to take rather similar precautions.” The American commander proposed to “allow matters to precipitate” for several days in order to better gauge the Soviet attitude toward the possible reconvening of the Kommandatura and toward the overall situation in Berlin.⁵⁰

On 19 June, Sokolovsky released a proclamation to the German people. He denounced the unilateral reform as a “blow to state unity” and mourned the impending disruption to “economic ties . . . built up through the centuries.” He declared a ban on circulation of the Western currency in the Soviet Zone of occupation or in “Greater Berlin,” which he proclaimed “economically part of the Soviet Zone.” He replied to the Western commanders the next day. Their letters, he complained, had arrived only a few hours before the Western powers announced their actions on the radio. They communicated a “unilateral and unlawful decision” to impose a separate currency reform that would “liquidate” the uniformity of money and complete “the division of Germany.” Nonetheless, Sokolovsky noted “with satisfaction” the exclusion of Berlin. “There can be only one currency in Berlin,” he asserted, for two currencies would not only undermine the economy of Greater Berlin, “which is located in the Soviet Zone of occupation and economically forms a part of that zone,” but would also impair the economy of the entire Eastern area.⁵¹

Perceiving an opening, Clay responded on 21 June. Admitting the difficulties of separate currencies in Berlin, he proposed an urgent meeting of financial experts at the Allied Control Council building on 22 June. Their job would be to hammer out a unitary currency arrangement to preserve Berlin’s trade relations with all the zones. He named as his chief representative his financial adviser, Jack Bennett.⁵²

The experts—members of the Council’s Financial Directorate—convened at 1400. All hopes of heading off a crisis lay in the hands of this small group, working with little time. The Western representatives proposed to provide the city with a separate “neutral” mark, legal tender in Berlin alone, but exchangeable into Eastern and Western currencies. The Soviet negotiator rejected the idea as economically impossible. Beyond the fact that Berlin was an integral part of the Eastern Zone, the city was already becoming the “dumping ground” of invalid banknotes from the West. Therefore, he stated, the only practicable alternative would be to include Berlin in the pending Eastern Zone reform. Some hairline cracks then appeared in the Western Front. Without expressly abandoning the

⁵⁰ Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 19 Jun 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:910. Clay’s views quote from Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 19 Jun 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:910.

⁵¹ Proclamation to the German People on the Western Currency Reform by Marshal Sokolovsky, 19 Jun 1948, pp. 59–62; Ltr, Sokolovsky to Clay, 20 Jun 1948, pp. 63–64. Both in Heidelberg and Hindrichs, eds., *Documents on Berlin, 1943–1963*.

⁵² Ltr, Clay to Sokolovsky, 21 Jun 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1342–43.

idea of a separate Berlin mark, the British representative began to explore the technical requisites for the quadripartite control of a new Eastern Zone currency, whereas the French expert declared himself ready to accept that currency under proper conditions. In contrast to his Allied partners, the American delegate, Bennett, disclaimed any sympathy for the Soviet proposal, even with guarantees, but agreed to continue talking.⁵³

After a two-hour pause for dinner, the talks reconvened at 2000. The representatives now focused on Soviet plans to include Greater Berlin in the Eastern Zone reform. Spelling out their provisions, the Soviet expert pointed out that the financial directorate had accepted nearly all points in earlier discussions, and many, he asserted, had stemmed from suggestions of his Western colleagues. Nonetheless, even if agreement were feasible over the *economic* substance of the reform, the discussions were fated to shipwreck on the political status of Germany's capital. Although the Soviet representative offered to let the Western allies recommend changes to the law, he insisted that the Soviet administration have the final say. Citing the principle of joint authority in Berlin, the Western delegates contended that only the Kommandatura could promulgate a law for the entire city. The Soviet expert pronounced their attitude "incomprehensible," for having demolished the quadripartite regime in Germany as a whole, the Western powers were now presuming to retain it for Berlin. "You cannot destroy the overall legal basis of the four power administration," he asserted, "but make an exception for yourselves."⁵⁴

Around 2230, Bennett ended the talks. He regretted the "tenacity" with which the Soviets insisted on a "unilateral takeover" of Berlin. If they went ahead with their plans, Bennett vowed, the United States would introduce a separate currency into the American Sector, in the hope that Britain and France would follow. Such a measure, the Soviet delegate retorted, would have "very serious consequences."⁵⁵

Both threats were in earnest. During the night of 22 June, minutes after the session ended, Sokolovsky addressed letters to Western commanders in chief, announcing his orders for a Soviet Zone currency reform embracing Berlin. Responding on the morning of 23 June, Clay and Robertson communicated their own decision to introduce the Western Zone currency into the Western sectors of the city. The Soviets retaliated with the "real crisis" Clay had foreseen in April—the Berlin Blockade.⁵⁶

⁵³ Min, Mtg of Financial Directorate at the Allied Control Council, 22 Jun 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1347–56.

⁵⁴ Min, Mtg of Financial Directorate at the Allied Control Council, 22 Jun 1948, 2:1361; and see also 2:1357–63.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:1362; and see also Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 23 Jun 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:912–14.

⁵⁶ Ltrs, Sokolovsky to Clay, 22 Jun 1948; Robertson to Sokolovsky, 23 Jun 1948. Both in Heidemeyer and Hindrichs, eds., *Documents on Berlin, 1943–1963*, pp. 62–65. Ltrs, Lt Gen G. S. Lukyantschenko, Ch of Staff, Soviet Mil Administration, to Louise Schröder, 22 Jun 1948; Clay to Sokolovsky, 23 Jun 1948. Both in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1363–69.

Confronting the Blockade

Curiously for such a signal event, the blockade began almost furtively. Instead of sending a formal notice to the Western powers, the Soviets revealed the measures through brief announcements in the Eastern Zone press. During the night of 23 June, the Soviet Zone news agency reported the stoppage of all rail traffic between Berlin and Helmstedt due to “technical difficulties.” On 24 June, it announced “severe restrictions” on electrical power deliveries into the Western sectors on account of “malfunctions.” A third announcement, appearing the same day, reported that the rail line difficulties were more serious than originally thought and could not be overcome any time soon. Therefore, “strong concern” had arisen over the Western sector’s food supply. In conjunction with the controls imposed on 18 June, the new impediments choked off all ground transportation between Berlin and Western Germany and restricted electricity consumption to the power generated in West Berlin. Many Berliners were so confused over the conflicting currency reforms—and so fearful of financial ruin—that they failed to recognize the larger crisis unfolding around them.⁵⁷

Despite the long gestation of the crisis, Clay had not yet fully developed a plan to deal with it. His first impulse was to resurrect his earlier scheme for an armed convoy. Accordingly, on 24 June he flew to Heidelberg where he met with Lt. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner, his military deputy, and Brig. Gen. Arthur G. Trudeau, the commander of the 1st Constabulary Brigade in Wiesbaden. He directed them to organize a task force to push up the autobahn. That force, numbering some 6,000 men, would deliver around 500 tons of supplies and thereby break the blockade. Clay minimized the risks of such an operation. The blockade was a bluff, he believed, and if the allies called it, the Soviets would fold. “I am still convinced,” he cabled to Maj. Gen. William H. Draper on 25 June, “that a determined movement of convoys with troop protection would reach Berlin and that such a showing might well prevent rather than build up Soviet pressure which could lead to war.”⁵⁸

Among the Washington leadership, only Draper supported Clay. As in April, Bradley remained opposed. If a convoy led to gunfire, as Bradley’s biographer portrays the chief of staff’s reasoning, the side that lost the exchange would not take it “lying down.” Rather, it would “reinforce and counterattack” until it won. “Sooner or later, probably sooner, we would face the likelihood

⁵⁷ Press releases, Allgemeine Deutsche Nachrichtendienst (General German News Service—ADN) of the Soviet Zone of occupation, 23–24 Jun 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1458–59.

⁵⁸ Backer, *Winds of History*, pp. 235–36; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 495–97. Clay’s meeting with Huebner and Trudeau is undocumented. Backer’s account is based on an oral interview with Trudeau. Smith bases his treatment partly on Backer’s interview and partly on his own interview with Clay, whose recollection meshed with Trudeau’s. Telg, Clay to William H. Draper Jr., 25 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:697.

of an all-out war.” Secretary of the Army Royall shared these reservations. In a teleconference with General Clay on the morning of 25 June, Washington time, Royall ordered him to refrain from “any action in Berlin which might lead to possible armed conflict.”⁵⁹

For decision makers in Washington, one question dominated: if the United States wanted to remain in Berlin, could it do so without risking war? Clay’s “tough talk”—as Bradley called it—offered no answer. Indeed, the military governor spoke in contradictions. On the one hand, he emphasized the necessity of holding Berlin. “I can only say,” he asserted in his teleconference with Royall, “that our remaining in Berlin means much to our prestige in Germany, in Europe, and in keeping high the courage of western Europe. To retreat now is to imply we are prepared to retreat further.” “If we go,” Clay warned the following day, “I do not believe we will ever get a real western German government. It will expect to be next.” On the other hand, having declared Berlin a vital interest, he went on to admit, “Except for our capacity to stick it out, we have few chips here to use.” The general had thus identified the essential dichotomy of the Western position in Berlin. From a military point of view, the city was indefensible, an island a hundred miles behind enemy lines. Politically, however, the city had become the most identifiable symbol of Western resolve in the struggle to contain communism. Berlin had to be held.⁶⁰

Some of Berlin’s new political leaders seized on the blockade as an opportunity to separate themselves from their socialist counterparts and tie themselves more firmly to the United States and the West. On 24 June, Reuter addressed a rally of 80,000 SPD comrades assembled at the Hertha sports field in Wedding, close to the border with East Berlin. He began with a call to resistance: “We will apply ourselves with all means and to all extremes against a claim to domination that will turn us into slaves, into the Helots, of another power.” At the same time as he fired up his listeners with words of defiance, Reuter was addressing wider—and ultimately more critical—audiences. Stoked by his rhetoric, mass demonstrations provided a stage for appeals to world opinion.⁶¹

On 25 June, the day after the rally, Clay sent for Reuter. He had not yet ordered the airlift and wanted to assure himself of German support. No matter what the allies might do, Clay warned, the Berliners would be short of fuel and electricity. They were going to be very cold and feel very miserable. He wanted to know if the Berliners would hold out. Reuter responded, “General,

⁵⁹ Bradley and Blair, *A General’s Life*, pp. 479–80; Teleconf, TT-9667, 25 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:699.

⁶⁰ Bradley and Blair, *A General’s Life*, p. 479; Teleconfs, TT-9667, 25 Jun 1948; CC 9677, 26 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:706; TT-9667, 25 Jun 1948.

⁶¹ Transcripts, Reuter speech, “Rede auf der SPD-Kundgebung zur Währungsreform auf dem Hertha-Sportsplatz” (Speech before the SPD Rally over Currency Reform at the Hertha Sports Field), 24 Jun 1948, 3:400–401; Reuter speech, “Rede auf einer SPD-Kundgebung im Rathaus Schöneberg” (Speech before a SPD Rally at the Schöneberg City Hall), 11 Jul 1948, 3:419. Both in *Ernst Reuter—Aus Reden und Schriften*, Hans E. Hirschfeld and Hans J. Reichardt, vol. 3 (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1963).

there can be utterly no question where the Berliners stand. They will stand up for their freedom and will gratefully accept any help that is offered them.” Reuter reaffirmed that message in a meeting with U.S. officials several days later. “We will go our way in any event,” he intoned. “Do what you can do; we shall do what we feel to be our duty. Berlin will bear all sacrifices and mount resistance, come what may.” The Americans, Willy Brandt observed, were “visibly impressed.” Instead of complaints, accusations, and conditions, they had heard a European politician declaring his readiness to shoulder a heavy burden without demanding anything in return, not even financial support.⁶²

Reuter’s early support for Western policies was exceptional. Allied plans, which led inevitably toward a de facto partition of Germany and Berlin, aroused broad opposition. Not only were the Germans being asked to swallow the bitter pill of partition, they would also have to accept international control over the Ruhr and severe restrictions on national sovereignty. Berliners—the common people as well as political leaders—especially feared for the fate of their city, a “dethroned” capital inside the Soviet Zone of occupation. In a formal resolution the City Assembly had passed on 13 June, its members pointed to the “grave dangers” of the London decisions and called on the Magistrat to demand national elections for a constituent assembly. German officials bridled when the military governors issued implementing directives, the so-called Frankfurt Documents, to the Western minister presidents on 1 July. The chief problem of the Allied dictate was that it foresaw no all-German solution *whatsoever*—only a truncated Western state.⁶³

Reuter’s influence removed a major inhibition to accepting the allies’ plans. By legitimating the London decisions from the perspective of national unity, he galvanized the minister presidents to implement the Allied program. Even those who cared nothing for the East received political cover for their actions through his assertion that the Western state was the initial step toward reunification. In this way, Reuter became America’s political spear in the battle for German opinion. His influence grew accordingly. Clay remembered Reuter as a “great man” and “good friend.” Brandt spoke of an “intimate partnership” which decided the course of the struggle. As the man in whom the Americans vested trust, he could codetermine their policy. No other German gained such authority until, perhaps, Konrad Adenauer in the early 1950s.⁶⁴

⁶² Willy Brandt and Richard Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter: Ein Leben für die Freiheit* (Ernst Reuter: A Life for Freedom) (Berlin: Kindler Verlag, 1957), pp. 425–26; and see also Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 501–02; Willy Brandt (as recorded by Leo Lania), *Mein Weg nach Berlin* (My Road to Berlin) (Berlin: Kindler Verlag, 1960), pp. 241–42.

⁶³ “Resolution by the City Assembly of Greater Berlin on the London Recommendations,” 13 Jun 1948, in Heidemeyer and Hindrichs, eds., *Documents on Berlin, 1943–1963*, p. 58; Brandt and Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter*, pp. 468–71; Friedensberg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 15, 100–101, and 318–19.

⁶⁴ Brandt and Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter*, p. 475; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, p. 502; Brandt, *My Road to Berlin*, p. 242.

As tensions increased, Britain's foreign minister, Bevin, proffered a solution to Clay's dilemma. During a meeting of the cabinet on 25 June, Bevin called for the immediate assembly of a large force of transport aircraft to begin supplying civilian needs. Speaking afterward at the Foreign Office, Bevin envisioned a "big display of carrier [cargo] aircraft for taking supplies to the Western sectors of Berlin." Although he did not imagine that it would be possible actually to feed some two million Germans, the display would serve "to keep up morale in Germany." In addition, the foreign minister was eager for the deployment of a "very large bomber force" throughout Europe "to show the Russians that we meant business."⁶⁵

Robertson discussed Bevin's ideas with Clay. Still fixated on armed convoys, the American partner doubted the feasibility of supplying over two million civilians by air. Nonetheless, on 26 June, Clay issued orders to the commander of the U.S. Air Force, Europe, Lt. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, to begin the airlift. With seventy planes available, all of them C-47s with a cargo capacity of 2 tons, the initial deliveries were estimated at some 200 tons per day. In a cable to Draper on 27 June, however, Clay noted that the two Allied airports, Tempelhof and Gatow, could accommodate fifty more planes. If, as LeMay was urging, those additional planes were the newer C-54s—which could carry over four times as much as C-47s—deliveries could reach 700 tons a day, not including the British contribution. The shipments would bolster German morale and "seriously disturb the Soviet blockade."⁶⁶

The Debate Moves to Washington

Although the National Security Act of 1947 had established the National Security Council to formulate policy on foreign affairs, the body had never convened, either in March or any time later, to consider Berlin. As a result, the first interdepartmental meeting of leading decision makers was an ad hoc session held in Secretary of the Army Royall's office on the afternoon of 27 June. Joining Royall were Secretary of Defense Forrestal, Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett, Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan, Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad, General Bradley, and other officials from the military and State Department. Their discussion proceeded on the assumption that existing food stocks, plus supplies transported by air, would delay serious food shortages for roughly sixty days. The participants then discussed three options: withdraw from Berlin at an appropriate time in the future, presumably when a constituent assembly for the West German government convened on 1 September; stay in Berlin by all possible means, including armed convoys or other forcible measures, thus accepting the

⁶⁵ Min, Discussion at the Foreign Ofc, 25 Jun 1948, C5094/H, FO 371/70497, PRO.

⁶⁶ Telg, Clay to Draper, 27 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:707-08; and see also Telg, Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 26 Jun 1948, C5005, FO371/70496, PRO; Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 26 Jun 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:918.

possibility of war; or maintain an “unprovocative but firm stand,” resorting to local negotiations and diplomatic approaches in order to assert Allied rights to Berlin while postponing the ultimate decision on whether to stay or withdraw. Bradley’s biographer summarized the general’s view on these choices as “get out; fight; or stand on quicksand, hoping for a diplomatic solution or another sudden change in Soviet policy.”⁶⁷

The conferees considered the advantages and disadvantages of each course of action. They weighed the political cost of withdrawing from Berlin against the danger of future crises and the risks of trying to supply the city by force. They also discussed how to “minimize or cover” a future withdrawal as well as how to “augment” the American position through the dispatch of B-29 bombers to Britain and Germany, an implicit threat to use atomic weapons. The airlift received no mention except as a means to buy time until the meeting of the constituent assembly. Although the group agreed on a number of ancillary steps—above all, to sound out Bevin on the stationing of two B-29 groups in Britain—only the president could decide the issues of principle. Forrestal, Lovett, and Royall would meet with him the next morning.⁶⁸

The three men met with President Harry S. Truman at the White House on 28 June. After relating the details of the Sunday afternoon discussion, Lovett posed the key question, “Were we to stay in Berlin or not?” Truman interrupted. He saw no need to discuss the point, the president snapped, “We were going to stay, period.” For Royall, this sounded like Truman had chosen option two—to stay in Berlin by all possible means—without considering the implications. If the U.S. government took a position that might entail having to “fight our way into Berlin,” the secretary warned, it had to face that fact and prepare for the consequences. Truman evaded the issue. “We would have to deal with the situation as it developed,” he answered, but his essential conviction was “that we were in Berlin by . . . agreement” and the Soviets “had no right to get us out.” Truman closed the meeting by approving the deployment of B-29s to Germany, neglecting any mention of Berlin.⁶⁹

Bradley found the lack of specific guidance from the president on Berlin to be disturbing. Although the group had discussed and considered many options, it had reached no conclusions nor made any decisions. The chief of staff believed that the National Security Council should have long since drafted a policy memorandum on Berlin and lamented the fact that actions had been “generated in a series of informal emergency meetings.” Therefore, on the morning of the

⁶⁷ Forrestal Diary Entry, 27 Jun 1948, pp. 452–53; and see also MFR, Plans and Opns Div, Army Staff, for General Omar N. Bradley et al., 27 Jun 1948, sub: State-National Defense Meeting of 27 June 48, Held for the Purpose of Determining the U.S. Position Regarding the Continued Occupation of Berlin, P&O 381 TS (27 Jun 1948), Rcds of the Army Staff, RG 319, NACP; Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, p. 479.

⁶⁸ Forrestal Diary Entry, 27 Jun 1948, p. 453; and see also MFR, Plans and Opns Div, Army Staff, for Bradley, 27 Jun 1948.

⁶⁹ Forrestal Diary Entry, 28 Jun 1948, pp. 454–55.

meeting at the White House, Bradley directed his planning office to write a systematic analysis of U.S. options. Completed the same day, the analysis bore the notation, “concur, ONB [Omar Nelson Bradley],” and represented Bradley’s express views on the situation.⁷⁰

The work began by rejecting an immediate withdrawal. To withdraw at the current moment would weaken U.S. prestige, alienate German opinion, and jeopardize the European Recovery Program. Therefore, in the present crisis, the United States had to remain firm. However, even should the crisis subside, the long-term position in Berlin might become untenable. Cut off from normal relations with East Berlin and the surrounding countryside, the population of the Western sectors would live in perpetual insecurity, forever denied a normal economic and social existence. In such a case, the United States could not remain in the city. On the other hand, the longer the Americans persevered in Berlin, the more time they would gain to build up a West German government, thereby diminishing Berlin’s importance as the seat of power. At an opportune moment, it would then be possible “by proper handling of publicity” to convince both the world and the Germans themselves that withdrawal was an alternative preferable to war or mass hardship.⁷¹

The analysis prepared by Bradley’s office was adamant that the United States could not “afford to provoke a war over Berlin.” The American people would have difficulty understanding why their government should “jeopardize the entire future of civilization” for the sake of an isolated city. It called for an immediate decision on whether the United States was really willing to fight for the city. If so, decision makers needed to recognize the consequences and begin full-scale preparations. If not, they should let future developments determine whether, when, and under what conditions Americans might withdraw from their exposed position. If Soviet pressures relaxed, they could remain in Berlin indefinitely, but this was seen as improbable. Therefore, planning should commence at once for the eventuality of withdrawal, with the aim of minimizing the political costs.⁷²

The Army’s senior leaders had refused to accept Truman’s guidance as the final word and established themselves as a pole of opposition to the “tough talk” emanating from Clay’s headquarters in Berlin. Deeply dissatisfied with the quality of decision making, Bradley continued to view the situation in Berlin as primarily a military problem and to offer and promote policies with that in mind.

Meanwhile, military leaders in Washington continued to take steps to bolster the airlift into Berlin. On 27 June, the Air Force issued orders transferring four squadrons of C-54 aircraft—fifty-two planes—to Germany. They

⁷⁰ Bradley and Blair, *A General’s Life*, pp. 480, 478; Memo, Maddocks for General Omar N. Bradley, 28 Jun 1948, sub: Notes on the Situation in Berlin (Army View), P&O 381 TS (28 Jun 1948), RG 319, NACP.

⁷¹ Memo, Maddocks for General Bradley, 28 Jun 1948.

⁷² *Ibid.*



U.S. C-54 Skymasters, a mainstay in the airlift, line up at Tempelhof Airfield.

began to arrive during the first days of July. On 1 July, the fourth day of the airlift—and the last day the Americans relied exclusively on their C-47s—the Anglo-American combined effort brought 500 tons of cargo to Berlin. With the added capacity of the C-54s, the airlift operators tripled that tonnage within two weeks. Although still far short of meeting the minimum needs of Berlin, this improved performance demonstrated the potential for expanding the airlift, and Clay, in a cable to Bradley on 10 July, requested additional C-54s. In good weather, Clay promised, they could increase American deliveries to 2,000 tons a day and, with British shipments of “at least” 1,000 tons, “would provide us with food, essential coal, and even some raw materials to maintain some industrial activity in the western sectors.”⁷³

Yet, even as he requested more airplanes, Clay still promoted his idea of an armed convoy. In a subsequent cable to Bradley later that day, he recommended advising the Soviet government that the United States was prepared to overcome the alleged “technical difficulties” on the transit routes and would send in a convoy with bridging equipment to make “our right of way usable.”

⁷³ Roger Miller, *To Save a City: The Berlin Airlift, 1948–1949* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998), pp. 30–33. Charts showing daily deliveries are located in file 1948/105/1, OMGUS, LAB. For a table showing average daily deliveries by month, see William Stivers, “The Incomplete Blockade: Soviet Zone Supply of West Berlin, 1948–1949,” *Diplomatic History* 21 (Fall 1997), p. 594. Telg. Clay to Bradley, 10 Jul 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:730.

He was certain the convoy would get to Berlin because the city itself was not a “sufficient asset” for the Soviets to risk war. He repeated the recommendation five days later, asserting the need to “test” the Soviet position by conducting the movement “as quickly as it can be arranged.” Bradley demurred. Armed convoys were being “considered” along with other courses of action, he replied to Clay, but “we are not yet prepared to reach a firm decision.”⁷⁴

In truth, the Army’s analysts had already completed their assessment. In a blistering critique sent to the chief of staff on 13 July, they not only demolished the recommendation but raised fundamental questions about Clay’s judgment. A teleconference with Brig. Gen. Vernon E. Prichard, the chief of the European Command Plans and Operations Division in Heidelberg, had produced only an “inconclusive” answer as to whether any plan existed to implement the military governor’s proposals. After General Prichard flew to Berlin to try to locate the plan, he was forced to disclose, in a second teleconference, that his staff had been taken by surprise, was unaware of Clay’s scheme, and was therefore unable to discuss operational details. He could only go on a general intention of dispatching a convoy of roughly 200 trucks, prepared to remove obstacles, down the autobahn to Berlin as a “one-shot” ruse to break the blockade.⁷⁵

Bradley’s staff saw no point to a ruse. The Soviets might simply sit back and permit the single convoy to pass, conceding the United States a “brief moral victory” that would soon yield to embarrassment when continued impediments to rail and barge traffic made it impossible to support the city. Alternatively, the Soviets might bottle up the convoy by destroying bridges ahead of and behind it, making the Americans look ridiculous. If, however, the United States intended to support Berlin economically, this would call for a prodigious system of truck convoys akin to the legendary “Red Ball Express” that supplied the front from ports in France during summer and fall 1944. Using the Red Ball as a basis for estimates, the analysts calculated the requirements and capabilities for a similar effort to supply Berlin. In order to deliver 2,400 tons of cargo per day, 1,000 trucks would feed a continuous circuit of traffic to and from Berlin. Messing, billeting, and maintenance facilities would have to be constructed along the route and secured by armed detachments. Each convoy would require an armed escort with light armored vehicles. Combat units would need to guard “critical defiles” and to patrol the route. All bridges along the autobahn—almost 400 in all—would have to be secured against sabotage. Engineer units would need to be stationed at the most critical structures. Left unsaid throughout the analysis was the simple truth that all of this was quite beyond the capabilities of U.S. forces then in Germany.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Telgs, Clay to Bradley, 10 Jul 1948, 2:734; Clay to Bradley, 15 Jul 1948, 2:740; Bradley to Clay, 15 Jul 1948, 2:740. All in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

⁷⁵ Memo, Strategy Br, Plans and Opns Div, for Bradley, 13 Jul 1948, sub: Proposed Motor Convoys to Berlin, P&O 381 TS (13 Jul 1946), RG 319, NACP.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Described in this scenario was an invasion of the Soviet Zone of occupation and the seizure of one of its major transport arteries. Whether the Soviets would have remained passive in the face of such an operation was problematic, and any sustained interruption in the traffic “circuit” would have resulted, as the critique warned, in the failure “to deliver even a starvation tonnage.”

In the absence of “definite evidence” that a “one-shot ruse” would prove effective, Bradley’s staff recommended rejecting the dispatch of armed convoys. It also recommended “that General Clay’s proposed policy be recognized to have at the moment no detailed plan supporting it. Indeed, it depended on an imponderable psychological factor for success against the risk of an embarrassing failure.”⁷⁷

The atmosphere in the U.S. capital was agitated. Few thought that an airlift could offer more than a temporary palliative measure—merely delaying the exhaustion of stockpiles. Clay’s convoy proposal collapsed under critical analysis, but Clay was continuing to press it, suggesting in turn doubts about the airlift. On 16 July, the secretary of the Army summoned the military governor to Washington. This was Clay’s opportunity to win his case, or lose it, before the National Security Council.

Clay arrived on 21 July. His first appointment was a meeting with Forrestal over dinner. The main topic was convoys. In the six days since he entreated Bradley for authorization to unleash the action, Clay had rethought his position. Three weeks ago, he informed the secretary, he could have put through an armed convoy without difficulty, and he still thought he could do it. However, the risks were now greater, and as time passed the chances would progressively diminish, for as Berlin moved more into the focus of world attention, it would be more difficult for the Soviets to retreat. Clay’s train of thought clearly indicated his movement away from a perception of Berlin as a military problem and a recognition that the city had become a political symbol.⁷⁸

The National Security Council met the next day. Clay, the first to speak, seized control of the proceedings. Emphasizing the political and strategic issues at hand, he asserted that the abandonment of Berlin would have a disastrous effect on Allied plans for West Germany and would also retard European recovery. He commended the British and French and pronounced the attitude of the German people “unbelievable.” He went on to discuss logistical requirements. The airlift was averaging 2,400 to 2,500 tons per day, Clay reported, more than enough to supply essential foodstuffs but not enough for coal. The allies could stave off extreme hardship with deliveries of 4,500 tons—3,500 would suffice at present, but additional tonnage would be required for the winter. Seventy-five additional C-54s would increase the American daily tonnage to 3,500, which, together with British deliveries of 1,000 tons, would meet Berlin’s minimum needs. He then extolled the political impact of

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Forrestal Diary Entry, 21 Jul 1948, pp. 459–60.

the airlift, declaring, “The airlift has increased our prestige immeasurably” and “thrown the Russian timetable off.” “Two months ago,” he stated, “the Russians were cocky and arrogant. Lately they have been polite and have gone out of their way to avoid incidents.”

The Air Force chief of staff, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, pointed out that any additional planes for the airlift would disrupt air transport service and adversely affect its ability to respond to emergencies elsewhere. Furthermore, a full effort would require not only more planes but the construction of a third airfield in Berlin, as well as depots in Britain and Germany; almost all military transport facilities would be involved. Yet, having expressed these reservations, Vandenberg then touted his capabilities. If a third landing site were available in Berlin, he said, the Air Force could deliver 3,620 tons under the worst conditions and 8,160 under the best ones. Therefore, with a “wholehearted” effort, the Air Force could supply Berlin.

In the ensuing discussion, Clay soft peddled his convoy scheme, dismissed the possibility of Soviet interference with the airlift, and assured Truman that the Soviets did not mean to go to war. Responding to a comment from Secretary Royall, General Clay asserted, “If we move out of Berlin we have lost everything we are fighting for.” The president acknowledged that, “[T]his was his opinion too.” Shortly thereafter, before the group had reached any decisions, Truman and his chief of staff, Admiral William D. Leahy, retired from the meeting.⁷⁹

Following the president’s departure, the council members agreed on concrete steps. Construction would start on a third airfield in Berlin, and seventy-five additional C-54 aircraft would deploy for the airlift, pending a future decision on more planes for a larger effort. The preferred diplomatic approach, the members agreed, would be an oral presentation to Stalin, followed by referral of the issue to the United Nations.⁸⁰

The Airlift in Berlin

While the policymakers in Washington continued to debate their approach toward the crisis in Berlin, military leaders in Germany met to establish priorities and responsibilities for the proposed airlift. On 27 July, representatives from U.S. Air Forces, Europe; the European Command; and the Bipartite Control Office, an organization established in 1947 to coordinate administrative control within the combined U.S. and British Zones, agreed on a delineation of responsibilities. The civilian Bipartite Control Office would determine the total requirement for supplies to be airlifted into Berlin, procure those supplies, and deliver those supplies to railheads in the vicinity of airfields in Western Europe. EUCOM, represented by the U.S. Army, Europe, would move the supplies

⁷⁹ Memo, National Security Council (NSC) for the President, 23 Jul 1948, sub: Summary of the Discussion of the 16th Meeting of the National Security Council, Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS), (82)2109, on-line document collection.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*



Map 6

from the railheads to the airfields and provide labor to move the cargo from ground transport into the aircraft. U.S. Air Force personnel would supervise the loading of the aircraft and then transport the cargoes from the Rhein-Main Airfield near Frankfurt and Main, and U.S. Air Forces, Europe headquarters at Wiesbaden, to Berlin (*Map 6*).⁸¹

As the debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Berlin wore on, the airlift of supplies into the city gathered momentum. Despite the original agreement, U.S. Army personnel bore the brunt of moving cargo from procurement to the airfield. At both ends of the pipeline, the U.S. Army provided or hired and supervised the truckers, transporters, loaders, and unloaders at staging areas throughout Germany and in Berlin. European Command personnel supervised transport from ports, depots, and other sources in the Western Zones to terminal points at Rhein-Main and Wiesbaden, transported the cargo from the terminal points to the airfields, and loaded the aircraft. Load checking, a critical step in ensuring that the aircraft were not overloaded, was initially an Air Force responsibility. Shortages of personnel in this essential specialty were made up by enlisted soldiers from the EUCOM school system.⁸²

At Tempelhof Airfield in Berlin, the garrison transportation officer took charge of receiving and handling cargo and ensured that the incoming materials did not stack up at the airport. The small Transportation Corps unit that had been handling outbound cargo at the airfield was expanded into the Transportation Corps Airhead Tempelhof. On 30 June 1948, the Berlin Command assigned 110 enlisted men to temporary duty at the airfield to assist the airhead operations. Six hundred Germans went to work there on the same day.⁸³

Neither the Transportation Corps nor the Air Force had enough men available to supervise the hundreds of Germans working at Tempelhof. Therefore, on 5 August, the command assigned two companies from the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, to that task. Later, in October, that crew was relieved by troops from the 16th Constabulary Squadron which provided 110 enlisted men and 7 officers to supervise unloading and transport operations. These men and the German workers they supervised unloaded the airplanes, cleared the cargo off the airfield, and delivered it to warehouses for distribution across Berlin.⁸⁴

The operation at Tempelhof quickly reached a remarkable efficiency. Empty trucks waited as each aircraft landed. The truck driver kept an eye on the "Follow Me" jeep leading each airplane off the runway and had already turned and begun backing his truck before the airplane had parked. When the aircraft door opened, the truck with twelve laborers was waiting. By the end of July, the average unloading time for the C-47s was eight minutes, while the larger C-54s required about twenty-five minutes. Problems at this end of the lift

⁸¹ Hist Rpt, Hist Div, EUCOM, Berlin Airlift, 21 Jun–31 Dec 1948, Historians files, CMH.

⁸² Miller, *To Save A City*, pp. 80–81.

⁸³ Hist Rpt, Hist Div, EUCOM, Berlin Airlift, 21 Jun–31 Dec 1948.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*



Landing at Tempelhof

were usually the result of unexpected surges in the number of aircraft arriving, which tended to break down the system.⁸⁵

As winter approached, coal became the most precious cargo to be delivered by the aircraft. Most Berliners relied on the fuel to heat their homes as well as to run the electricity generating power plants. Unfortunately, coal was also the most difficult cargo to transport. Loaded onto planes in bulk, the coal dust filled the cabins and created hazards for planes and crews. It was also awkward to unload. The U.S. Air Forces, Europe, experimented with dropping coal shipments from specially adapted B-29 bombers. The tests proved unsuccessful, however, as the coal turned to powder when it hit the ground. Ultimately, the Army Quartermaster Corps provided 500,000 canvas duffle bags to be used as coal sacks. This proved to be the most efficient method of transport, but extremely costly. After some experimentation, German manufacturers developed multilayer paper sacks that could be produced for pennies each. In a

⁸⁵ Miller, *To Save a City*, pp. 83–84.

few months, the airlift was consuming 850,000 of these paper sacks per month to deliver the required quantities of coal.⁸⁶

By the end of the year, the Air Force had proved that it could land more than 800 aircraft a day at Tempelhof Airfield, as long as the weather held. In November, two squadrons of R5D aircraft, the U.S. Navy version of the C-54, joined the airlift. The naval squadrons had more maintenance personnel assigned than air force squadrons and included a higher concentration of skilled technicians. As a result, the naval aircraft were able to haul more tonnage and maintained a higher rate of aircraft utilization than their Air Force counterparts.⁸⁷

While part of the American garrison in Berlin worked to make the airlift a success, many who lived in the U.S. Sector hardly perceived a threat. In early spring, when OMGUS began gradually to relocate personnel to Frankfurt, site of the German bizonal authority, it did so solely for the sake of administrative efficiency. At the same time, in order to avoid the appearance of a wider evacuation, Clay resisted Army pressure to withdraw dependents, agreeing only to diminish their numbers through a policy of replacing married officers with single men once tours had ended. The blockade heightened Clay's contempt for the fearful. "Anyone who would be nervous here, would be nervous anywhere," he declared to his staff. Most shared the commander's composure. Given the option to leave, only a handful of soldiers sought reassignment. Civilians also reacted calmly. "I do not look for anything to happen," wrote Clay's civil affairs adviser, James K. Pollack, to his wife on 26 June. All but sixty of the Army's roughly 1,300 civilian employees remained at their posts, and while some 350 dependents left Berlin, well over 1,000—including 500 children under 18-years-of-age—stayed.⁸⁸

Despite Clay's public equanimity, he and the other Western Allied commanders in chief began initial steps to prepare for the worst. In July 1948, Clay sent a message to General Bradley requesting the authority to begin planning for the withdrawal of Western forces as far back as the Rhine River and to prepare plans for a coordinated defense. Clay recommended the establishment of a supreme allied commander, preferably an American, and the designation of assigned defense sectors along the Rhine for U.S., British, and French forces. In response, Bradley authorized Clay to set up a joint planning staff and to begin initial coordination. He cautioned, however, that relevant discussions were already underway in London and that any plans or

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 91–95.

⁸⁸ Teleconf, TT-9218, 17 Mar 1948, 2:579–80; Telg, Clay to Maj Gen Albert C. Wedemeyer, Director of Plans and Opns, Army Staff, 2 Apr 1948, 2:611. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*. Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 15 Apr 1948, file 35/26, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Interv, John H. Backer with James L. Sundquist, OMGUS, Control Ofcr, 5 May 1980, Clay Project, OHRO. Quote from Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, p. 417. See Strength Rpts, Berlin Mil Post, Jun 1948–May 1949, box 44, Rcds of Berlin Mil Post, RG 260, NACP.

agreements made in Germany were subject to extensive revision based upon decisions taken at a higher level. In Berlin, U.S. leaders made tentative plans to shelter noncombatants in the event of an emergency. They acknowledged that “any employment of our military units as a tactical force in the U.S. Sector of Berlin could be termed imaginative,” and that evacuation of noncombatants must be viewed as their primary mission.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, the rhythm of life beat normally for many other Americans in Berlin, who, neither diverted from their accustomed tasks nor disturbed in their comforts, perceived the crisis mainly through the sound of airplane engines overhead. As before, few wants went unmet. Because the number of Americans in Berlin was relatively small, it was no great task to maintain their level of subsistence at a fairly high level. As Murphy recalled, the cancellation of controls on consumer goods, initiated in step with the introduction of hard money through the currency reform, brought items onto the market that “Germans had not seen in decades.” Therefore, anybody with money “could buy almost anything,” and the “American community, which had expected an austere existence during the blockade, found itself deluged with luxuries at reasonable prices.”⁹⁰

Privations were slight. Whereas the average West Berliner received but four hours of electricity each day—two hours delivered at odd times twice daily—American households enjoyed constant service from 0600 to 0830 and from 1800 to 2300, leaving them without electrical illumination during 1600–1800 from mid-November to mid-January. Private automobiles were rationed five gallons of gasoline per week and the use of military transportation was further restricted. Only the patrol jeeps and essential administrative vehicles received close to normal allocations of fuel. As opposed to the improved offerings of the private market, officially provided foodstuffs became somewhat more monotonous. Thus, while dining in the officers’ club during a visit to Berlin, George F. Kennan overheard an American major exclaiming through the dance music, “Look what’s on de menu. Tuna fish. . . . We been feedin’ it to our dog. . . . He jes’ looks at me and says: ‘Jeez, tuna fish again.’”⁹¹

⁸⁹ Msgs, General Lucius D. Clay to General Omar N. Bradley, 16 Jul 1948; Bradley to Clay, 16 Jul 1948. Both in Chairman’s Files, Leahy, Rcds of the JCS, RG 218, NACP. Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Cmd, OMGUS, Plan for Sheltering of Non-Combatants for the McNair Barracks Unit Area, 15 Mar 1948, Entry 152, Classified Decimal File, 1948–1951, EUCOM, Berlin, RG 549, NACP.

⁹⁰ The cumulative breakdown through Nov 1948 is found in Airlift Coordinating Committee Rpt, ALREP no. 161, 8 Dec 1948, file 5/36-2/6, OMGUS, LAB. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, pp. 319–20.

⁹¹ Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, Office of the Director of Intelligence, no. 9-10, 17 Nov 1948, sub: Berlin, Winter 1948–1949, pp. 6–7, file POLAD 17/24-2/15, OMGUS, BAK; Interv, Backer with Sundquist, 5 May 1980; Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, S-4, 1 May–30 Jun 1948, Entry 37042, Unit Histories, Berlin Mil Post, RG 338, NACP; Memo, 1st Lt Frank C. Schofield, Bn Historian, for Commanding Ofcr, Berlin Mil Post, 10 Jul 1948, sub: 3d Bn, 16th Inf History of Activities, Entry 37043, Unit Histories, Berlin Mil Post Hist Rpt, RG 338, NACP; Kennan, *Memoirs*, p. 430.



An Army engineer operates a bulldozer as German laborers clear the field with shovels to construct a new runway at Tempelhof.

For average soldiers, the routine of patrolling streets and guarding installations continued. Although both the 16th Constabulary Squadron and the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, increased the number of daily patrols dispatched, Col. Robert A. Willard's Berlin Military Post—the former Berlin Command that, after 1 May, reported directly to the Headquarters, European Command—maintained its character as a “housekeeping” force providing logistical and technical services to the occupational establishment. Of the various units, the engineers alone undertook radically different tasks. Whereas their chief preblockade duty had been to maintain buildings and facilities, the airlift summoned them to the project of expanding Berlin's airfields. Accordingly, in early July, they started crash construction of a second runway at Tempelhof and began a third in August. That same month, they launched work on an entirely new airport: Tegel, in the French Sector. In a Soviet-style mobilization of labor, Army builders organized tens of thousands of Berliners, paid at roughly a mark an hour, to work with picks, shovels, and rakes, while American enlisted personnel operated heavy equipment such as graders and bulldozers. In a round-the-clock push, these mixed construction crews completed Tempelhof's second runway on 12 September, the Tegel airport on 29 October, and the third Tempelhof runway on 23 November.⁹²

⁹² “Berlin Command Becomes Berlin Military Post,” *Berlin Observer*, 30 Apr 1948, Entry A11771, OMGUS, Berlin Cmd, General Corresp, 1947–1948, RG 260, NACP; Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, S-4, 1 May–30 Jun 1948, Entry 37042; Miller, *To Save a City*, pp. 80–85; and see also 58–62.

For one fleeting moment, it appeared that American soldiers in Berlin might confront an adversary on the streets. As the currency crisis came to a head, numerous informants warned of attempts by the Socialist Unity Party to foment strikes and civil disturbances in the Western sectors. Along with sending street corner agitators into West Berlin on 21 June, sources reported, the party was forming groups, totaling one hundred persons in all, to carry out “special missions” to overturn Allied authority. For the first time, the constabulary faced a real prospect of battling insurrectionists. Yet suddenly, on 25 June, the informants sounded an emphatic all-clear. The Soviets, they asserted, had ordered the actions canceled. In the view of the British intelligence staff, “it was tolerably certain that the Russians were not prepared to support the SED with physical measures of their own . . . and that they were most anxious to avoid any incident that might provoke [a] clash between Russian troops and [the] Western powers.”⁹³

The U.S. military police, who in earlier years had coped with swarms of Soviet marauders, encountered fewer problems than before. In 1947, seeking not only to end the epidemic of rape and plunder but to contain the spread of Western cultural influences, Soviet commanders had withdrawn their soldiers from entire villages and city districts, thereby isolating them from the German population. As a result, at the same time as political tensions heightened, Soviet troop disturbances in West Berlin diminished, with mundane drunkenness and traffic violations the chief sources of trouble. In particular, the wide boulevards of the American Sector invited drivers to exceed the speed limit, and Soviet personnel transiting between Potsdam and Karlshorst became special targets of enforcement.⁹⁴

Two such cases led to potential confrontations between the Americans in Berlin and their Soviet counterparts. On 26 June, a constabulary roadblock stopped two Soviet automobiles for exceeding the speed limit just after leaving the city autobahn. By chance, one of the vehicles contained Marshal Sokolovsky, en route to his quarters in Potsdam. Four jeeps, one armored car, and numerous soldiers armed with tommy guns quickly surrounded the entourage. When the Soviets refused to follow their captors to the military police station, an hour-long standoff ensued. Finally, a military police liaison officer, arriving with an

⁹³ Memo, External Survey Det for Maj Gen Robert L. Walsh, Director of Intelligence, EUCOM, 29 Jun 1948, sub: Cancellation of Strike Plans, file 798/18, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK. See also Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 26 Jun 1948, file 2857/8, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, Office of the Director of Intelligence, no. 112, 3 Jul 1948, p. Pol 25, file 3/430-1/7, OMGUS, BAK; Memo, External Survey Det for Walsh, 29 Jun 1948; Weekly Intel Rpt, Intel Staff, British Forces, Berlin, for HQ Intel Div, no. 38, 4 Jul 1948, p. 4, file 7/29-2/10, OMGUS, BAK.

⁹⁴ Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, pp. 92–95. Confined to their facilities around Karlshorst, Soviet soldiers also began to disappear from much of East Berlin. For decades, while Allied soldiers, officials, and dependents belonged to the landscape of Berlin-Mitte, the Soviets were rarely seen. For Mil Police reports of Soviet incidents from Apr–Dec 1948, see file 80/7, OMGUS, BAK.

interpreter, ordered the troops to disperse, and, after a brief conversation with the indignant marshal, sent him on his way. “Vaudeville,” commented Murphy in a cable to the secretary of state.⁹⁵

The second episode occurred one month later. Having spotted a Soviet amphibious jeep speeding through Zehlendorf at a purported sixty miles an hour, a posse of three jeep patrols and two motorcycle policemen chased it across the breadth of the U.S. Sector, firing shots in the air and at the tires of the jeep. After its driver sideswiped one of the motorcyclists at Potsdamer Platz, the patrolmen followed the fugitives a mile into the Soviet Sector, where they shot one in the shoulder. When an American liaison team visited the Soviet Kommandatura to discuss the case, they met with the vehicle’s ranking passenger, a lieutenant colonel, who justified his failure to halt on the grounds that he had committed no offense—the vehicle was mechanically incapable of the alleged speed, he asserted—and therefore refused to “fall into the hands of an uncivilized, animal-like people who shoot people without any provocation.” Reporting to the provost marshal, the U.S. liaison officer noted blandly, “The abnormal situation . . . in this incident is due to the behavior of the Soviet offenders and the vague orientation of the Military Police as to the usage of arms.”⁹⁶

Despite such occurrences, an inherent rationality guided relations between U.S. and Soviet troops. As police blotters reveal, American patrolmen handled most cases with circumspection. Even when the actions of their subordinates reflected a level of inexperience or overenthusiasm, senior officers on both sides retained an ethos of professionalism that transcended ideologies and enabled them to prevent local altercations from escalating. Clay exonerated the men who detained Sokolovsky with a scribbled note, “These soldiers only carried out their orders.” Nonetheless, he hastened to the marshal’s office to tender a personal apology. Both commanders agreed that “incidents in Berlin did not offer a solution” to problems and undertook to instruct the commandants to take all possible measures to dampen tensions.⁹⁷

Even the inveterately belligerent Colonel Howley grasped the need for restraint. In late August—a time when neither commandant would let himself be seen approaching the other—Howley commissioned a Russian-speaking member of his administration section, Leonid Gran, to talk with Kotikov about avoiding future troubles. When Gran appeared at the Soviet headquarters,

⁹⁵ Memo, Capt Richard A. Lake, S-2 Liaison Ofcr, for Marshall, Berlin Mil Post, 26 Jun 1948, sub: Incident Involving Soviet Marshal Sokolovsky in the American Sector, file 80/7, OMGUS, BAK; Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 27 Jun 1948, file 2857/8, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

⁹⁶ Memo, Lake for Marshall, 29 Aug 1948, sub: Shooting Incident during Attempted Apprehension of a Speeding Soviet Vehicle, file 80/7, OMGUS, BAK.

⁹⁷ Mil Police blotters for Apr–Dec 1948 are found in file 80/7, OMGUS, BAK. Note, General Lucius D. Clay for Brig Gen Charles K. Gailey, Ch of Staff, 27 Jun 1948, file 80/7, OMGUS, BAK; Telg, Clay to Kenneth C. Royall, 28 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:709–10.

Kotikov sent his deputy for police affairs, Lt. Col. Koslov, to speak with the American visitor. Raising the recent case of an OMGUS official held on a charge of illegal photography, Koslov announced that the accused party had gone free earlier in the day. If the film removed from the official's camera demonstrated that he had not taken any forbidden photographs, the Soviets owed him an apology, Koslov asserted. Koslov then apologized over the arrest, three days earlier, of three German policemen from the Western sectors. Their release, he said, had been delayed through negligence, and General Kotikov had severely reprimanded the responsible officer. At that point, after informing Koslov that the U.S. authorities had withdrawn American troops from the U.S.-Soviet Sector boundary to a depth of three blocks, Gran communicated a request from Howley that the Soviets undertake a similar move. Koslov replied that a presence of Soviet troops along the boundary was a temporary measure to assist German police and "should not be construed in any way as a measure against the American or British forces." Koslov then agreed to an American proposal, relayed through Gran, that the powers, instead of conducting police activities in border areas, should encourage collaboration between the district police forces of Mitte and Kreuzberg. "Colonel Koslov was extremely courteous and affable throughout the interview," Gran reported.⁹⁸

In effect a proxy dialog between Howley and Kotikov, the conversation illustrates an alternative reality of U.S.-Soviet relations during the crisis. Despite the tensions around Berlin, officials at local echelons were acutely aware of the need to prevent the international conflict from spilling over into daily relationships. Thus, the crisis *over* Berlin belied the nature of relations *within* the city, where the first commandment of the occupying forces, as they stood at elbow's reach, was to avoid complications. That all sides obeyed it—above all, in a time of confrontation—provided, much more than a few thousand lightly armed troops, a real foundation for the security of the U.S. establishment and helps explain why anxiety scarcely touched its members.

The City Becomes a Symbol

In his appearance before the National Security Council, Clay had allayed the skeptics' fears and postponed a final reckoning. The airlift offered a nonprovocative alternative to armed convoys, a way to buy time for diplomacy, and a means to temporize over choices. At the same time, the key issue of whether Berlin was worth a war was never addressed. That allowed men like Lovett to declare, "[W]e must have an absolute determination not to be kicked out of Berlin" while omitting to grapple with the question of the ultimate use of force.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Memo, Leonid Gran for Col Frank L. Howley, 23 Aug 1948, file Soviet Misc, Jan-Dec 1948, Public Safety Br, Investigations and Interrogations, 1945-1949, box 909, RG 498, NACP.

⁹⁹ Memo, NSC for the President, 23 Jul 1948.

Forrestal did not acquiesce in Lovett's omission, nor had Clay extinguished the secretary's wider doubts. On 26 July, Forrestal forwarded to the National Security Council a harsh appreciation of the crisis from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Completed on 22 July, the paper had reached his desk too late to influence the council's decisions. Its purpose, as stated in Bradley's biography, was "to force the government and the NSC to arrive at a clear-cut policy." It also reflected the Joint Chiefs' point of view that, from a military standpoint, Berlin remained an untenable forward position.¹⁰⁰

In the first part of the memorandum, the chiefs expressed a view similar to Vandenberg's in his presentation to the National Security Council. They conceded that the United States could supply indefinitely Berlin's "minimum" needs with an all-out commitment of its air transport fleet. But what would this "minimum" bring? Here the chiefs exposed a glaring deficiency. Although the airlift could furnish enough food, coal, liquid fuel, and medicines to maintain a basic level of existence, it could make "little provision for clothing, maintenance material, raw material, or industrial supplies." As a result, "unemployment, morale, and stamina of the population will steadily worsen." Thus, air transport could not "in any case be regarded as a permanent solution of the problem." The alternative of armed convoys, the paper went on, offered only a "remote" possibility of success. Passive interference alone could render them "abortive," while Soviet military action "whether simply for prevention or deliberately as a result of a war decision . . . would shift the stage from one of local friction to that of a major war involvement." The chiefs supported the augmentation of the airlift not because they believed it could break the blockade but because it "is providing and should continue to provide a cushion of time" to find a diplomatic solution. "In this connection," they suggested,

It may not be altogether out of the question to consider, during the time that is to be gained by concentrating of major effort on air transport supply, the possibility that some justification might be found for withdrawal of our occupation forces from Berlin without undue loss of prestige. . . . Therefore, subject to [an] unalterable decision that withdrawal under no circumstance will be undertaken unless forced by war action, the withdrawal possibility should be at least kept in mind. The development of plans for such a solution appears desirable, as neither air transport nor armed convoy in themselves offer a long-range solution to the problem.¹⁰¹

The memorandum ended with an urgent appeal. Given the determination to stay in Berlin, the chiefs wanted "a decision now" regarding future military actions. That decision, they asserted, had to take into account the probable

¹⁰⁰ Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, p. 481. Memo, James V. Forrestal, Sec of Def, for NSC, 26 Jul 1948, sub: U.S. Military Courses of Action with Respect to the Situation in Berlin, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, LAB.

¹⁰¹ Memo, Forrestal for NSC, 26 Jul 1948.

inadequacy of air supply as well as the strong likelihood that armed convoys would prove “not only . . . fruitless but would involve the major risk of war.” If, notwithstanding these dangers, policymakers decided to supply Berlin by force if other means failed, the chiefs recommended: that all possible time be gained through the airlift to prepare for war, and that “[f]ull-out preparations for the early eventuality of war be inaugurated immediately.”¹⁰²

The chiefs of staff won no arguments with this discomfiting piece. Not only had they dissented from the declared policy of unconditional “steadfastness,” but they insinuated that policymakers had not fully contemplated their decision. The response to their paper was evasion. As his biographer recounts Bradley’s lament, “we never did get an answer to our questions. . . . Truman’s view seemed to be that he would keep postponing the decision until faced with the necessity of to fight or to get out.” In Bradley’s eyes, that postponement was worse than “unsettling.” It was, in fact, “outrageous,” for “[d]uring the critical phase of the Berlin Blockade,” the Joint Chiefs of Staff “were so poorly advised that we could not draw contingency war plans.” Bradley’s criticism, however justified, overlooked a misunderstanding of the administration’s policymaking. Rather than strictly military considerations, the decisions on Berlin were founded on a political assumption—that the “loss” of Berlin would undermine, if not destroy, America’s position in all of Europe.¹⁰³

However ambitious, American goals were limited. The United States wanted to integrate West Germany into the European Recovery Program and to forge an economic-political coalition of the Western European democracies. To do this, U.S. officials were willing to write off the Eastern Zone of Germany and to concede the division of Europe. Over the long term, they sought a stable peace based on the status quo. Such objectives were fundamentally incompatible with the aggressive revisionism inherent in the new German leadership in Berlin and embodied by Reuter. Yet, as long as Americans perceived the struggle as a battle to *defend* West Berlin, they never saw the incompatibilities beneath a surface of identical goals. As a result, U.S. leaders forged an alliance with political leaders in Berlin whose goals proved to be more ambitious than their own. Emboldened by their success in Berlin, the Western Allies grew far less open to compromise with the Soviets and the schism between the two sides widened. The Soviet blockade of Berlin and the Allied determination to stay marked a decisive turning point in the Cold War. From this point on, the military significance of the city would fade, overtaken by its status as a symbol of Western resolve.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Bradley and Blair, *A General’s Life*, p. 481.

9

THE SPLIT CITY

As U.S. policymakers debated their options, the objectives of the blockade and the conditions for lifting it remained unclear. The Soviets had delivered no ultimatum, and if the restrictions were but a short-term measure to halt the influx of worthless currency from the West, they could disappear as soon as the Eastern authorities had implemented their counterreform. Moreover, as both General Lucius D. Clay and Ambassador Robert Murphy emphasized, the threat of starving West Berlin did not harmonize with Soviet objectives in Germany as a whole. Perhaps, suggested one member of Murphy's staff, the Soviets might try to end the crisis through an "inconspicuous relaxing process."¹

By early July 1948, however, hopes faded for a painless outcome. As days passed into weeks, the restrictions no longer appeared as a short-term reaction to the invalidation of the Reichsmark. Yet Soviet aims and motives were still unclear. Three interpretations competed for plausibility. The first presupposed a Soviet decision to counter the West German republic with an East German "socialist" state. In that event, the Soviets could scarcely tolerate hostile enclaves in that state's very heart, and the goal of the blockade, as Col. Frank L. Howley exclaimed, was "to starve the Germans into revolt against the Western powers and thus to drive us out." Alternatively, the pressures on Berlin could be seen as a diplomatic bludgeon to reestablish the quadripartite control regime with reparations, central German administrations, and shared influence over the Ruhr; the goal, then, was not the physical eviction of the Western powers but the reversal of their decisions. Finally—the minimalist position—the Soviets could be aiming to force the Allies to withdraw the Western mark (also known as the D-mark) from Berlin. The blockade began over this issue and might end over it as well. The integration of the city's Western sectors into the Eastern monetary system would tie them to the Soviet Zone economy, constrain their activist democratic leaders, and eliminate a chronic source of disruption to East Germany's political and economic stability.²

¹ Memo, Richard A. Sterling for Perry Laukhuff, undated, sub: Thoughts on Soviet Relaxation of Pressure on Berlin, file 796/1, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; and see also Telgs, General Lucius D. Clay to Kenneth C. Royall, Sec of the Army, 25 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:699; Robert Murphy to George C. Marshall, Sec of State, 26 Jun 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:921.

² Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 197.

For the Western powers, the third objective was potentially negotiable. The Allies might trade concessions over Berlin's currency for an immediate end to the blockade, thereby calming tensions long enough to press on with Europe's reconstruction and consummate the formation of a West German state. For America's military conservatives, who viewed Berlin as a peripheral interest, such a settlement exerted substantial attraction, and Secretary of State George C. Marshall was amenable to this approach. For others, however, it would reduce the Allies to decorative fixtures in Berlin, destroy Western prestige, and endanger all of the progress made since 1947. Rejecting compromise, they resolved to maintain West Berlin's independence and resistance to Soviet domination. Ernst Reuter embodied this policy most clearly among the Germans. General Clay came to it gradually but pursued it with singular determination.

The majority of Berlin's citizens longed to keep the metropolis whole. For them, in the summer of 1948, a divided Berlin was hardly inevitable. Despite the breakdown of four-power institutions, the city's common institutions initially held together. Technical facilities, such as the railways and electrical grid, crossed district lines; enterprises drew on all sectors for markets, workers, and raw materials; and Berlin's cultural life knew no internal boundaries. The City Assembly, with its strong pro-Western majority, continued to meet in East Berlin until early September; the Magistrat held out until the end of November. Throughout these months, hope still lingered that the conflict might end without an irreparable split.

Seeking Clarification

On 23 June 1948, the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states convened in Warsaw for talks on Germany. At the end of their meeting the following day, they issued a declaration condemning the decisions adopted in London. The ministers called for the establishment of a single German government, the conclusion of a peace treaty, withdrawal of occupation troops within a year of the treaty, guarantees for the fulfillment of German reparations obligations, and four-power control over Ruhr heavy industry for a "definite time." Drafted by Polish experts on Germany, the statement contained no terms for lifting the blockade. Efforts to find answers in the Soviet official newspaper, *Tägliche Rundschau*, were frustrated by changing stories. The journal argued on 24 June that the Western Allies had forfeited their rights in Berlin when they terminated four-power rule in Germany. Five days later it focused on currency. If the Western occupying powers renounced their "unlawful" attempts to circulate a second currency in the city, "all difficulties" arising from those attempts would be eliminated. On 30 June, in a letter to Lt. Gen. Sir Brian H. Robertson, Marshal Vasily D. Sokolovsky offered a hint of settlement while avoiding clarity. Replying to a note of protest sent by the British commander on 25 June, Sokolovsky first spoke of "technical difficulties." He then termed the restrictions "temporary" and designed for protection of the Eastern Zone's currency. Expressing "satisfaction" that Berlin's food stocks

sufficed for several weeks, he praised the Anglo-American efforts to maintain communications with the Western Zones by air. The text of the marshal's letter appeared in *Tägliche Rundschau*. Printed in bold type, an editor's summary emphasized Sokolovsky's reference to the "temporary nature" of the blockages.³

Sokolovsky's letter was ostensibly conciliatory and held out hopes for an early end to the crisis, but when Clay, Robertson, and Lt. Gen. Roger Noiret visited the marshal at his headquarters on 3 July, he raised a new issue. Mentioning currency only in passing, Sokolovsky asserted that the "technical difficulties" were real but only a "partial question." One had to consider the problem "as a whole," he asserted. It was impossible, therefore, to discuss Berlin without addressing Allied plans for a separate Western state. Noting that the Soviet military governor had raised "very broad questions," the Western generals declared they had nothing further to say and left his office. In Clay's assessment, Sokolovsky had "no latitude in negotiating the transport question alone . . . unless there is a complete discussion of the German problem."⁴

Was this Premier Joseph Stalin's last word? On 6 July, the Western foreign ministers handed formal notes to the Soviet ambassadors in Paris, London, and Washington. Rejecting Soviet efforts to link Berlin to the quadripartite regime as a whole, they claimed that their rights to the city derived solely from victory. Therefore, they would negotiate over Berlin alone—and only after the Soviets had restored freight and passenger traffic "fully" and "without delay." The Soviet reply, delivered through the ambassadors on 14 July, at last defined a position. By breaking the agreements on quadripartite control, it asserted, the Allies had "undermined . . . the legal basis" of their right to participate in the administration of Berlin. Therefore, the Soviet government would not limit negotiations to Berlin, "since that question cannot be severed from the general question of four-power control in Germany as a whole." Nor would it fulfill "any preliminary conditions whatsoever."⁵

³ Statement Excerpts, Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, and Hungary regarding the decisions of the London Conference on Germany, Warsaw, 24 Jun 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 150–51. Full text at http://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration-of-the-foreign-ministers-warsaw.24_june_1948-en-d8d5dc6-9325-43wc-8b5c-d6adf070e.html. See also Editorial Note, *FRUS, 1948*, 2:370–71. According to information provided to the U.S. Embassy by an official of the Polish Foreign Ministry, Molotov accept the policy draft with only minor changes in phraseology. The Soviet foreign minister also overruled several Bulgarian objections to the draft. M. Sobinow, "Wenn der Kopf ab ist, weint Man nicht über die Haare" (If you've lost the head, you don't cry over the hairs), *Tägliche Rundschau*, 24 Jun 1948; N. Orlov, "Währungskrise" (Currency Crisis), *Tägliche Rundschau*, 29 Jun 1948; "Wiedereröffnung des Grenzverkehrs, Antwort Marschall Sokolowskijs an General Robertson" (Reopening of Border Traffic, Answer of Marshal Sokolovsky to General Robertson), *Tägliche Rundschau*, 30 Jun 1948.

⁴ Minutes of the meeting were transmitted in Telg, Murphy to U.S. Embassy, Paris, 4 Jul 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:948–50.

⁵ Msgs, George C. Marshall to Alexander Panyushkin, Soviet Ambassador in Washington, D.C., 6 Jul 1948, 2:950–53; Panyushkin to Marshall, 14 Jul 1948, 2:960–64. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

In conferences during the weekend of 19–20 July, Washington policymakers decided that another formal note would “elevate the matter further in the realm of prestige” and make it more difficult for the Soviets to back down. The best method, they decided, would be to approach Stalin directly. The purpose would be to warn him of the dangers of war, to impress on him the Allies’ determination to remain in Berlin, and to affirm their readiness to talk in the absence of duress.⁶

On 26 July, after initial resistance from Ernest Bevin, the Allies agreed on a common procedure. Their senior ambassador in Moscow, Walter Bedell Smith, would deliver an aide mémoire to Vyacheslav M. Molotov, affirming their positions and asking for an interview with Stalin. After Smith had made the initial démarche, the British and French ambassadors would follow with the same approach. If Stalin refused the interview, the Allies would take the issue to the United Nations.⁷

Moscow Diplomacy

Fate had chosen an uncommon emissary in Smith. Passed over for the post of military governor of the U.S. Zone of Germany in 1945—a bitter disappointment—General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s former chief of staff had become Clay’s nemesis. During the 1947 meeting of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, Smith opposed Clay’s efforts to unify Germany. In early 1948, after Marshall had announced that the State Department would take over the occupation on 1 July, Smith, the secretary’s old favorite, prepared to take his rival’s place. Yet, the new assignment did not come about. With tension between East and West mounting, President Harry S. Truman preferred to leave Smith in Moscow. When former Secretary of State James F. Byrnes stirred up congressional opposition to Clay’s displacement, the occupation remained in Army hands and Clay stayed on in Germany.⁸

More significant than purely personal differences were Smith’s substantive views on Berlin, which diverged markedly from the military governor’s. Smith viewed the American presence there as a strategic mistake and did not believe that the U.S. position in Europe depended on defending a marginal outpost. Even as he granted that the airlift could stave off “real hunger,” Smith felt that it could never sustain the city’s economic life, and in time, the Western position would become untenable. Just as General Eisenhower had refused to divert U.S. forces to the capture of Berlin three years earlier, Smith was unwilling to risk Western security and economic recovery by trying to maintain

⁶ Telg, Marshall to U.S. Embassy, London, 20 Jul 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:971–73.

⁷ Telg, Lewis W. Douglas, U.S. Ambassador, London, to Marshall, 26 Jul 1948, 2:986–88; Teleconf, Dept of State with U.S. Embassy, London, 26 Jul 1948, 2:989–93. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

⁸ Interv, Col R. Joe Rogers with General Lucius D. Clay, 14 Dec 1972, oral history transcripts, Lucius D. Clay Papers, AHEC; Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 455–60; D. K. R. Crosswell, *Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), p. 23.

an indefensible outpost there. The Soviets, he thought, might be willing to terminate the blockade if granted sufficient concessions on Germany overall, but the United States would only “postpone the day” when pressures resumed. Therefore, the ambassador was eager not only to settle the conflict but to prepare the ground for disengagement later.⁹

Despite his misgivings about the Western presence in Berlin, Smith rose to the demands of his mission. During initial interviews with Deputy Foreign Minister Valerian Zorin and Molotov on 30 and 31 July, the ambassador stressed that the written word of formal notes “was very rigid” and therefore “much more could be accomplished by informal exploration.” Smith also asserted, in response to a question from Molotov, that he considered it possible to talk about Berlin in connection with all-German issues. The opening succeeded. On 1 August, the Western representatives received an invitation to meet with Stalin the next evening.¹⁰

The meeting began at 2100. Acting as spokesman, Smith read a statement affirming Allied rights in Berlin. Stalin’s retort linked those rights to Berlin’s status as capital of a united country. Nonetheless, asserted the premier, the Soviet Union had no intention of ousting the Allies from their sectors. Rather, it had imposed “all restrictive measures” to “prevent the invasion of the Soviet Zone by the special Western currency, and resulted from the tactics of the three powers at the London Conference.” After some discussion, Stalin agreed to remove all transport restrictions into and out of Berlin in exchange for the withdrawal from Berlin of the Western mark.¹¹

Smith was elated. “Stalin and Molotov were undoubtedly anxious for a settlement,” he cabled Washington. Although the Soviet emphasis on currency, Smith continued, was “inspired by their desire to rivet Berlin to the Soviet Zone,



Walter Bedell Smith, U.S. Ambassador
to the Soviet Union, 1946–1948

⁹ Telg, Lt Gen Walter Bedell Smith to Marshall, 24 Jul 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:984–85.

¹⁰ Telg, Smith to Marshall, 31 Jul 1948, 2:997. See also Telg, Smith to Marshall, 30 Jul 1948, 2:995–96. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

¹¹ Walter Bedell Smith, *My Three Years in Moscow* (New York: J. Lippincott, 1950), p. 242; Telg, Smith to Marshall, 3 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1000.

it seems to me that we are in a mess over the currency in Berlin and might be well out of it on Soviet terms.”¹²

General Clay, however, disparaged Smith’s diplomacy. In a teleconference on 3 August, shortly after the ambassador’s reports had reached Washington and Berlin, the military governor complained that the negotiators had set no conditions for removing the B-mark from circulation. If the Eastern mark were to function as the city’s sole currency, the Allies needed guarantees of quadripartite financial management, including control of credit volume and availability, uniform rules for issuance throughout Berlin, availability of “sufficient funds” for the occupation powers, and measures to govern Berlin’s trade with the Western Zones. In the absence of such arrangements, Clay warned, the Western powers could encounter disaster in Berlin.

In a message to General Omar N. Bradley and Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall the next day, Clay continued his dissent. He said the Western representatives in Moscow had not “fully understood” the importance of quadripartite control over Berlin’s economy. The Soviets were clearly determined to take over Berlin’s banking and credit systems, and German “political leaders”—he did not say whom—had told him that acceptance of the Soviet actions would destroy the city government. However, given a “reasonably satisfactory” solution to the currency issue, Clay admitted that he saw no alternative but to swallow the bargain.¹³

Although Clay’s desire for guarantees appeared unexceptional, details were critical, because “quadripartite control” could be interpreted either broadly or restrictively. In the teleconference of 3 August, Royall outlined a proposal requiring equitable rights to monetary supplies throughout Berlin, adequate provision for the city’s budget, and freely accessible banking and credit facilities in all sectors. In sharp contrast to this emphasis on access and equitable treatment, Clay demanded shared control over credit *policy*—the terms and volume of credit—as well as “sufficient funds” for the costs of occupation. His first condition entailed Western participation in the financial affairs of the entire Soviet Zone. His second required the Eastern Zone economy to shoulder the costs of Western forces in Berlin. Whereas Royall’s proposal invited negotiation, Clay’s demands, especially the first, seemed tailored for refusal.¹⁴

State Department counselor Charles E. Bohlen, who was present at the teleconference alongside Secretary Royall, communicated Clay’s views to Marshall, who incorporated them in a message he sent that evening to Smith. The secretary of state directed the ambassador to obtain guarantees of equitable treatment, freely accessible banking and credit facilities, a “currency basis” for trade between the Western Zones and Berlin, and funds for budgetary

¹² Telg, Smith to Marshall, 3 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1006–07.

¹³ Telg, Clay to General Omar N. Bradley and Royall, 4 Aug 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:752–53.

¹⁴ Teleconf, TT-9890, 3 Aug 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:748–52.

and occupation costs. The message omitted, however, the military governor's demand to comanage credit policy.¹⁵

Smith would have been satisfied to take the deal as Stalin offered it. The ambassador's objective was to uphold the plans for West Germany while ending the blockade, and he was ready to pay a price to achieve that end. But now he had to return to Molotov with fresh demands. Meeting with Western representatives on 6 August, the Soviet foreign minister was predictably unyielding, conceding the Western Allies "no function whatever in the control of Berlin currency" and suggesting that the costs of occupation be charged to the zones rather than to Berlin. In two subsequent sessions, on 12 and 16 August, Molotov remained entrenched in his position. The Western representatives concluded that their only hope was a last ditch meeting with Stalin.¹⁶

From 13 to 23 August, the three representatives, in coordination with their home governments, hammered out an opening statement to Stalin accompanied by two texts—a draft four-power communiqué, and a directive to the military governors in Berlin. The communiqué stated the two main provisions of the agreement: the lifting of restrictions coupled with acceptance of the Eastern mark as the sole currency of Berlin, and a meeting of representatives to discuss issues concerning Germany as a whole. The directive set out the terms of reference for discussions between the military governors, who would be charged with making the "detailed arrangements" to implement the accord. Aside from a clause requiring "no discrimination" against holders of the B-mark and a new reference to "unhampered trade and economic connections for Berlin," its stipulations respecting the joint control of currency were identical to those in Marshall's cable of 3 August and omitted Clay's demand to codetermine credit policy.¹⁷

When the ambassadors met Stalin on 23 August, he greeted them "quite jovially" with a new draft communiqué. Based largely on the text Smith had submitted to Molotov on 6 August, Stalin's paper conceded the bulk of the demands expressed by the Western representatives. His two main additions were: the express use of the German Bank of Emission of the Soviet Zone as the source of currency, and the establishment of a quadripartite financial commission to control the "practical implementation" of the single currency in Berlin. He accepted the idea of a directive to the military governors, proposing to allow them a week to reach a solution. In his report to Washington, dispatched at 0500 on 24 August, the ambassador announced that the talks had yielded "practically every safeguard on which we insisted."¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid.; Telg, Marshall to Smith, 3 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1008–09.

¹⁶ Telgs, Smith to Marshall, 5 Aug 1948, 2:1016–21; 6 Aug 1948, 2:1016–21; 9 Aug 1948, 2:1024–27; 12 Aug 1948, 2:1035–38; and 17 Aug 1948, 2:1042–47. All in *FRUS, 1948*.

¹⁷ Telg, Smith to Marshall, 23 Aug 1948, 2:1062–63; and see also Telg, Marshall to Smith, 17 Aug 1948, 2:1056–58. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

¹⁸ Telg, Smith to Marshall, 24 Aug 1948, 2:1065; 2:1068; and see also 2:1066–67. All in *FRUS, 1948*.

When Clay saw the documents flashed on the screen in the teleconference room, he again bristled. "I do not feel very happy," he complained. The communiqué had failed to recognize Berlin as a quadripartite city and to affirm the allies' juridical rights, while the directive contained substantial technical defects. At Clay's instigation, the State Department sent Smith revisions to the text. In addition to detailed drafting amendments, they included a reference to the "four military governors responsible for Berlin." This modification to the preamble of the directive was Clay's method for asserting the judicial principle of quadripartite authority.¹⁹

Smith was incensed. The Soviets would never, he asserted, revive quadripartite government in Berlin as long as they were unable to reestablish quadripartite government in Germany. The State Department needed therefore to decide whether the United States was better off "if we simply stay under present conditions" or whether "it was better to have communications resumed."²⁰

British patience had also run out. Although Robertson saw no prospect for restoring quadripartite government, he believed that the directive offered a "fair" shot at protecting Berlin's population from Soviet "engulfment." In a note to the prime minister, Bevin prized "the chance for a reasonable settlement." The British emissary in Moscow, Frank Roberts, reported that he and Smith were both convinced "that we cannot go back to Molotov with a host of drafting amendments." It appeared to Roberts that in "certain American quarters" an agreement seemed "even less attractive . . . than no agreement at all." Unless Clay and the State Department were held in check, Roberts warned, a settlement would be "dashed from our lips, a thirsty public wondering why."²¹

The State Department gave way to the remonstrance. Dispatched in the early morning of 26 August, a new instruction to Smith rescinded the reference to quadripartite rights and retracted a number of amendments to the text. Although Smith and Roberts worried over having to present the remaining changes, Molotov absorbed them with little hesitation. The representatives settled on a final wording during the night of 30 August.²²

The scene of the negotiations now shifted to Berlin, where the military governors had one week to report on their consultations over the "detailed arrangements" to implement the decisions. It was here that failure was most

¹⁹ Teleconf, TT-1080, 24 Aug 1948, 2:781; and 2:778–80, 782–84. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*. Telg, Marshall to Smith, 24 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1074–77.

²⁰ Telg, Smith to Marshall, 25 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1079.

²¹ Telg, General Sir Brian Robertson to Earnest Bevin, 24 Aug 1948, C6961/G, FO 371/70510, PRO; Note, Earnest Bevin to Prime Minister Clement Attlee, 24 Aug 1948, in *Documents on British Foreign Policy Overseas, Series III, vol. VI: Berlin in the Cold War, 1948–1990*, eds. Keith Hamilton et al., no. 101 (London: Routledge, 2009); Telg, Frank Roberts, British emissary in Moscow, to Bevin, 25 Aug 1948, in Hamilton et al., eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy Overseas*, no. 102.

²² Telgs, Marshall to Smith, 26 Aug 1948, 2:1083–84; Smith to Marshall, 30 Aug 1948, 2:1092–97. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

likely to occur amid a conflation of principles with technical issues few could understand.

Clay now dominated the terrain, and that did not bode well for the negotiations. When Robertson called a meeting between Clay, Noiret, and himself to coordinate their positions, Clay attended reluctantly, expressed no hope of reaching an acceptable agreement, and affirmed the intention of referring every issue to Washington in order to disclaim personal responsibility for the outcome of the talks. He took what Robertson called “a violent view” on one point of discussion. “[O]bviously we are going to have very great difficulty,” Robertson warned the Foreign Office.²³

Clay’s attitude contrasted sharply with his views several months before. In early May, he had advocated a “monetary union” between Berlin and the Soviet Zone. He refreshed that recommendation on 25 June, suggesting in a cable to Acting Under Secretary of the Army Maj. Gen. William H. Draper that he approach Sokolovsky with the idea of a “general trade agreement” between Berlin and West Germany. As Clay envisioned this scheme, the D-mark would not enter into circulation in Berlin. Rather, D-mark earnings from Berlin’s exports to the Western Zones of Germany would pay for imports from those areas, while deficits would be covered by converting Eastern marks into D-marks at an agreed rate of exchange. Such an agreement, Clay pointed out, would “maintain the principle that western currency is being used in Berlin but would obviate the difficulties of two currencies,” because the D-mark would only clear the city’s external trade; Berlin’s “domestic” payments would occur solely in the currency of the Soviet Zone.²⁴

Although the precise moment of Clay’s conversion is unclear, a clear evolution is discernable in his attitude on adopting the Soviet Zone currency. From his advocacy in early May, he progressed through conditional acceptance and unwilling acquiescence to bitter opposition. Whereas his views in the spring reflected the influence of American economists such as Robert Eisenberg, Manuel Gottlieb, and Edward A. Tenenbaum, who desired to preserve Berlin’s “natural” ties to its hinterland, by late summer Clay had found common ground with the views of the city’s activist politicians who sought to integrate the Allied sectors into West Germany. Reuter’s speech before the mass rally at the Hertha sports field on 24 August encompassed a passionate appeal for the Western D-mark, and when Clay called for Reuter the following day, the Social Democrat’s heroic posturing assured a positive reception for his projects. On 13 August—roughly the midpoint of the Moscow negotiations—Clay received a petition submitted in the name of the democratic parties and trade unions. The signatories not only refused the Soviet mark as the sole legal tender for Berlin but rejected the parallel currency system installed by the Allies. In its

²³ Telg, Robertson to Sir William Strang, 28 Aug 1948, C7136, FO 371/70511, PRO.

²⁴ Telg, Clay to William H. Draper, 25 Jun 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:696–97.

place, they “demanded” that the Western powers introduce the West German mark as the exclusive means of payment in West Berlin.²⁵

Although they might have differed somewhat in their ultimate goals, Clay and Reuter now found themselves traveling in the same direction. The general’s interest still lay more in maintaining a strong American presence in Berlin as a visible sign of support for Western Europe against Soviet intimidation. Reuter and his fellow militants wished to sever any linkage with the Soviets and East Berlin altogether, tying West Berlin firmly to the emerging Western Alliance. The blockade was steadily moving the two movements onto a common path.²⁶

The Negotiations Founder

When the military governors met on 31 August to formalize the Moscow agreements, Clay arrived late. He waved at Robertson and General Marie-Pierre Koenig but ignored Sokolovsky. In Robertson’s judgment, Clay “brought himself to speak with some difficulty” but then “thawed slightly,” helping to allay a misunderstanding between Robertson and Sokolovsky over the organization of working committees. “Clay took more part in [the meeting] than he probably intended to do,” surmised the British military governor. “The fact is that his forceful and efficient mind cannot bear to see things going untidily.”²⁷

Robertson’s worries over Clay’s disposition soon yielded to a larger problem with Sokolovsky, who quickly turned obstinate. At the start of substantive discussions on 1 September, the Soviet marshal disputed the Western interpretation of the powers of the financial commission, raised the question of controlling air traffic—purportedly to safeguard the Soviet Zone currency from the smuggling of money—and indicated that the restrictions under discussion were only those applied after 18 June, thereby excluding the measures imposed in March.²⁸

The Soviets had made a serious mistake. Britain and France were eager for compromise. Neither sought a perfect outcome. The task of the Western military governors, Bevin told Robertson, was merely “to work out the best solution they can.” By taking an obdurate position at the outset, the Soviets

²⁵ Telgs, Clay to Bradley and Royall, 4 Aug 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:752; Murphy to Marshall, 7 Aug 1948, file 35/22, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Memo, Social Democratic Party, Christian Democratic Union, and Liberal Democratic Party, Berlin with Provisional Leadership of the Independent Trade Union Organization, Berlin, for Allied Mil Governments, 13 Aug 1948, sub: “Lage der Berliner Wahrung” (Berlin Currency Situation), in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1404–08.

²⁶ In a teleconference with Royall and Draper on 19 September, Clay advocated expanding the airlift, making preparations to establish a West Berlin government and installing the Western mark as sole legal tender in the Western sectors. Teleconf, TT-1271, 19 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:866.

²⁷ Telg, Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 31 Aug 1948, C7198, FO 371/70512, PRO.

²⁸ Telgs, Clay to Draper, 1 Sep 1948, 2:798–801; and 2 Sep 1948, 2:807–08. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

missed their best opportunity to close a deal. Instead, Sokolovsky had played into the hands of Clay and the State Department hardliners. If, as Robertson believed, the marshal was tabling bargaining chips to trade away at a later point, the deadline was too short for such ploys.²⁹

Despite the added complications, the talks quickly reduced themselves to two essentials: the control of Berlin's trade arrangements and the powers of the financial commission. In respect to trade, the Soviets insisted on retaining sole control over the licensing of exports from Berlin, allegedly to block the flight of capital goods to the West. The Allies demanded that the four powers jointly issue licenses so as to protect Western sector enterprises from coerced engulfment in the Eastern Zone economy.

The financial commission was the more vexatious question. The directive contained a list of four arrangements the commission would control. Derived virtually word for word from the instructions Marshall sent to Smith on 3 August, they encompassed: no discrimination against holders of B-marks, equality of treatment and provision of "fully accessible" banking and credit facilities, a satisfactory basis for Berlin's foreign and interzonal trade, and sufficient currency for occupation and budgetary costs. The Soviets insisted that the commission's authority was restricted to ensuring these stipulations. The Western representatives countered by citing the last two paragraphs of the directive. The first of these stated that the Soviet Zone's Bank of Emission would regulate currency in Berlin. The second asserted, "The [quadripartite] financial commission . . . shall be set up to control the practical implementation of the financial arrangements indicated above." From this juxtaposition, they contended that the financial commission should exercise broad control over the Bank of Emission, not simply over the itemized "arrangements."³⁰

Clay described the stakes in a cable to Draper. If the commission's authority extended only to the itemized arrangements, he explained, the Soviets could set credit and discount rates so "as to wreck the Berlin economy or to force it into complete dependence on the Soviet Zone." The only real defense would be joint control over the volume of money and credit. General Clay had first urged such control on 3 August and, three weeks later, had proposed changes to the draft directive giving the commission power to ensure "adequate currency and

²⁹ Telg, Bevin to Robertson, 30 Aug 1948, in Hamilton et al., eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy Overseas*, no. 104.

³⁰ Four-Power Directive to the Military Governors in Berlin on Lifting the Soviet Blockade and Introducing a Uniform Currency Reform in Berlin, 30 Aug 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 168–69. Smith's minutes of the 23 August meeting read: "He [Stalin] explained that the functions of the Soviet Bank of Emission in connection with the regulation of currency in Berlin would be subject to control of a [quadripartite] financial commission . . . which he proposed should be set up to govern the practical implementation of financial arrangements involved in the introduction and circulation of a single currency in Berlin." Telg, Smith to Marshall, 24 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1066. On 30 August, however, Molotov stated that the financial commission would "control the financial arrangements listed in (A) to (D)" of the directive. Telg, Smith to Marshall, 30 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1094–95.

credit supplies” for the city departments and the Berlin budget. Presumably, he had two motives for wanting to insert this into the U.S. position. First, in the event the Soviets accepted, they would be surrendering key prerogatives of the Eastern Zone central bank. Second, if they refused, he would have grounds to declare failure, which, as Smith and Roberts suspected, was his preferred end.³¹

Although Bevin and Robertson upheld Clay on the powers of the financial commission, their support reflected more the British policy of maintaining solidarity with the United States than agreement on the substantive merits of such controls. In Bevin’s view, the establishment of quadripartite control over the use of the Eastern mark was “far more a political gesture” than “a provision of practical importance.” While he felt it crucial that the Soviet Zone banknotes circulate only with the consent of the Western powers, the real issue was Berlin’s external commerce. Currency unification would naturally favor exchanges between Berlin and the Soviet Zone of occupation, Bevin acknowledged. Nevertheless, even as “complete freedom of trade” was “clearly impracticable,” Allied negotiators needed to safeguard commerce with the West through quadripartite exchange and clearing mechanisms. Robertson was of like mind. “What is important,” he told his political adviser Christopher Steel, “is that the Soviets should not be allowed to dictate what firms may operate, what raw materials they may have, what they may make, and to whom they may sell.” This presupposed abolition of the unilateral Soviet licensing system but did not require interference with the Eastern Zone central bank.³²

On 4 September, Sokolovsky raised Robertson’s hopes. When Robertson stated that he could never agree to unilateral Soviet trade licenses, Sokolovsky did not exclude modifications, adding that the controlling body might well be the Magistrat. Robertson agreed with the suggestion, whereupon the military governors sent the issue back to the committee. “My colleagues still feel quite hopeful,” Clay reported. They had found Sokolovsky “more yielding” and felt “agreement was quite possible.” As usual, he demurred: “I must admit,” he confided to Draper, “that I am completely unable to diagnose the events which lead to such conclusion on their part.”³³

The last meeting of the military governors—on 7 September, their deadline for reporting to their governments—produced no overall resolution. Sokolovsky reverted to the earlier Soviet position on trade, demanding sole control over the issuance of trade licenses. He also refused to bend on the powers of the financial commission, stating that his attitude conformed to the letter of the directive. However, unexpectedly, he agreed to remove all restrictions on rail

³¹ Telg, Clay to Draper, 1 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:799. Clay’s wording was transmitted to Smith in Telg, Marshall to Smith, 25 Aug 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1076.

³² Telgs, Bevin to Roberts, 8 Aug 1948, C6441/G, FO 371/70506; Christopher Steel to Patrick H. Dean, 28 Aug 1948, C7087/G, FO 371/70511. Both in PRO.

³³ Telg, Clay to Draper, 4 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:825–26; and see also Telg, Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 4 Sep 1948, C7305/G, FO 371/70512, PRO.

and highway traffic imposed since 30 March and also conceded on several technical questions concerning the exchange of B-marks for Eastern marks. As before, the military governors differed in their assessments of these moves. “The Soviets want agreement,” Robertson surmised, and had offered a “substantial bribe” in order to obtain favorable terms on trade and currency. While granting “some possibility” that he could “fight out a reasonable trade agreement,” Clay branded Soviet tactics “clever and deceptive with just enough concessions to take fire out of a protest at Moscow.”³⁴

In Washington, views had hardened. On 8 September, the State Department instructed Smith to demand that Molotov amend the directive to confirm Western views. If Molotov refused, or attempted to bargain over the points, the Western representatives should proclaim that “no real basis” existed for a practical settlement unless the Soviets recognized Western juridical rights in Berlin. Once more, Smith pushed back. Any agreed solution would necessarily be a compromise “without clear Soviet admission of quadripartite authority,” he asserted. The alternative would be an indefinite blockade. Were the Western governments prepared to deal with that? If not, they had to weigh substantial concessions. “In none of the replies I have received,” he declared, had he seen “an indication that this basic strategic question has been considered.”³⁵

Smith’s questions—like those of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in July—were answered with silence. Incited by Clay and Murphy, Washington decision makers were ready for a break. If the Soviets refused to amend the directive, they determined, the discussions would end. Indeed, the Soviets intended to impose fresh conditions. Beyond the demand for recognition of Allied rights, they wanted Soviet guarantees for the safety and orderly functioning of the city administration. For the British and French, the first condition was empty legalism, and the second a side issue. Worried that the Allies were turning soft, the State Department agreed to drop its new demands only in return for a “firm and unmistakable commitment” by Britain and France to terminate the talks if Molotov attempted to stall—and even if he gave way, to grant the military governors no more than seventy-two hours to achieve results. This, fumed Bevin, placed “our fate in the hands of any one of the Military Governors whose liver might be out of order on that particular day.”³⁶

The City Begins to Split

As the powers negotiated, the tenuous connections that held together Berlin’s civic institutions began to give way. The extreme elements on both sides

³⁴ Telg, Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 8 Sep 1948, C7359/G, FO 371/70513, PRO; Teleconf, TT-1182, 8 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:846.

³⁵ Telgs, Marshall to Smith, 8 Sep 1948, 2:1141; Smith to Marshall, 9 Sep 1948, 2:1144. Both in *FRUS*, 1948.

³⁶ Telgs, Marshall to Douglas, 11 Sep 1948, in *FRUS*, 1948, 2:1149; Bevin to U.K. Ambassador, Washington, D.C., 12 Sep 1948, C7442A/G, FO 371/70513, PRO.

of the conflict sought to tear the city apart—in the East, hardline Communists eager to transform the Soviet Zone into a socialist state, and in the West, militant leaders intent on transforming West Berlin into a bridgehead from which to roll back Soviet influence. In a period of progressive polarization, Berlin's moderates stood on eroding ground. The dialectical reasoning of Ferdinand Friedensburg—who argued that to remove the Soviets, one needed to conciliate them first—defied prevailing passions. As weeks passed, concern for preserving the city's unity became irrelevant to people fired by animosity toward the Soviet Union, fixated on their own travails, and increasingly inclined to define *their* city as West Berlin.

On the American side, Colonel Howley almost longed for a split. In late March 1948, he had opined to the British commandant, Maj. Gen. Edwin O. Herbert, that life in a divided Berlin would be no more difficult “than living in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul,” and in a statement to his diary on 30 June he dismissed the breakup of the Kommandatura as “good riddance of bad rubbish.” At the end of July, U.S. officials encouraged Western leaders of Berlin to set up a special committee of the City Assembly to coordinate the administration of the Western sectors. The implicit objective of the move would be to spade the ground for a separate West Berlin government. Herbert thought it typical of the “unilateral and irresponsible action the Americans are inclined to take.”³⁷

General Herbert overestimated American influence over the Germans. Reuter's plan of attack presupposed the division of Berlin, and he relied on no American for inspiration. Nor did the head of the economics department, Gustav Klingelhöfer. In mid-July, Murphy's economics staff learned from a “highly placed official” that the department was ready to administer the Western sectors separately. Just as in the removal of Otto Ostrowski in 1947, the Americans and Germans were pulling on the same string. Their aim was to remove the Western sectors from the adjoining area and to weld them into a separate city-state, West Berlin, as free as possible from association with the East.³⁸

When the military governors met on 31 August, Berlin had been disintegrating piece by piece. On 25 May 1948, following a dispute over the election of delegates to the spring assembly of the city's trade unions, Western unionists split from the Communist-dominated *Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (Free German Federation of Trade Unions) to form the *Unabhängige Gewerkschaftsorganisation* (Independent Trade Union Organization). In early June, Colonel Howley recognized the organization as the authoritative trade

³⁷ Memo, Maj Gen Edwin O. Herbert for General Sir Brian Robertson, 30 Mar 1948, sub: Berlin, 1948, C2464/G, FO 371/70491, PRO; Col Frank L. Howley Diary Entry, 1 Jul 1947–1 Jul 1948, p. 87, box 3, Howley Papers, AHEC; Telg, Political Div, Control Commission for Germany (British Element) to Foreign Ofc, 27 Jul 1948, 445/108/48, FO 1049/1357, PRO.

³⁸ Memo, John B. Holt for Robert Murphy, 16 Jul 1947, file 796/1-6, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

union body in Berlin, and it received Allied recognition as the negotiating partner for wage agreements the following month. On 26 July, Friedensburg suspended the Soviet-appointed police president, Paul Markgraff, for insubordination and for failing to accept decisions handed down by the City Assembly. He replaced Markgraff with Johannes Stumm, Markgraff's deputy and a former police inspector during the Weimar period. Although the Soviets refused to recognize the move, the Western commandants approved it the following day, and Stumm proceeded to set up a separate police headquarters in West Berlin.³⁹

The Central Food Office was the second department to dissolve. In late July, the Soviets created a subdepartment of the agency, ostensibly to organize a program to provide food to Western sector residents who registered for rations in East Berlin. When the subdepartment began to expropriate work space and to ignore instructions from its Social Democratic department head, he removed his agency, in mid-August, to West Berlin.⁴⁰

The cracks were also widening in Berlin's flagship institution of higher education, the Berlin University. When the Soviets reopened the institution in January 1946, they placed it under their zonal Administration for Public Education rather than the Magistrat. Dissatisfied with that situation, U.S. officials in Berlin contemplated establishing a second institution in the American Sector, and in January 1948, Colonel Howley ordered members of his education branch to prepare a plan and to look for buildings. They submitted their proposals to OMGUS on 14 April, just in time to profit from further agitations. Only two days later the Eastern Zone authorities expelled three students—political activists, who had execrated the university administration in the pages of a U.S.-licensed “literary” journal—for violations of “decency” and “honor.” Furor ensued, and on 23 April some 2,000 demonstrators rallied in the British Sector to decry the expulsions. One of the activists, Otto Stolz, demanded a “free university” for West Berlin.⁴¹

In late May, after receiving recommendations from an OMGUS study commission, General Clay unlocked a grant of RM20 million for the future institution. Reuter took personal charge of preparations. On 24 July, a committee under his leadership appealed for assistance in constructing “the spiritual center of free Berlin.” The committee brought in administrators to recruit faculty,

³⁹ Four Year Rpt, 1 Jul 1945–1 Sep 1949, OMGUS, Berlin District, p. 18, CMH Library; Howley, *Berlin Command*, p. 212.

⁴⁰ Four Year Rpt, 1 Jul 1945–1 Sep 1949, pp. 18, 117–18; Steege, *Black Market, Cold War*, p. 228. For a detailed documentary treatment, see Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1559–1604.

⁴¹ James F. Tent, *The Free University of Berlin: A Political History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 68–78; Memo, John R. Sala, Ch, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, for Director, Reorientation Fund Control Ofc, OMGUS, Berlin District, 14 Apr 1948, sub: Outline for a New University in the American Sector of Berlin, 13 Apr 1948, box 41, RG 260, NACP; Ltr, Rector, Berlin University, to Otto Hess, Joachim Schwarz and Otto Stolz (relegated students), 16 Apr 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:574–75; Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, p. 88.

to locate facilities for offices and classrooms, and to receive applications from prospective students. The military government supported the project closely. Converted to DM2 million after the currency reform, Clay's original grant funded over 70 percent of the university's initial budget. OMGUS provided a large villa to house its secretariat and furnished virtually all food, coal, vehicles, lecture halls, building materials, books, and periodicals. Of the 350,000 books available to students when class began in mid-November, 100,000 came directly from the OMGUS library.⁴²

Experts in both the American and British military governments were initially critical of the effort. The British educational adviser, Robert Birley, deemed the picture of Communist control over the Berlin University "very exaggerated." The majority of students and teaching staff were non-Communist, and "[o]n the whole, the Berlin University is an anti-Communist element in the Russian sector." The expelled students, wrote another official, "undoubtedly occupied themselves chiefly with political activities" and "had deliberately trailed their coats." The American experts saw no reason to found a new university on account of three agitators. In their eyes, the politicians in Berlin were "interested in stirring . . . action against the Soviets." For all the noise emitted at political rallies, "[t]here has been no exodus of students or professors in protest against totalitarian oppression." Only then would the military government confront an obligation to care for "courageous people, but . . . not as long as they stay in the present university."⁴³

⁴² "Beschluss der Stadtverordnetenversammlung über die Errichtung einer Freien Universität in Berlin" (Resolution of the City Assembly on the Establishment of a Free University in Berlin), 11 May 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:576; Memo, Lt Col G. H. Garde for Kendall Foss et al., 5 May 1948, sub: Committee on the Establishment of a German University in the U.S. Sector of Berlin, file 4/1-3/9, OMGUS, BAK; Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 103, 1 May 1948, p. Soc.1-4, file 3/430-1/5, OMGUS, BAK; Memos, Foss for General Lucius D. Clay, 4 Nov 1948, sub: The Free University, file 1948/128/1, OMGUS, BAK; John P. Thompson, Ch, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, for Maj Gen Maxwell D. Taylor, U.S. Commandant, Berlin, 9 Sep 1949, sub: Special Financial Report on Free University of Berlin, file 4/14-2/1, OMGUS, LAB; "Aufruf zur Grundung einer freien Universität" (Call for the Founding of a Free University), 23 Jul 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 1:577–78; Memos, Howard W. Johnston, Ch, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, for tripartite Kommandatura, 5 Aug 1948, sub: A New University for the West Sectors of Berlin: Outline of Present Status, file 4/1-3/9, OMGUS, LAB; Johnston for Intel Ofcr, OMGUS, 16 Nov 1948, file 4/14-2, OMGUS, LAB.

⁴³ Memo, Robert Birley for Foreign Ofc, 12 Mar 1948, sub: Cultural Policy in the British Sector of Berlin, FO 1912/166, PRO; Ltr, Political Div, HQ, Control Commission for German (British Element), to Foreign Ofc, 6 May 1948, C3662, FO 371/70493, PRO; Memo, Sterling W. Brown, Asst Deputy Dir, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, for Clay, 29 May 1948, sub: Establishment of a German University in the U.S. Sector of Berlin, file 1948/128/1, OMGUS, BAK. Much of this memorandum stemmed from a paper written by the OMGUS chief of higher education, Fritz Karsen, a Weimar-era educational reformer. Memo, Fritz Karsen for Richard T. Alexander, Ch, Education and Cultural Relations Br, OMGUS, Berlin District, 11 May 1948, sub: New University in Berlin, file 1948/128/1, OMGUS, BAK.

Countering the prevailing slogans, the specialists viewed the political effects of the new institution as decidedly negative. They feared that the university would act as a magnet for liberal and democratic elements from the Soviet Zone. Yet its graduates would have no prospects of returning to work in the Eastern Zone and helping to keep democracy alive. The net consequence would be that the Soviet Zone would become devoid of all the democratic elements among its students and professors.⁴⁴

The Free University, as it was called, opened in the U.S. Sector of Berlin in November 1948 with some of its associated medical facilities located in the British Sector. Classes began for some 2,200 students in late November with faculties in medicine, law, and philosophy, including most of the subjects taught in an American liberal arts college. Officials held a formal opening ceremony on 4 December with American playwright Thornton Wilder providing one of several keynote addresses. Included among the student body were 590 who had transferred from the Berlin University in the Soviet Sector. Eight professors and fifteen instructors also joined the Free University faculty from the Soviet-controlled school. Although the university initially struggled to establish a steady source of funding, it ultimately became one of the most powerful symbols of scholarship and academic freedom in the West. In a conflict between East and West that often became driven by popular perception, Western political leaders would point to the university's growth and success as shining examples of the superiority of their culture and way of life.⁴⁵

The initial ruptures in Berlin's public life foretold the division of its legislative and executive bodies. The City Assembly was the first to split. The drama began on 23 June, when a crowd of Socialist Unity Party supporters and Eastern Zone trade unionists, some 600 strong, occupied the assembly spectators' gallery and entrance passageways to the Stadthaus. The disruption ended two hours later when the Berlin trade union chairman and Unity Socialist deputy, Roman Chwalek, ordered them to leave. The deputies then debated the currency issue. However, as the deliberations drew to a close, roughly 200 persons, mostly youths, circled the building, hurling profanities and threats. The deputies could only leave after six policemen, led by a Social Democratic officer, came to their aid at 2130. Following this incident, Otto Suhr, as City Assembly president, resolved to move the body to West Berlin unless Kotikov guaranteed security around the Stadthaus. Although the next meeting, six days later, passed without incident, Suhr suspended activity for nearly two months

⁴⁴ Memo, Karsen for Alexander, 11 May 1948.

⁴⁵ Ltr, John P. Thompson to Robert von Pagenhardt, Institute of International Relations, Stanford University, 14 Dec 1948; Memo, Johnston for Intel Ofcr, 16 Nov 1948, sub: Information on Free University. Both in Free University, OMGUS, RG 260, NACP.

thereafter. Under attack from the Eastern Zone press over the parliamentary work stoppage, he finally called a meeting for the afternoon of 26 August.⁴⁶

On the morning of the scheduled session, the parliamentary elders heard reports that a mob was converging on the Stadthaus. They declared a postponement. A crowd of several thousand people appeared with flags, banners, and printed signs. The demonstrators broke through the front door of the building and occupied the empty hall. The tumult then quieted as a fifteen-person deputation went to speak with Acting Mayor Friedensburg, now serving in place of the gravely ill Louise Schröder. Friedensburg termed the ensuing discussion “calm” and “peaceable.”⁴⁷

The City Assembly met the following day. However, shortly after Suhr had called it to order, he learned that demonstrators were again marching on the Stadthaus. He adjourned the meeting, which had lasted only ten minutes.⁴⁸

Suhr set 6 September for the next attempt to meet in the Stadthaus. Professing that the political prestige of the Western parties was at stake, he dismissed British advice to postpone the session pending the results of the military governors’ discussions. Three issues dominated the agenda: the date for the next Berlin elections, confirmation of the decision to dispatch representatives to the parliamentary council, and a vote of no confidence in the head of the labor department, Waldemar Schmidt, one of the three Socialist Unity Party members of the Magistrat. Anticipating disruption, Suhr proposed to transfer proceedings directly to the Reichstag, just inside the British Sector near the Brandenburg Gate, should demonstrators appear. Even as General Herbert ruled out the Reichstag, Suhr’s request suggests that he had fixed the date with the express purpose of moving the City Assembly to the Western sectors before the currency talks had ended.⁴⁹

Suhr called the session for 1200. At 1000, a mob of demonstrators, purporting to be trade unionists and works council members, gathered before the Stadthaus. Suhr promptly adjourned the meeting. The demonstrators broke into the hall at 1130. Roughly a half hour later, union leaders, shouting from the podium, told them to leave. In his capacity as vice president of the assembly, the Unity Socialist delegate Ottomar Geschke adjourned the session until 1315.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ MFR, Lt Col H. P. Whiteford, U.K. Magistrat Control Ofcr, 24 Jun 1948, sub: Demonstration at the Magistrat, 23 Jun 1948; Memo, 24 Jun 1948, sub: Interview with Dr. Suhr. Both in 32/2701/16/07, FO 1012/215, PRO. Friedensburg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 266–67.

⁴⁷ Interv, Maj F. J. Jebbens, Magistrat Control Staff, for Secretariat, British Troops, Berlin, with Ferdinand Friedensburg, 26 Aug 1948, Encl to Memo, Maj F. J. Jebbens, 26 Aug 1948, 32/2701/16/07, FO 1012/216, PRO.

⁴⁸ Min, Miscellaneous, 27 Aug 1948, 32/2701/16/07, FO 1012/216, PRO.

⁴⁹ Under the provisional constitution, the Assembly’s term in office extended only two years. It was due to expire on 17 November 1948. Telg, Political Div, Control Commission for Germany (British Element), to Foreign Ofc, 3 Sep 1948, 445/115/48, FO 1049/1354, PRO.

⁵⁰ Memo, Governmental Structure Br for Secretariat, Control Commission for Germany (British Element), 6 Sep 1948, sub: Assembly Meetings, 445/152/48, FO 1049/1355, PRO.



A mob storms the Stadthaus on 6 September 1948.

Suhr, who had left in the morning, sent word that he had adjourned the session indefinitely. The remaining Western delegates then departed, leaving the Socialist Unity group alone in the Stadthaus. After conferring with non-Communist party leaders in the afternoon, Suhr called a new meeting in the student assembly hall of the Technical University, a few kilometers inside the British Sector. It began shortly before 2000. The representatives voted to hold elections on 14 November and to confirm the selection of delegates to the West German parliamentary council. A critical ramification of the first decision was that Reuter would become mayor of the Western sectors before the year was out, almost certainly with a massive Social Democratic majority.⁵¹

U.S. Troops in Berlin Continue the Mission

Despite the split of civic institutions throughout Berlin, U.S. Army personnel in the city continued with their normal routines. Soldiers provided

⁵¹ Ibid.; Memo, French Liaison Ofc, Magistrat, for French Mil Government, Greater Berlin, 6 Sep 1948, sub: Incident of 6 September 1948, 445/172/48, FO 1049/1355, PRO; “Bericht des Stadtverordnetenvorstehers über die Notwendigkeit der Verlegung des Tagungsortes der Stadtverordnetenversammlung” (Report of the President of the City Assembly on the Transfer of the Meeting Place of the City Assembly), 6 Sep 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1615–18; Telg, Murphy to Marshall, 7 Sep 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1131.

support for the ongoing airlift and maintained guard posts at key locations. They also spent hours working to keep essential vehicles running and took part in training exercises.

In Frankfurt, the infrastructure required to support the airlift continued to evolve from an ad hoc arrangement into a more formal structure. On 30 March 1949, EUCOM directed Brig. Gen. Philip E. Gallagher, then EUCOM director of posts, to organize and take command of the U.S. Army Airlift Support Command. The new agency assumed control over all operations in direct support of the airlift at Rhine-Main and Wiesbaden Air Force Bases. It oversaw two Airlift Detachments from the 7795th Traffic Regulating Detachment; the 24th Transportation Truck Battalion, including six heavy truck companies; the 559th Ordnance Medium Automotive Maintenance Company; and the 7934th Labor Supervision Center, Headquarters, with nine labor service and nine labor supervision companies. General Gallagher's headquarters began operations on 6 April and, after occupying several temporary sites, moved into a permanent location at Rhine-Main Airfield on 22 September. The new headquarters supplied the element of management needed to analyze procedures, determine requirements, and coordinate actions with other services and agencies supporting the airlift. It also relieved some of the strain at EUCOM headquarters, where many officers had been handling airlift responsibilities as an additional duty.⁵²

Although the Germans continued to provide the majority of workers unloading aircraft and distributing supplies, the Berlin Military Post provided administrative support and supervisory personnel. In April 1949, U.S. military officials at Tempelhof Airfield put into effect a system to increase the efficiency of German labor crews. Supervisors charted the performance of each shift and, at the end of each month, awarded prizes to outstanding crews and individuals. Ongoing construction of the Tegel Airfield in the French Zone required U.S. Army engineers to oversee the project and more than one hundred enlisted men to assist the primarily German labor force. Construction of two new runways at Tempelhof, as well as resurfacing of the existing runway, worn down by constant use, also employed Army engineers and labor support.⁵³

Pilferage of cargo was also a serious problem at Tempelhof despite the supervision of U.S. Army personnel. Much of the theft consisted of the removal of flour and sugar, by countless ingenious methods, during cargo unloading. During the entire airlift, U.S. officials released about one hundred German workers from employment, both for theft and for attempting to sell their wares on the black market.⁵⁴

One of the most critical elements of support provided by the Berlin Military Post proved to be the ongoing maintenance of the vehicles used to transport and distribute goods. Of particular importance were the ten-ton semitrailers

⁵² Hist Rpt, Hist Div, EUCOM, Berlin Airlift, 1 Jan–30 Sep 1949, Historians files, CMH.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.



A U.S. MP watches for pilferage during unloading operations at Tempelhof.

and the two-and-one-half-ton trucks that crews used on a 24-hour day, 7-day week basis. Parts for the trailers were in critically short supply. Despite the fact that the operation urgently required every vehicle, it was necessary to send them for weekly, monthly, and semiannual maintenance. An inspection team checked all vehicles supporting the airlift at frequent intervals to ensure correct maintenance and proper standards of performance. With the reduced tonnage both into and out of Berlin due to the blockade, it was impossible to ship vehicles to ordnance shops in the U.S. Zone for higher echelon maintenance. The command established a rebuild section near the airfield to repair major vehicle assemblies that normally would have gone to higher level shops in the West.⁵⁵

Although personnel strength in Berlin allowed for an adequate supply of maintenance personnel, the 24th Transportation Truck Battalion supporting operations at Rhine-Main and Wiesbaden experienced a shortage of trained heavy-truck drivers and automotive mechanics. Replacements received in theater were generally of good quality but lacked training and experience.

⁵⁵ Hist Rpts, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1949; HQ, Berlin Mil Post, 1 Jul–30 Sep 1948. Both in Entry 37042, Unit Histories, 1940–1967, Berlin Mil Post, RG 338, NACP.



U.S. military police on patrol in Zehlendorf, March 1948

The demanding workload precluded sending the new men to technical service schools, so the battalion could only rely on its own on-the-job training.⁵⁶

The Soviet blockade also influenced the activities of U.S. military police units operating in Berlin. During the first quarter of 1949, the Office of the Provost Marshal reported a marked increase in incidents involving Soviet military personnel in the U.S. Sector of Berlin. The report attributed the increase to the heightening Soviet displeasure regarding the evolving Atlantic Pact and to the currency reforms in the Western sectors. The Soviets had also intensified their search for military or political deserters who sought refuge in the U.S. Sector. Not surprisingly, the number of Americans detained by the Soviets also increased, but the provost marshal indicated that most were new personnel who had wandered into the Soviet Sector, because they had not been familiar with the sector and zonal boundaries.⁵⁷

Despite the demands of supporting the airlift, most units in Berlin attempted to maintain some semblance of a normal training schedule. Headquarters, Berlin Military Post, directed a regular schedule of inspections, ceremonies, and parades lest any man forget that he was still a member of the U.S. military. The command training guidance for 1949 also reminded unit commanders that the Gr unewald Forest was available for field training and bivouac. In early 1949, the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, reported that, when not committed

⁵⁶ Hist Rpt, Hist Div, EUCOM, Berlin Airlift, 1 Jan–30 Sep 1949.

⁵⁷ Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1949.

at Tempelhof, its companies conducted training in winter tactics, weapons employment, road marches, and general military subjects. Likewise, the 16th Constabulary Squadron reported that its training schedule had emphasized preliminary marksmanship training for upcoming qualification shoots at the indoor range at Andrews Barracks. In the second quarter historical report for 1949, the squadron commander noted that 111 of his enlisted members had recently completed the Military Justice Course for NCOs.⁵⁸

Although morale throughout the command remained relatively high, some units reported that troops experienced a “caged-in feeling” resulting from the prolonged blockade. Officials noted a marked increase in leave requests, and all established pass policies remained in effect. Units went out of their way to provide the men with a maximum of recreation within their own areas and to improve the facilities and living conditions in the troop billets. The Special Services Branch reported that three special service clubs remained open throughout the period, as well as twelve libraries and twenty-eight bowling alleys. The golf course at Wannsee also remained open for play during the winter months. Units within the command participated in baseball, football, softball, volleyball, and track and field competitions, both within the confines of the city and as part of the larger EUCOM athletic leagues.⁵⁹

More than sufficient supplies reached U.S. troops in Berlin through the airlift. Nonetheless, some sacrifices were made. Gasoline and coal remained a priority for the airlift, but shortages forced the command to strictly control vehicle use and to limit the amount of coal available for heating hot water and for most public buildings. Primarily because of the cuts in electricity, the Post Exchange Branch was forced to close several snack facilities and limit operations at the ice cream plant to five hours between 1800 and 2300. Although the garrison had adequate supplies of military clothing and equipment, the 7782d Special Troops Battalion reported that it had to take “extraordinary measures” to procure specially modified cavalry boots for the band. As another concession to the blockade, the post exchange found it necessary to ration candy bars at the rate of five per person per week.⁶⁰

Despite these privations, the U.S. troops in Berlin continued to support Berliners, especially the children, through a variety of charitable ventures. In July and August 1948, the command offered evacuation to the Western Zone for all displaced persons remaining in West Berlin. More than 5,400 accepted the offer and departed the city. Summer camps supported by various American units in Berlin accommodated some 670 children during the summer of 1948, with food rations supplemented by donated CARE packages. During the month of January 1949, the German Youth Activities Program distributed candy, toys,

⁵⁸ Memo, Maj John J. Sigwald, Adjutant, for Berlin Mil Post, 9 Mar 1949, sub: Training, Entry 37042, Unit Histories, 1940–1967, Berlin Mil Post, RG 338, NACP; Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1949.

⁵⁹ Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, 1 Jul–30 Sep 1948.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

and Christmas dinners to 37,129 children of the city. The American Women's Club also donated 1,000 pounds of assorted canned goods to be distributed to needy families.⁶¹

In the same manner as their counterparts in the U.S. Zone, the U.S. troops in Berlin had settled into a routine that approached normal peacetime operations, but they remained a little on edge due to their precarious position. Although commanders in Berlin had begun to initiate some measure of military training for their units, this was more to restore a sense of military professionalism than to prepare for defensive contingencies. Although the Soviet blockade and the ever-present Soviet Army provided constant reminders of the threat that the Americans faced, the U.S. soldiers in Berlin understood that they had little role to play in the drama transpiring around them.

The Allies' Ultimatum

Meanwhile, the diplomatic wrangling over the city continued. When the currency talks returned to Moscow, Smith had no room to negotiate. His instructions were to present an aide-mémoire to Molotov accusing Sokolovsky of departing from critical understandings and demanding that he set the marshal straight. If Molotov refused, Smith would terminate the interview. At his meeting with the ambassadors on 14 September, Molotov promised a prompt response. Delivered in writing four days later, the reply expressed a readiness to put Berlin's trade under quadripartite control, and Molotov orally added a subsidiary concession, allowing the Allies to import food and fuel into Berlin and to control the proceeds. But the Western powers had demanded that the Soviets yield on all critical issues, so a partial compromise on one could not warrant further discussions on the basis of the directive.⁶²

Because construction of the permanent United Nations headquarters in Manhattan had just begun in 1948, the General Assembly was scheduled to convene on 21 September in the French capital, and all three Western foreign ministers would be present. Bevin proposed to use the occasion to work out further steps through direct conversations with his colleagues. The consultations would focus on a reply to Molotov's note and tactics for referring the issue to the United Nations. Both Marshall and French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman quickly agreed.⁶³

Accompanied by the military governors, the three men held extended discussions on 21 September. Marshall brimmed with confidence. On 19 September, in a teleconference with Secretary Royall, Clay had rendered an

⁶¹ Ibid.; Hist Rpt, HQ, Berlin Mil Post, 1 Jan–31 Mar 1949.

⁶² Telg, Marshall to Smith, 12 Sep 1948. For text of Aide-Mémoire, see Telg, Marshall to Smith, 12 Sep 1948. Both in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1151–55. Aide-Mémoire, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Embassies of the United States, United Kingdom, and France, 18 Sep 1948, 2:1162–65; Telg, Smith to Marshall, 18 Sep 1948, 2:1166–73. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

⁶³ Telg, Bevin to U.K. Embassy, Washington, D.C., 19 Sep 1948, C700/G, FO 371/70515, PRO.

ebullient report on the achievements of the airlift. “Yesterday, our air forces alone brought in 5500 tons,” he exulted. “This proves we can last indefinitely in Berlin and in fact can probably . . . do as much by air as we ever did by rail and highway.” Bolstered by such claims, and with Clay at his side, Marshall preached determination. The airlift, he said, had “broken” the blockade and would “take care of the needs of the western sectors of Berlin as long as we wish.” The Soviets were everywhere in retreat, he declared. West Germany was now on its feet, and recovery had progressed to the point “that we can really say that we are on the road to victory.”⁶⁴

When asked for a detailed estimate of the airlift’s potential, the military governor buttressed the secretary’s assertions. Extrapolating from an extraordinary performance on 18 September, when the Allies made a special push to mark U.S. Air Force Day, Clay argued that the Western powers could fly more than 800 planes into Berlin on days of fair weather. With sufficient C-54s, he proceeded, they could transport 8,000 tons on good days, and even allowing for 30 percent nonflying weather, they could still average well above the 4,500-ton minimum requirement, thus permitting additional deliveries of coal for home heating and supplies for Berlin’s economy.⁶⁵

The purpose of Marshall’s optimism was to dissuade his counterparts from equivocation. Even if he could not fully allay their skepticism over the airlift, he realized his main goal, for the agreed reply to the Soviet aide-mémoire, delivered to the Soviet embassies on 22 September, posed an ultimatum disguised as a question: would the Soviet government, in order to create the conditions for further discussions, lift the blockade, and if so, when? Thus, instead of making a counterproposal, the Western powers had returned to their position of 6 July, refusing to talk unless the Soviets restored the transport routes beforehand. As Clay had put it several days before, the battle for Berlin was now “a struggle of nerves until someone folds.”⁶⁶

Although Clay had convinced Marshall that victory could be won on Western terms, doubts festered. Speaking at a gathering of British officials on 23 September, Bevin termed the airlift a “palliative and not a final solution.” This fact would have to be faced, he said, even as the allies did their utmost to build up the operation. General Robertson agreed. Secretary Marshall’s estimate was inconsistent with his own information, he asserted. While “a supply operation of this sort is the sort of thing at which the Americans are very good,” the airlift could “provide no permanent answer to the blockade” and “must fail in the end.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Teleconf, TT-1271, 19 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:867; Min, Mtg of the Sec of State with the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom and France, 21 Sep 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1178.

⁶⁵ Telg, Clay to Bradley, 23 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:878.

⁶⁶ Teleconf, TT-1271, 19 Sep 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:875.

⁶⁷ Min, Mtg in His Majesty’s Embassy, Paris, 23 Sep 1948; Memo, Robertson for Earnest Bevin, 23 Sep 1948. Both in C8025/G, FO 371/70517, PRO.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were also skeptical. In a message to Bradley on 10 September, Clay requested 116 additional C-54s—69 immediately in order to meet minimum subsistence requirements, and another 47 by 1 December in order to provide “some” coal for home heating as well as space for industrial freight. The Air Force soon allotted fifty planes, but in a message to Bradley two weeks later, Clay pressed for the remaining sixty-six. Despite his misgivings over Berlin, Bradley advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 29 September to approve the augmentation. In the same paper, he called for an urgent study of the military implications of continuing the airlift over an extended time.⁶⁸

The resulting paper, approved by the chiefs on 13 October, reiterated the reservations expressed in July. Although the airlift could run indefinitely, the ability of the armed forces to meet their “primary national security responsibilities” would progressively deteriorate. The report stated, “Because approximately 52 percent of our total C-54 cargo type aircraft are required for the augmented Berlin airlift task, thus shortening their useful life, and because these planes will be in great jeopardy in the event of sudden hostilities, there will be a serious reduction in our air capabilities for implementing emergency war plans, including essential support by the Military Air Transport Service of these plans.” Although the Soviets had not interfered with the airlift to date, the report continued, they could “drastically reduce” airlift operations through a number of direct or passive measures. “Application of these measures might be successful in causing failure of the supply by air to Berlin without overt war provocation. On the other hand, incidents created by these measures might, from the U.S. viewpoint, be acts of war.” Operating as it did “across the Soviet Zone of occupation,” the airlift invited “Soviet-inspired incidents for which diplomatic retreat would be most difficult for either side.”⁶⁹

A “full recognition of the facts,” the chiefs continued, revealed “that the Berlin airlift cannot be a permanent solution of the problem . . . and that such action can in turn easily bring forth the necessity of a decision by the United States” as to whether Berlin was a case for war. As in July, they wanted a prompt answer. If the answer was positive, they recommended immediate, “full-out preparations” for war. If not, they urged the immediate preparation of plans “leading to our withdrawal.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Telgs, Clay to Bradley, 10 Sep 1948, 2:853; and 23 Sep 1948, 2:878–79. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*. Memo, General Omar N. Bradley for the JCS, 29 Sep 1948, sub: Military Implications Involved in Continuing Operation of the Berlin Airlift (JCS 1907/9), P&O 381 TS (6 Oct 1948), RG 319, NACP; Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, pp. 150–51.

⁶⁹ Rpt, Joint Strategic Survey Committee, 13 Oct 1948, sub: Military Implications Involved in Continuing Operation of the Berlin Airlift, RG 319, NACP

⁷⁰ Rpt, Joint Strategic Plans Committee, JCS, 6 Oct 1948, sub: Military Implications Involved in Continuing Operation of Berlin Airlift, Encl to Memo, JCS for James V. Forrestal, 13 Oct 1948, sub: Decision on JCS 1907/9, P&O 381 TS (6 Oct 1948), RG 319, NACP.

As noted in the Joint Chiefs of Staff official history, the memorandum produced a reaction, “but not of the type anticipated.” In a meeting of the National Security Council on 14 October, Under Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett said that the chiefs had contracted “a case of the jitters.” Their recommendations, he asserted, served no purpose beyond to justify increased appropriations. Secretary Royall accused them of trying to “pass the buck” and took offense at the underlying tone of the paper. In the face of these rebuffs, the chiefs agreed to withdraw the memorandum and to submit a new one consistent with the administration’s policy. The National Security Council then approved the reinforcement. Clay would get his additional sixty-six planes, supplies of aviation gasoline would be built up, and steps would be taken to ensure adequate personnel and financial support for the operation.⁷¹

Because the talks with the Soviets had already stalled, the National Security Council’s refusal to grapple with the key issues of the memorandum left policymakers with no clearly defined options should the airlift fail. Its omissions were willful, and they characterized the American attitude in Berlin as well as Washington. When Bevin, speaking with British officials on 23 September, pointed to the need for a planning staff to prepare for all eventualities, General Robertson said it was difficult to discuss such matters because the Americans refused to contemplate the possibility of withdrawal. Roberts joined Robertson’s lament by adding, “General Bedell Smith had been shocked at the absence of planning by the Americans in Berlin.”⁷²

Clay Gains the Upper Hand

Smith, in fact, had emerged as the most vehement dissident on Berlin. At the same time as Bradley initiated the Joint Chiefs’ ill-fated critique of the airlift, the ambassador was in Washington for consultations. In a meeting with the State Department’s policy planning staff on 28 September, Smith laid out an expansive argument for withdrawal. Whereas the military leaders emphasized the gap between commitments and resources, Smith tore into the strategic justifications for the Berlin commitment and sought to demonstrate how the Allies’ presence there contradicted their interest in a stable peace.

Smith started by expressing regret that the United States was in Berlin at all. “[W]e should never have let ourselves get into an exposed salient like Berlin under such conditions,” the ambassador asserted. Not only was Berlin an “enclave that could be chopped off with ease,” its political importance was intrinsically nil. “Berlin,” he said, “has become the important symbol it now is largely because we ourselves have made it so.” He then expounded his strategic rationale. The Soviets, he stated, were weak and wished to avoid war. “I feel

⁷¹ Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, pp. 154, 155; Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, pp. 298–99.

⁷² Min, Mtg at His Majesty’s Embassy, Paris, 23 Sep 1948.

so confident that they would not now undertake a deliberate military attack on, say, one of our concentrations of aircraft at Wiesbaden, that I would not hesitate to go there and sit on the field myself." Berlin, however, was a place of "confused relationships," and the corridors into the city had "potentialities for incidents that could readily lead to war." In order to minimize the danger of armed hostilities, Smith argued, the Allies should withdraw from their "exposed salient" and draw a "clear-cut zonal line severing us from them." Because the Soviets could not cross that line "without the onus of direct aggression, there would be relatively less likelihood of war." Otherwise put, it was not the Soviets who threatened war but the *situation* itself. The point was, then, to reorder that situation in the interest of strategic stability.⁷³

Although Smith admitted that leaving Berlin would "throw a pall over Western European hopes for security," that did not justify remaining. It would suit the Soviets, he asserted, to have the United States stay on indefinitely, while the airlift diverted resources from military preparations and the European Recovery Program. Smith hoped that the United Nations would provide the means "for us to get out of Berlin." The United States should encourage any such action by the world organization. United Nations sovereignty over Berlin would be "very desirable" if it helped remove American forces from the city. Although individuals exposed to retribution should be evacuated, the United States owed no obligations to the overall population. "Our present hysterical outburst of humanitarian feelings," the ambassador declaimed, "keep reminding me that just 3 1/2 years ago I would have been considered a hero if I had succeeded in exterminating those same Germans with bombs."⁷⁴

Smith ended his disquisition with an assessment of East-West strength. Like Clay, he was unalarmed over Soviet power. "[T]ime," he said, "is on our side." Western Europe was recovering much faster than the Soviet Union. Soviet industrial potential was developing slowly, and its military potential was also lagging. Although the Soviets had the "necessary scientific data" for the atomic bomb, they lacked "the high degree of technological precision for mass production." Over the longer run, the economic and military gap would further widen in favor of the West.⁷⁵

Smith's words represented the essence of a military interpretation of the U.S. situation in Berlin. From the time of the Moscow foreign ministers' conference in early 1947, when he had opposed Clay's efforts to unify the zones, Smith had embraced a "two worlds" solution to the problems of Germany and Europe. The United States would build up Western Europe while accepting—for the lack of tangible interests elsewhere on the continent—Soviet domination of the East. Having made that choice, he believed, the United States could not reasonably expect to occupy an outpost within the Eastern camp. Nor was

⁷³ Min, 286th Policy Planning Staff Mtg, Dept of State, 28 Sep 1948, in *FRUS*, 2:1194–97.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

a footing in Berlin of any real advantage to the West. As long as the Soviets remained inside their sphere—and they had neither the intention nor capacity for aggression—Western Europe’s progress was secure. To best assure recovery, the Allies needed not a salient in hostile territory but a stable status quo. Their enclaves in Berlin undermined stability, and it would be better to dispose of them, in order to focus on making Western Europe prosperous and strong.⁷⁶

When the United Nations convened in Paris, most officials in Washington and Berlin had different hopes for the meeting than Smith. Whereas the ambassador to Moscow saw a chance to contrive an Allied exit from Berlin, his adversaries sought to use the forum to condemn the Soviets and thereby gain moral backing for possible future measures, including force, to break the blockade. They did not regard the United Nations as offering any path toward settlement, and in no event did they wish to become mired in additional discussions on the basis of the Moscow directive.⁷⁷

Discussion in the United Nations began well for the Allies. In order to avoid trouble from the Asian, Latin American, and Scandinavian states in the General Assembly, the Americans decided to refer the conflict to the eleven-member Security Council, where the only Soviet ally was the Ukraine. Under the leadership of Council President Juan A. Bragmulia of Argentina, the “neutral” members of the council—Argentina, Belgium, Canada, China, Colombia, and Syria—canvassed the powers to find a workable formula for settlement. The result was a so-called neutral powers resolution presented to the Security Council on 22 October. It called on the powers to prevent any incident that might aggravate the conflict, to terminate immediately all restrictions on traffic to Berlin and between the zones, and to resume talks between the military governors to establish the Eastern mark as Berlin’s sole currency, according to the 30 August directive. Within ten days of the fulfillment of these measures, the Council of Foreign Ministers would reopen negotiations on all issues relating to Germany as a whole.⁷⁸

The resolution was not fully to the Americans’ liking. They had initially hoped to gain international condemnation of the Soviet Union and wanted

⁷⁶ Apart from the Eastern Zone of Germany, Czechoslovakia was the only advanced area in the Soviet orbit. Smith’s British colleague, Frank Roberts, expressed identical views. See Ltr, Frank Roberts to Sir William Strang, 14 Sep 1948, in Hamilton et al., eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy Overseas*, no. 110.

⁷⁷ In a discussion with the French ambassador to the United States, Henri Bonnet, Department of State Counselor Charles E. Bohlen cited the winning of United States and world public opinion as the “essential” reason for going to the United Nations. Memo, Charles E. Bohlen, “Memorandum of Conversation by Charles E. Bohlen, Department of State Counselor,” 21 Aug 1948, sub: Conversation, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1058.

⁷⁸ Phillip C. Jessup, “The Berlin Blockade and the Use of the United Nations,” *Foreign Affairs* (September 1971): 170; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 461–62; Draft Resolution Urging Implementation of the Four-Power Directive on Berlin and a Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on Germany, submitted to the U.S. Security Council, 22 Oct 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 191–92.

no further mention of the directive. Nonetheless, it called for the lifting of the blockade *prior* to further talks and thus jibed with the Allies' refusal to negotiate under duress. "The betting" as Bohlen put it, "was 8 to 1 against Soviet acceptance." True to expectations, the Soviets vetoed the measure on 25 October. The United States had won a significant moral victory and could score propaganda points over the Soviets' resort to the veto.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, Clay pushed ahead. On 11 September, in a message to Draper, he had outlined three courses of action should the Allied powers break off the Moscow discussions: establish the D-mark as the sole legal tender in West Berlin; set up a separate banking system in the Western sectors but continue to use two currencies; and introduce a special West Berlin mark, decoupled from the Western Zone currency. Western sector politicians, he said, desired a "clean separation" and would therefore oppose any but the first solution. On 28 September, Clay ceased all talk of options and came out flatly for the Western mark. He requested authority to prepare to install the D-mark as West Berlin's sole currency at an "early date." Draper approved the request two days later, contingent on agreement with the British and French.⁸⁰

From that moment, Clay lost all tolerance for continued delay. In his eyes, any renewed discussions of currency would stall the consolidation of West Berlin. From the beginning of October, he fired off repeated cables warning of imminent collapse if the D-mark was postponed. "Every day's delay," he asserted on 17 October, "is causing economic, political, and financial losses in Berlin." The situation was becoming serious; the changeover should be "undertaken without delay." Ambassador Murphy echoed Clay's alarm; Draper pushed for action; and the State Department's Office of European Affairs joined the chorus, soon accompanied by Marshall's deputy, Lovett.⁸¹

Marshall refused to be stampeded. One day after the vote in the Security Council, the U.S. representative to the council, Phillip C. Jessup, visited UN Secretary General Trygve Lie. Lie suggested a way out of the impasse. Working quietly with Soviet and American experts, the secretary general's office might formulate an independent proposal for the use of the Soviet Zone currency in Berlin. Once agreed upon, the proposal would take effect simultaneously with the lifting of the blockade. Under such a procedure, the Americans could persist in their refusal to negotiate with the Soviets under duress, while the Soviets

⁷⁹ Quote from Jessup, "The Berlin Blockade and the Use of the United Nations," p. 170.

⁸⁰ Telg, Clay to Draper, 11 Sep 1948, CC5915, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 38-39, LAB; Telgs, Clay to Draper, 28 Sep 1948, 2:881; Draper to Clay, 1 Oct 1948, 2:882. Both in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

⁸¹ Telgs, Clay to Draper, 17 Oct 1948, CC-6354, Rep 37, Acc 2919, 43-45, LAB; and 7 Oct 1948, CC-6226, Rep 37, Acc 2919, 43-45, LAB; Ltr, William H. Draper to Robert Lovett, Undersecretary of State, 19 Oct 1948; MFR, 30 Oct 1948, sub: Conversation between Mr. Hickerson, Mr. Beam and Colonel Lincoln. Both in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 41-42, LAB. Telg, Robert Lovett to Charles E. Bohlen and Phillip C. Jessup, 28 Oct 1948, Rep 37, Acc 2919, 43-45, LAB; Ltr, Robert Murphy to Charles E. Saltzman and Jacob D. Beam, 5 Nov 1948, file Acc 2919, 35/23, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK.

would face no requirement to lift the blockade before reaching an agreement on currency. Jessup presented his own ideas in a memorandum to Marshall. He recommended against introducing the D-mark as sole legal tender in West Berlin “until all other measures had been tried.” Such a step, he asserted, “would be interpreted . . . as deliberate aggravation of the situation.” Instead, he proposed to use intermediaries to devise a solution. A group of neutral experts, appointed through either the secretary general or the Security Council, would draw up technical plans for submission to the council or to the powers. Marshall approved Jessup’s recommendations.⁸²

By agreeing to postpone the currency changeover, Marshall had shifted direction since his meeting with Bevin and Schuman on 20 September. Then, with Clay at his side, the secretary had exuded such confidence over the airlift that compromise appeared unnecessary. Yet Marshall, never a true believer on Berlin, was open to persuasion, and Jessup had made the last argument. Moreover, Ambassador Smith, the secretary’s longtime friend, had seen him in Paris before proceeding to Washington. Although no record exists of what Smith told Marshall privately in the French capital, the ambassador’s emphatic disquisition to the policy planning staff leaves little for imagination; and on 22 October, Smith termed the idea of using neutral intermediaries as “by far the best line of action.”⁸³

Lie, whose staff had already carried out technical studies of the currency question, yielded leadership over the effort to Bragmulia and the six neutral members. Bragmulia directed five questions to each of the powers, addressing the roles of the financial commission as well as control over Berlin’s trade with the Western Zones of Germany. The Allies responded on 23 November, repeating the positions they had taken during the military governors’ talks while avoiding any mention of the directive. The Soviets, who answered the next day, again defined the commission’s financial role to the specific “arrangements” spelled out in the directive but conceded its authority over trade. The responses in hand, Bragmulia invited the governments of Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, and Syria, to join Argentina in naming a technical committee of seven members—one expert from each of the neutral states and one representing the secretary general.

⁸² Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), pp. 203–04; Jessup’s views given in Telg, Marshall to Lovett, 27 Oct 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1236. James Forrestal had first broached the idea of a “neutral commission” (i.e., Dutch, Swede, Norwegian, and Swiss) in a phone call to Marshall on 19 September, just before the secretary’s departure for Paris. In mid-October, the Department of State considered the appointment of neutral experts from central banks. James V. Forrestal Diary Entry, 19 Sep 1948, in Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, p. 491; Telg, Lovett to Bohlen, 22 Oct 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1231–33; Jessup, “The Berlin Blockade and the Use of the United Nations,” p. 171.

⁸³ Words from Telg, Smith to Lovett, 22 Oct 1948, in Editor’s Note, *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1233.

The four powers flew in their own financial experts to work with the commission, which started its consultations in early December.⁸⁴

The Mixed Currency System and Holes in the Blockade

Despite his cries of urgency, General Clay's efforts to push through a rapid conversion to the D-mark were bogging down. Already, during preparatory talks in October, he had encountered problems with the French, who felt the mixed currency system was working relatively well and wished to give the Soviets no further grounds to claim that the Allies had abrogated Berlin's quadripartite status. The United Nations talks had subsequently whetted Bevin's appetite for compromise. The Soviets were making moves toward settlement, Bevin believed, and he was anxious to support the UN effort. Worst of all, from Clay's standpoint, was Jessup's recommendation, embraced by Marshall, to delay the conversion until they had exhausted all diplomatic approaches.⁸⁵

Aided by Murphy, Clay fought to reverse the secretary's decision. The military governor's strongest argument was the prowess of the airlift. His words to Marshall in mid-September, when he convinced the secretary that the airlift had "broken" the blockade, were Clay's constant refrain. When Jessup visited Berlin in early November, Clay said the transports were arriving like "pearls on a string." The airlift was successful; Berlin could be supplied, however harsh the winter. Although the military experts—men like Bradley and his colleagues on the Joint Chiefs of Staff—rebuffed such optimism, it infected civilian decision makers and strengthened their resistance to compromise. Belief in the airlift made Lovett one of Clay's most powerful allies. Both men were now committed to exploiting the conflict in Berlin toward the goal of greater cooperation in the West. In addition to performing logistical wonders, noted Marshall's deputy, the airlift was "welding the Western Germans into a unity that we had been unable to get otherwise." Accordingly, given the Allied ability to supply Berlin by air, American policymakers perceived no reason to delay the D-mark in pursuit of some feeble compromise.⁸⁶

Clay's second argument for immediate conversion was his concern over West Berlin's imminent economic collapse. Clay had initially given 1 November as the last date to avoid disaster in West Berlin. When the deadline passed without catastrophe, he contrived new ones. Yet, even as he changed his

⁸⁴ Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, pp. 213–16; Telg, John Foster Dulles, Acting Head of U.S. Delegation, to Marshall, 23 Nov 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1257–60. For text of Soviet answers, see Telg, Dulles to Marshall, 24 Nov 1948, Rep 37, Acc 2919, 43–45, LAB. See also Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 461–64.

⁸⁵ Mins, Mtg in Lord Henderson's Ofc, 6 Nov 1948, sub: Currency in the Western Sectors of Berlin, C9123; Mtg, Sir William Strang's Ofc, 11 Nov 1948, sub: Berlin Currency, C9296/3/. Both in FO 371/70522, PRO. Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, pp. 193–225, 233–44; Stivers, "The Incomplete Blockade," pp. 601–02.

⁸⁶ Jessup cited Clay's assessment in a conversation with Lie on 2 November. Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, p. 210; Min, Thirtieth Mtg of the NSC, 16 Dec 1948, DDRS, (88)762, on-line repository.

dates, Clay's main storyline remained unaltered: West Berlin's economy was plummeting, and only the D-mark would save it. In his eyes, the Allies were losing ground daily, price chaos was endangering production, and business ethics and tax compliance were below the prereform level.⁸⁷

Reality, however, bore scant resemblance to Clay's assertions. The airlift was not supplying all the needs of West Berlin, and the Western sector economy was nowhere near the brink of ruin. A masterful tactician, the military governor was adjusting the facts to fit his policies. His effusive praise of the airlift into Berlin failed to tell the complete story. After initial daily deliveries to the German economy of 310 tons in June and 2,453 tons in July, the airlift brought in 3,332 tons a day in August, 4,134 tons in September, and 4,072 tons in October. Shipments then fell with the onset of autumn fog, declining to 3,109 tons in November and 3,833 tons in December. Although the post-July averages mark a vast improvement over the early numbers, they must be gauged against the minimum goal, set by airlift planners, of 4,500 tons a day. That target represented what General Robertson termed a "low standard"—just enough food and coal to sustain bare rations and to generate a sparse amount of electricity—that made him "extremely doubtful whether we could hold the city . . . for a protracted period." It comprised no materials for home heating and only trifling supplies of "economic goods" needed to sustain employment and industrial output. Yet even the estimated minimum of food and coal was not reaching Berlin.⁸⁸

Despite the shortcomings, Berlin was faring reasonably well. The increased food rations enacted during the last meeting of the quadripartite Kommandatura remained in effect, and—notwithstanding the monotony of condensed foods—the population was eating more than before. More spectacularly, the economy was holding up beyond all hopes. Whereas American economists had expected production to collapse and unemployment to soar toward 50 percent, through the end of December West Berlin's industrial enterprises were producing nearly 70 percent of their preblockade output and unemployment remained in bounds at 10.6 percent of the workforce. It seemed difficult to explain these facts—particularly the city's economic performance—by an airlift that was failing to meet designated requirements.⁸⁹

The explanation lies in the nature of the Soviets' "blockade." Contrary to popular misconception, their closing of Western land routes to Berlin entailed no attempt to isolate the Western sectors from either East Berlin or the surrounding countryside. As a result, approximately one-fifth of all goods entering West

⁸⁷ For example, see Telgs, Clay to Dept of the Army, 6 Nov 1948, in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2:918–19; Clay to Royall, 5 Jan 1949, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 48–49, LAB.

⁸⁸ Telg, Robertson to Foreign Ofc, 10 Aug 1948, C6531, FO 371/70506, PRO. For monthly delivery figures, see table in Stivers, "The Incomplete Blockade," p. 594. Shown in metric tons, the numbers have been adjusted above to English tons.

⁸⁹ Stivers, "The Incomplete Blockade," p. 591.

Berlin during the blockade originated in the Soviet area of occupation. Although much came through the black market, legal trade also flourished. West Berliners foraged the countryside, where they bartered or used the coveted Western mark to obtain supplies. From mid-November 1948, they could purchase goods—no questions asked—in so-called Free Shops in East Berlin. They could purchase home heating coal from street dumps in West Berlin, at the *Osthafen* (East Berlin's inland port), or at official distribution centers in Potsdam. In mid-July, the Soviets made an offer to West Berliners to draw rations in the Eastern sector. Over time, roughly 5 percent of Western sector residents—mainly those living in districts bordering East Berlin—registered for rationed goods in the Eastern sector, where they obtained not only food but heating coal. These other sources provided enough food, fuel, and other goods to offset the shortage in the airlift's estimated daily targets.

Western sector businesses improvised a thriving trade with the East. Many companies produced directly for individual concerns in the Soviet Zone as well as for the East German economics administration, the *Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission* (German Economics Commission), receiving both money and raw materials, including coal, bottled gas, gasoline, diesel oil, and high-value specialty inputs. Firms in the vicinity of the Eastern-controlled S-Bahn railway received electricity tapped from the system's electrical wires. A one-time survey conducted during October by a West Berlin business association revealed that 41 percent of Western sector producer goods came from the Soviet area, which also accounted for 23 percent of sales. A real symbiosis grew around this East-West exchange. In addition to securing raw materials, Western sector companies earned money to remain solvent, while in the East, the trade blunted the impact of the Allied counterblockade.⁹⁰

Portrayed by Clay as the agency of impending collapse, in fact the parallel currency arrangement underpinned the Western sector economy. Because persons and businesses could pay rents, taxes, utilities, rationed goods, and wages in Eastern currency, the system subsidized workers and industrial enterprises at the expense of those—such as landlords, the city government, food processors—who were obligated to accept Eastern marks. By manipulating currencies, employers could compensate for low productivity. Well-situated companies that realized full or partial D-mark earnings could pay workers' salaries in Eastern marks purchased at exchange rates of three to five Eastern marks to one D-mark. Eastern mark income also benefited less fortunate firms as long as they could use the Soviet Zone currency to meet expenses in West Berlin. This enabled them to undertake work for Soviet area customers. Many small workshops realized between 50 and 100 percent of their turnover through such means. Had they operated on an exclusive D-mark basis, they would have shut down.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 570, 584–90.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 587.

These facts were well known. American economic experts in Berlin—employed by both the military government and the State Department—reported them in numerous analyses. German businessmen, bankers, and economists advised against abolishing the dual currency regime. In remarks to a military government intelligence officer in November, private and central banking representatives warned that “the introduction of the Western mark as the sole medium of payment in the Western sectors of Berlin would be a very costly operation and of primary benefit only to the party sponsoring it.” Speaking for the Christian Democratic group in the City Assembly on 4 November, Berlin party chairman Walter Schreiber pleaded the case for parallel currencies. While an improvisation, and certainly no option for the long run, the system was propping up production and employment under emergency conditions, and that fact was common knowledge.⁹²

The Final Separation

Throughout the autumn, while the Americans debated their objectives in Paris, Berlin’s leaders were fighting the decisive battle over the administrative unity of the city. At stake was Berlin’s fate once the crisis ended. Would the sectors reunite under a single administration, or would Berlin’s division become permanent?

After the City Assembly withdrew to West Berlin in September, the Magistrat remained in the Stadthaus, where it continued to conduct business. Its seventeen members, who had cooperated reasonably well throughout the previous years, retained a spirit of collegiality. Two of the three Socialist Unity counselors, Heinrich Acker and Erich Lübbe, were former Social Democrats, and the third, Schmidt, was an undogmatic Communist. Relations with the Soviets oscillated between confusion and hostility. On the one hand, the Soviets vehemently denounced the non-Communist counselors for transgressions ranging from “war-mongering” to “indolence.” On the other, they still treated the Magistrat as the legitimate executive of Berlin, addressing orders and other formal correspondence to Friedensburg as acting mayor. Although the counselors lived in the shadow of Stalinist repression, they enjoyed a certain immunity stemming from rank and prominence—Reuter attended meetings through October—and the great majority resolved to stay unless physically expelled.⁹³

⁹² Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 132, 20 Nov 1948, Fin. 3, file 3/430-1/11, OMGUS, BAK; Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, pp. 229–30.

⁹³ See for example, Orlov, Currency Crisis; Karl Maron, “Der Bankrott des Magistrats vollendet” (The bankruptcy of the Magistrat completed), *Tägliche Rundschau*, 4 Jul 1948; B. D., “Unnötige Notlage Berlins” (Unnecessary Distress of Berlin), *Tägliche Rundschau*, 18 Jul 1948. See also Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift*, pp. 279–81. See for example, a letter from the Chief of Civil Administration of the Soviet Military Government of Berlin, addressed to Friedensburg as “Acting Governing Mayor of Berlin” on 24 November, only six days before the formation of an Eastern sector Magistrat, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1677–78.

Friedensburg led that determined majority. As long as the Magistrat refused to move, he declared, "There was neither East nor West, but only Greater Berlin." A departure from the Stadthaus would seal the city's division and betray the people of the Soviet Sector. Numerous persons had lost their livelihoods, property, and personal freedom to political reprisals, and the Magistrat had a duty to support them. Finally, asked Friedensburg, what would become of Berlin after the blockade? The transfer of the administration to West Berlin would impose finality when the aim should be to keep the future open.⁹⁴

Reuter differed. On 20 September, he asked his party board to recognize that "the illusions of a united Berlin are coming to an end." It was impossible to make objective decisions under pressure and unreasonable to ask the counselors to subject themselves to danger. The only course, he insisted, was to transfer the administration to West Berlin. The action should proceed by plan and at the initiative of the Western parties, not forced on them by the adversary.⁹⁵

The Magistrat's members, however, refused to leave their posts. Remarkably, all of the Social Democrats save Reuter and Klingelhöfer backed Friedensburg. The chief of personnel and administration, Otto Theuner, was especially outspoken. Speaking with a British informant, he declared that he preferred Friedensburg to Reuter because the former was trying to keep Berlin united. Reuter, asserted Theuner, was "so fixed in his ideas that one can no longer reason with him," and Suhr was "almost as bad." Theuner then underscored a personal dilemma. He lived in the Eastern sector. Therefore, if the split in Berlin's administration became absolute, he would have to abandon his house and business and move. Many thousands shared his dilemma and stood to suffer from being left in the wrong part of Berlin. It is scarcely surprising that those pushing for a split already resided in West Berlin.⁹⁶

Stymied by their colleagues, Reuter and Klingelhöfer decided to cut the knot themselves. In October they ceased attending interdepartmental meetings in the Stadthaus. Then, during the night of 14–15 November, they suddenly cleared their offices of files and equipment and established their departments in West Berlin. A betrayal of collegiality, the action worsened conditions for the remaining counselors, who now had to reckon on intensified police surveillance.⁹⁷

Howley and Murphy both made clear their view that a division was both inevitable and advantageous. Still seeking a middle ground, the British worried that the Americans were backing anything the Germans "may care to put up" without regard for either the Paris mediation efforts or Berlin's future as a united city. Also hoping to preserve Berlin's unity, the French advised postponement of the upcoming mayoral election in order to buy time for agreement. Yet, as

⁹⁴ Friedensburg, *It was about German Unity*, p. 274; and pp. 272–77.

⁹⁵ Brandt and Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter*, p. 456; Friedensburg, *It was about German Unity*, p. 276.

⁹⁶ Memo, Lt Col H. P. Whiteford for Ofc of Deputy Director, Mil Government, 22 Nov 1948, sub: Statement of Theuner, 88273, FO 1012/286, PRO.

⁹⁷ Friedensburg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 279–80, 297–98.

long as the United States supported Reuter and his activists, the two Allies had no power to block them.⁹⁸

The mayoral election threw the onus of decision on the Soviets. The Western powers had approved the City Assembly's election ordinance immediately upon receiving it. Kotikov waited until 20 October to reply. He conditioned his approval on a host of vague stipulations that the assembly rejected. The elections, therefore, would take place in the Western sectors only, and the Socialist Unity Party would not dare participate. Due to the lateness of Kotikov's response, the deputies postponed the vote to 5 December.⁹⁹

The Soviets now confronted a deadline for dealing with the Magistrat. The existing body was pro-Western, but the new one would likely prove a cockpit of anti-Sovietism. A separate Eastern sector administration appeared inevitable. Nonetheless, the Soviets temporized for another month.

Less than a week before the polling, the Soviets finally acted. On 30 November, delegates from the Socialist Unity Party and allied organizations assembled in the Admiralspalast, site of the party amalgamation in 1946. They voted to depose the pro-Western administration and to install a "provisional democratic Magistrate." Heading it was the former Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert Jr., son of the first president of the Weimar Republic. Aside from Schmidt and the economics counselor Karl Maron, the other members were unknown to the wider public, and Acker and Lübke were notably absent.¹⁰⁰

Allied intelligence analysts felt the Soviets had made a tactical error by failing to wait until after the election. On 28 November, when Suhr voiced fears that voter participation would be too weak to make an effective demonstration, Reuter had reportedly replied, "Don't worry. Ivan will help us out at the last moment as usual." Acting as foretold, "Ivan" proved him right. Over 86 percent of eligible voters went to the polls. The Social Democrats increased their share to 64.5 percent from 51.8 percent in 1946. The Christian Democrats fell to 19.4 percent from 23.5 percent in 1946. The Liberal Democrats, who identified themselves as hardliners, rose to 16.1 percent from 9.7 percent in 1946. While an embittered Jacob Kaiser,

⁹⁸ Memo, H. Hays, Head of Government Structure Br, for Ofc of Deputy Director of Mil Government, 25 Oct 1948, sub: Approval of New Constitution, 445/238/48, FO 1049/1356, PRO. See also Memo, Herbert for Ch, Political Div, Control Council Gp, 7 Oct 1948, sub: Elections in Berlin; Ltr, P. Garran, Ch, Political Div, to Christopher Steel, 4 Oct 1948. Both in 445/206/48, FO 1949/1356, PRO. Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 464–66. Friedensberg and Ganeval were especially close. Friedensberg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 251–52, 255–58, 261–62.

⁹⁹ For summaries, see Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift*, pp. 290–91; Friedensberg, *It was about German Unity*, pp. 291–95. For Kotikov's conditions, see Ltr, Alexander G. Kotikov to Ferdinand Friedensberg, 20 Oct 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1704–05.

¹⁰⁰ "Antrag des Demokratischen Blocks zur Absetzung des Magistrats von Gross-Berlin" (Motion of the Democratic Block for Dismissal of the Magistrat of Greater Berlin), 29 Nov 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1688; "Errichtung eines Illegalen Magistrats im Sowjetischen Sektor" (Establishment of an Illegal Magistrat in the Soviet Sector), 30 Nov 1948, in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945–1951*, 2:1680; Weekly Intel Rpts, OMGUS, ODI, no. 137, 25 Dec 1948, p. Pol. 3, file 3/430-1/12; OMGUS, ODI, no. 138, 1 Jan 1949, p. Pol. 3, file 3/430-1/13. Both in OMGUS, BAK.

the former leader of the Eastern Zone Christian Democrats, attributed his party's losses to its policy of "sticking to [its] posts" in East Berlin as the Social Democrats "pursued at a safe distance a provocatively anti-Russian policy," the intelligence analysts ascribed the result to "the self-defeating tactics of the Communists."¹⁰¹

On 7 December, the City Assembly elected Reuter to the post of mayor. On 18 January, he announced the new Magistrat. Six of the fourteen positions went to the Christian and Liberal Democrats; his arch-foe Friedensburg joined Schröder as a deputy mayor. The generosity, however, was window dressing. Commanding the passion of the masses, the mayor would dominate the city government virtually uncontested. Although still within parameters set by the Western Allies, Reuter would prevail in any conflict with the Christian Democrats or with opponents in his own party.

The Final Throes of Currency Reform

Even as the political process in Berlin was reaching a climax, the debate over currency reform was also nearing conclusion. On 23 November, in a "background" interview with journalist Stephen White, Clay splashed his views on the pages of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Quoted as an "authoritative official of the American Military Government," he declared that the Moscow directive could no longer provide the basis of an agreement on the issue of currency reform in Berlin. The Soviets, he explained, had accelerated the division of the city, and the December elections would produce "two cities of Berlin." No such situation had existed when the Allies issued the directive, and the Western powers had "no hope of reaching a settlement on those previous terms."¹⁰²

The article stirred up a furor in Washington and Paris. The impression it conveyed, wrote Jessup in an angry cable to Marshall, was "either that the United States had repudiated the policy which we have been following . . . or else that there is a wide split between our authorities in Berlin and Washington." It had caused "major embarrassment" in his dealings with the French and British, the ambassador went on, and had increased French suspicions of American policy. In addition, Jessup complained, the financial experts sent from Washington had no technical plan for introducing the Soviet mark. The

¹⁰¹ Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 137, 25 Dec 1948. Quote from Memo, Christopher Steel for P. Garran, 8 Dec 1948, sub: Conversation with Dr. Suhr on Berlin Politics, 445/288/48, FO 1049/1357, PRO; "Ergebnis der Wahlen zur Stadtverordnetenversammlung" (Results of the Elections to the City Assembly), 20 Oct 1946, 1:1139-40; and 5 Dec 1948, 2:1713. Both in Reichardt, ed., *Sources and Documents 1945-1951*. The figures for 1946 refer to results in the Western sectors only. Kaiser's view reported in Memo, Garran for Steel, 13 Dec 1948, XC 187103, FO 371/70528, PRO. For the American analysis, see Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 137, 25 Dec 1948.

¹⁰² Stephen White, "Old Directives No Longer Valid in Berlin Crisis," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 Nov 1948.

“cumulative impression” was “most harmful.” Jessup wanted to know whether the secretary’s guidance still applied.¹⁰³

Marshall’s reply, sent on 25 November, appeared on first glance to affirm existing policy. “While endeavoring to secure the best possible solution,” the secretary declared, the American experts could not “refuse to go along with any alternative . . . which safeguards [the] basic principles of our position.” Nonetheless, Clay’s cries of urgency were having their effect. If Bragmulia’s initiative failed, Marshall continued, the Western powers would have to introduce the D-mark as the sole currency in West Berlin by 20 December “at the latest.”¹⁰⁴

From this moment, the American delegation, Jessup included, scarcely feigned cooperation with the UN. Several days later, in bad health and set to leave office in January, Marshall relinquished the reins of policy to Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett, who backed Clay. With the secretary sidelined, policymakers now determined that *no* solution stemming from the technical committee could protect Allied interests. Even as the neutral commission began work, they stepped up pressure on the British and French to accept an early changeover to the D-mark. The Americans were not disposed to wait. As Jessup and Bohlen noted in a teleconference with Lovett, a decision to postpone the D-mark until the commission finished its report would entail “a dangerously long period of inaction.”¹⁰⁵

The British and French, however, stood their ground. Worried that the Soviets might strangle trade in Berlin, Bevin refused to approve the changeover until the neutrals’ diplomacy had clearly failed. For their part, the French had acquiesced in the initial issuance of Western marks only with extreme reluctance, and their military governor, General Marie-Pierre Koenig, opposed in principle West Berlin’s integration into the West German republic. The British and French financial experts cooperated closely with the commission when it started work in December. The British expert, Charles H. P. Gifford, confounded the Americans with his support for the neutrals. “Gifford,” reported Jessup on 16 December, “appears extremely conciliatory, is constantly discussing detailed proposals both in committee meetings and privately.”¹⁰⁶

On 22 December, the commission submitted its recommendations and asked the powers to comment. The British, French, and Soviets declared themselves ready to negotiate on the basis of these proposals. The Americans refused.

¹⁰³ Telgs, Jessup to Marshall, 24 Nov 1948, 2:1262–63; and see also 2: 1264–65. Both in *FRUS, 1948*.

¹⁰⁴ Telg, Marshall to Jessup and Bohlen, 25 Nov 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1266–68.

¹⁰⁵ Teleconf, Phillip C. Jessup, Charles E. Bohlen, and Robert Lovett, 29 Nov 1948, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 46-47, LAB; and see also Telg, Lovett to Jessup and Jefferson Caffery, U.S. Ambassador, France, 16 Dec 1948, in *FRUS, 1948*, 2:1279–80.

¹⁰⁶ Telg, Jessup to Dept of State and Dept of the Army, 16 Dec 1948, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 46-47, LAB. For Bevin’s position, see Telg, U.S. Embassy, London, to Lovett, 30 Dec 1948, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 48-50, LAB; Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, pp. 211–25, 233–44.

The “whole experience,” declared Lovett in a 29 December cable to London, had “created grave doubts” as to whether any scheme would work. Instead of discussing the neutrals’ submission, the American technical experts formulated a counterproposal they designed to be refused; the Soviets would have no say in the financial affairs of the Western sectors. A Western sector central bank, the *Stadtkontor*, would control the volume of currency and credit in West Berlin and might, indeed, pursue a monetary policy completely separate from that of the Eastern Zone’s Bank of Emission. Implicitly, the Americans called on the neutral experts to scrap their own recommendations in favor of the U.S. plan. When, on 20 January 1949, the Soviets predictably rejected the ploy, the neutrals’ initiative came to an end. It remained only for them to file a final report declaring failure.¹⁰⁷

Even at this late date, Bevin delayed. He wanted to give the neutrals time to complete their report—they submitted it on 11 February—before taking the final step. Reuter traveled to London early in the month, and after two days of talks with British officials, politicians, and trade unionists, met privately with Bevin on 9 February. There, the foreign secretary assured Reuter that the D-mark conversion was imminent, and authorization went out to Robertson the same day.¹⁰⁸

The French, however, continued to withhold approval for another three weeks over their insistence that the Western sector central bank operate independently of the West German bank of issue. Even after the Allies reached agreement, Clay and Koenig continued to squabble over dates. All the time, American officials continued to cry alarm about West Berlin’s economic deterioration and impending collapse. When the conversion was finalized on 20 March, it came four and one-half months after Clay’s original target date of 1 November and five months after he started calling the measure urgent.¹⁰⁹

For Reuter, the change marked the consummation of his struggle to bind both the Allies and the West Germans to Berlin. The D-mark signified the “conclusive recognition” that Berlin belonged to the West. “Now they cannot leave us behind,” he exulted over the radio. “The sheer fact of the introduction of the Westmark [Western mark] is worth more than a hundred declarations ‘We remain here!’ It is a fact—the Berliner wants facts, and with that he is completely right.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Telg, Lovett to U.S. Embassy, London, 29 Dec 1948, copy in Rep 37, Acc 2919, 48-50, LAB; Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, pp. 213–23; Rpt, United Nations Technical Committee, Berlin Currency and Trade, 11 Feb 1949, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 199–203. For provisions of the United States counterproposal, see Telg, Draper to Clay, 4 Jan 1949, in *FRUS, 1949*, 10 vols., Germany and Austria Council of Foreign Ministers (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), 3:647–48.

¹⁰⁸ Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, pp. 244–45; Brandt and Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter*, pp. 495–97.

¹⁰⁹ Stivers, “The Incomplete Blockade,” p. 602; Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, pp. 246–49.

¹¹⁰ Wolff, *Die Währungsreform in Berlin*, p. 281. Quote from Brandt and Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter*, p. 501.

The economic consequences of the move were devastating. As soon as Western sector companies could no longer meet costs in Eastern marks, the discrepancy in currency values created impenetrable trade barriers. Suddenly, West Berlin's products were over three times more expensive to purchasers in the East. Trade declined by 35 percent in April alone and continued to regress. By December 1949, it was running at 38 percent below the level of March. The entire economy experienced violent contraction. Unemployment, which held at 13.5 percent in March, steadily ballooned, reaching nearly 25 percent by the end of the year. The economic collapse, so greatly feared by Allied analysts in the summer of 1948, had finally occurred—triggered by the Western mark. Ironically, with their stalling on the currency conversion, British and French officials had delayed it to a point where its repercussions had no effect on the outcome of the crisis, which Stalin had already decided to end.¹¹¹

The Soviet Retreat

The Soviets had blundered into the blockade. At the very time they were struggling to play the “national” card against Allied plans to divide Germany, they had launched an action that made them a most implausible “friend” to the German people. As State Department policy planners noted, the Soviet coercive measures against Berlin strengthened the Western position in Germany as a whole. American intelligence analysts reported widespread demoralization and membership loss among Communists in all parts of the country. Had a prospect ever existed for linking Soviet aims with Germany's national longings, it was dashed by the blockade. Instead of impeding Allied plans, the blockade accelerated the establishment of a West German government. After convening in Bonn on 1 September, the parliamentary council made rapid progress toward drafting a West German “Basic Law.” Germany had become “one of the most anti-Communist countries in the world,” asserted General Clay in remarks before the National Security Council in October. During the Bonn deliberations, the sole pockets of “national resistance” were the Communist Party and the Christian Social Union of Bavaria. That situation, Clay pointed out, “had arisen not only from our actions but also from the Soviet mistakes.”¹¹²

The Soviets played as villains in a historical melodrama. The image of beleaguered Berliners, saved from hunger and tyranny only by the Allied planes, impressed itself on public consciousness throughout the world. Soviet offers of food and coal, although trumpeted in the Eastern Zone press, were little known outside Berlin. Nor was the extent and significance of East-West trade in the city. The distinction between restrictions on West Berlin's land communications with Western Germany and its complete isolation from the surrounding countryside was drowned in the clamor of propagandist. Even though West Berliners never

¹¹¹ Stivers, “The Incomplete Blockade,” pp. 590–92.

¹¹² Quote from Stivers, “The Incomplete Blockade,” p. 597.



Soviet military government officers in the U.S. district of Kreuzberg, 1945

really faced starvation, international media, encouraged by Reuter, Clay, and others, told a different story.

The economic contradictions of the blockade were as glaring as the political. The Eastern Zone economy suffered grievously from the counterblockade—imposed on 24 June—against Western Zone shipments to the East. Germany’s prewar economy featured the concentration of light, finished-goods industries in the Eastern part of Germany and a corresponding concentration of raw materials and heavy industry in the West. Eastern Zone economic planners sought to rebuild these ties. Their first economic plan, drafted just as the blockade began, presupposed “the largest possible expansion of interzonal and foreign trade, in order to import raw materials and export finished products.” Throughout the blockade, these officials openly lamented the tearing apart of the complementary zonal economies and called “urgently” for finding “means and ways to . . . bring [internal] trade to a level that meets the requirements of the entire German economy.” For reconstruction to proceed, the crisis had to be resolved.¹¹³

¹¹³ “Wirtschaftsplan 1948 und der Zweijahresplan 1949/1950” (Economic Plan for 1948 and the Two-Year Plan for 1949–1950), *Die Wirtschaft, Sonderheft 3* (July 1948): 1–2, 15–16. *Die Wirtschaft* was the official organ of the Eastern Zone proto-government, the German Economics Commission.

Finally, the blockade was hastening the formation of an American-led military bloc in Europe. On 17 March 1948, representatives of Belgium, Britain, France, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Brussels pledging them to establish collective defense arrangements and to strengthen economic and cultural ties. On 11 June, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution bearing the name of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. It recommended associating the United States with regional and collective arrangements “based on continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid.” On 6 July—the second week of the blockade—preliminary discussions toward establishing a North Atlantic Treaty began in Washington between the United States, Canada, and the five Brussels signatories. Drafting talks began in December, and on 15 March 1949, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, and Portugal received invitations to adhere to the pact. At that point, with the treaty set for signing on 4 April, Stalin’s sole hope for warding off a frightful strategic nightmare was to stall ratification in national parliaments. More than ever, he needed to relax global tensions.¹¹⁴

The Soviet dictator had grasped the futility of the blockade months earlier. His actions had only pushed the West toward greater unity that would ultimately lead to the creation of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Federal Republic of Germany. In mid-December 1948, when Socialist Unity Party leaders Otto Grotewohl, Wilhelm Pieck, and Walter Ulbricht traveled to Moscow to discuss the future of the Eastern Zone, Stalin ordered the German comrades to scrap communism as a near-term goal. Their mission, rather, was to place the “struggle for unity and peace” on the “broadest national” basis in order to facilitate the eventual unification of the zones. The logic of these aims demanded an end to the crisis. Nonetheless, neither the Western Allies nor the West German political leadership placed great trust in Soviet attempts at compromise. To them, the very existence of the blockade was *prima facie* evidence of Stalin’s nefarious intentions.¹¹⁵

Stalin’s line resonated further in public statements as the Soviets attempted to undo the propaganda nightmare they had created. On 30 December, in an interview in the Socialist Unity Party journal, *Neues Deutschland*, Pieck explicitly disavowed any intention of establishing a “people’s democracy” in the Soviet Zone and affirmed as the party’s primary task the strengthening of “existing democracy.” On 25 January, the opening day of the party’s first congress, observers witnessed a dramatic event: the termination, after four minutes, of the radio broadcast of Col. Sergei Tulpanov’s address to the delegates, coupled with removal from circulation of the written

¹¹⁴ Printed in Lord Hastings Ismay, *NATO: The First Five Years, 1949–1954* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Bosch, 1955), p. 171, 3–11.

¹¹⁵ Notes, Wilhelm Pieck, “Notizen für die Besprechungen in Moskau” (Notes for the Talks in Moskau), p. 258; Rpt, Pieck to Central Secretariat, Socialist Unity Party, 27 Dec 1948, sub: “Die Besprechungen am 18.12.48,” p. 268. See also, “Ergebnis der Estündigen Besprechung am 18.12.1948,” pp. 259–61. All in Badstubner and Loth, eds., *Wilhelm Pieck—Notes on Policy Toward Germany 1945–1953*. Wilfried Loth, *Stalins ungeliebtes Kind* (Stalin’s Unwanted Child) (Berlin: Rowohit, 1994), pp. 142–48; Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, pp. 262–63.

text. Tulpanov, a notorious ideologue in the Soviet Military Administration, had unleashed a tirade against “Anglo-American imperialism.” The abrupt gagging of his speech, as a U.S. intelligence analyst surmised, advertised “to the rank and file that something new was coming.” Ulbricht fueled further speculation, stating to the congress two days later, “We regard Berlin not as a city or a state of the Eastern Zone but as the capital of Germany. Therefore, we do not have the intention of incorporating Berlin into the Eastern Zone.” With this assertion, Ulbricht abandoned not only a dogma but also the basis for asserting that only the Eastern mark could circulate in the city.¹¹⁶

On 30 January, Stalin flashed a signal through the American press. In a cable sent several days earlier, the journalist Kingsbury Smith had asked Stalin whether the Soviets would end the blockade if the West postponed establishment of the Western state pending a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers to consider Germany as a whole. In his reply, he said he saw “no obstacles” to lifting the restrictions if the Allies consented to end the counterblockade of economic traffic with the Eastern Zone and to delay formation of the Western state pending a foreign ministers’ conference.¹¹⁷

On first reading, Stalin’s conditions differed little from those he initially proposed during the ambassadors’ talks in August. Bohlen, however, noted an anomaly. Stalin had said nothing about currency. Did this imply a retreat? Bohlen alerted the new Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson to the possibility of a Soviet feeler. On Acheson’s instruction, Jessup asked his Soviet counterpart, Yakov Malik, whether the omission was intentional. Malik’s reply came nearly a month later. The omission, stated the Soviet envoy, was “not accidental.” The Soviets would lift the blockade if the Allies ended the counterblockade and agreed to reconvene the Council of Foreign Ministers. Malik added, one week later, that the two steps need not be simultaneous. The blockade could end before the start of the conference.¹¹⁸

Although the Soviets had capitulated, nearly two months of haggling preceded a final settlement. The reason for the delay was the Western reluctance to give a firm guarantee that the Allies would establish no West German government in the period between the end of the blockade and the opening of the conference—or, indeed, *during* the conference. At most, Jessup was willing to state “as a factual matter” that if a meeting took place in “the reasonably near future,” the West German government would not yet exist. In the end, the Soviets consented to lift the blockade provided that the Western powers set a date for the meeting to begin. In a quadripartite communiqué, issued on

¹¹⁶ Telg, Murphy to Dept of State, 20 Jan 1949, file 454/21, Ofc of Political Adviser, BAK; Loth, *Stalin’s Unwanted Child*, pp. 148, 150; Weekly Intel Rpt, OMGUS, ODI, no. 149, 19 Mar 1949, p. Pol. 6, file 3/430-2/2, OMGUS, BAK. For Tulpanov’s significance, see Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, pp. 318–52. Quote from Brandt and Löwenthal, *Ernst Reuter*, p. 492.

¹¹⁷ Answers Given by Marshall and Stalin to Question Posed by Correspondent Kingsbury Smith Concerning a U.S.-Soviet Peace Pact and Conditions for Lifting the Soviet Blockade of Berlin, 30 Jan 1948, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, pp. 198–99.

¹¹⁸ MFRs, Phillip C. Jessup, 15 Feb 1949, 3:694–96; Jessup, 21 Mar 1949, 3:700–704. Both in *FRUS, 1949*.



A U.S. aircrew celebrates the end of the Berlin airlift.

5 May, the parties announced the terms of their agreement. The restrictions of both the blockade and counterblockade would be removed on 12 May and eleven days thereafter Council of Foreign Ministers meeting would convene in Paris to consider questions and problems relating to Germany and Berlin.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ MFR, Jessup, 5 Apr 1949, in FRUS, 1949, 3:713; Four-Power Communiqué on Arrangement for Lifting the Berlin Blockade Effective 12 May, Concluded in New York, 4 May 1949, in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1945*, p. 221.

America's victory was complete. The Soviets would lift the blockade with no quid pro quo aside from one last chance for discussion. The West German state was inevitable, and nothing could deflect the Allies from their course.

10

CONCLUSION

On 6 January 1949, General Lucius D. Clay, exhausted from his long four years in Germany, asked permission to retire. His superiors, however, refused to release him. Not only did the blockade continue, but both the Occupation Statute and the Basic Law were unfinished. Clay, as the personal embodiment of U.S. policy in Germany, could not yet depart.

Four months passed before the moment finally came. On 8 April, the Allies signed the Occupation Statute, and, two weeks later, the military governors approved the Basic Law. Finally, at the end of the month, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Security Council Phillip C. Jessup and Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations Yakov A. Malik sealed the terms for ending the blockade. With Clay's work now complete, he arranged to leave Berlin on 15 May.¹

One minute past midnight on 12 May, traffic resumed between Berlin and Western Germany. The first interzonal train reached West Berlin shortly after daybreak. Later that morning, with the Allied military governors and dignitaries from the Parliamentary Council in attendance, the City Assembly commemorated the Allied victory. Speaking on behalf of the Magistrat, Ernst Reuter praised Berliners for their steadfastness and thanked the Allies for their help. The airlift, he declared, was “the most impressive demonstration of the firm resolve of the entire world not to abandon Berlin to the fate that had been prepared for us.” The mayor then honored the departing American military governor:

We are happy to see here as a guest in our midst the man who together with his two colleagues developed the initiative last summer to organize the airlift. The memory of Lucius Clay will never fade in Berlin. We know what we have to thank him for. (Stormy, prolonged applause.) And we use the hour in which General Clay takes his leave to say to him that we will never forget what he has done for us.²

¹ Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 527–46; Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, pp. 476–77; Telg, General Lucius D. Clay to General Omar N. Bradley, 15 Apr 1949, 2:1112; Telg, Bradley to Clay, 15 Apr 1949, 2:1113; Telg, Clay to Bradley and Kenneth C. Royall, Sec of the Army, 28 Apr 1949, 2:1133. All in Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*.

² “Erklärung zur Aufhebung der Blockade vor der Stadtverordnetenversammlung” (Declaration on the Lifting of the Blockade before the City Assembly), 12 May 1949, in Hirschfeld and Reichardt, *Ernst Reuter—Aus Reden und Schriften*, 3:736–37.

Clay returned the tribute two days later. Breaking protocol, he visited Reuter in the mayor's office—an unprecedented gesture of respect for a German leader. When the general left Berlin the following day, the mutual adulation continued. Hundreds of thousands of residents lined the streets on the way to Tempelhof to bid farewell. On 1 June, the boulevard facing the U.S. headquarters, Kronprinzenallee, was renamed Clayallee, the only street in West Berlin ever to be named for a living person.³

The initial jubilation, however, soon passed. Cut off from the rest of Germany and surrounded as it was by the Red Army and, soon, a hostile East Germany, West Berlin always seemed just one step away from collapse or absorption. As the crisis of West Berlin's economy deepened, the exhilaration of resistance yielded to concern. West Berliners faced new risks and complicated choices in selecting an economic and political path for their city. Meanwhile, the Soviets would continue to challenge the presence of the Western allies in Berlin and the city embellished its position as the focal point for Cold War confrontation. The U.S. Army in West Berlin would become an enduring part of the symbolism that defined the conflict. Its presence, year after year and especially during times of high East-West tensions like the Berlin Crisis of 1958–1961 resulting in the erection of the Berlin Wall, was a powerful and unifying symbol. Denigrated by some as a mere “trip wire” force, the U.S. Army in Berlin was composed of American soldiers who were the living, breathing representatives to the people of Berlin and later West Germany, providing them tangible reassurance that they would not be abandoned.

But was such a determined commitment necessary? Could history have followed another course, without the decades of poisonous confrontation, destruction of economic value, and wrenching apart of human contacts? In view of the sudden implosion of the Communist regimes of Central Europe in the fall of 1989, such questions appear irrelevant. That judgment, however, would be far too facile. Because historical consciousness is the filter through which contemporary realities are understood, the narrative of Berlin will retain relevance as long as the city remains embedded in America's past. The debate over its meaning, therefore, will retain significance long after other experiences have vanished from memory.

In concluding, however, it is more appropriate to focus on what happened rather than to dwell on missed alternatives. Above all, one fact stands clear. Within the context of history as it actually occurred, the occupation of the 1940s was a signal success. The military government had secured not only the cooperation of West Berlin's population in reestablishing orderly life in the city but also its willing and self-conscious association with American policies and aims.

³ Smith, *Lucius D. Clay*, pp. 554–55; “Sensation um jeden Preis im ersten Interzonenzug nach Berlin” (Sensation at Any Price in the First Inter-zonal Train to Berlin), *Neues Deutschland*, 13 May 1949.

Yet, far from representing a triumphal march of nation-building, the American success resulted only partially from U.S. decisions and actions. American officials held the power to impose discipline on unruly soldiers, to reduce the burden of requisitions, and to give the occupation a beneficent face. But they could gain at most respect for U.S. authority. The wider success of the military government—in particular, the winning of the ideological struggle for Berlin—owed, in large part, to favorable circumstances along with the strength of American will. Two circumstances were especially critical.

One was the political party landscape in occupied Berlin. Americans did not create political partners in the city but found them. Those partners, the Social Democrats, belonged to a party founded during the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm I (1871–1888). It had been a pillar of the Weimar Republic, the dominant force in both Prussia and Berlin, and commanded a broad popular following. Social Democrats had served in parliaments, national and state cabinets, and in all levels of the civil service. Their leadership could mobilize masses of “party soldiers” for political tasks. The party’s social reform concepts, its democratic identity, and its fierce anticommunism were internally rooted. The Americans had only to tap this formidable force.

The second was egregious Soviet mistakes. The Soviets’ policy of securing their interests in alliance with “amenable” non-Communists corresponded to German realities. But they defeated their own intentions. Their early failure to control rampaging troops tarred them as barbarians and the memory of the “Rape of Berlin” would cast a long shadow on any of their initiatives. The coerced union between the Communists and Social Democrats made bitter enemies. Finally, the Berlin Blockade counts as one of the greatest misjudgements of the Cold War. The Soviets gambled that the West would abandon the encircled garrison once its ground access had been cut off. The obstinacy of Clay and the success of the airlift allowed the Americans to choose the political gains of remaining in Berlin over the military appeal of withdrawal. The corollary of these mistakes was that Berlin’s population quickly looked to the Western Allies for protection and, in time, came to respect U.S. power.

Although the impact of the U.S. occupation troops was usually less newsworthy and dramatic than the decisions and pronouncements of the military government, it was certainly no less important. American soldiers provided the initial pacification and local security to allow the military government and the civilian municipal government to begin to restore civic control over the city. While the conduct of the U.S. soldiers in Berlin was not without flaw, it was disciplined enough to stand in sharp contrast to the excesses of the Soviet troops. When the Soviet blockade of the city’s Western sectors threatened to starve West Berliners into submission, it was the American soldiers who planned and supervised the logistics operations, built and repaired the runways, and helped to distribute the food and coal that the airlift provided. Although the numbers of U.S. soldiers were never high, and thus they were never a realistic deterrent to a determined Soviet military incursion, they provided enough of a military presence to make that option unacceptable.

For the duration of the Cold War, Berlin remained a dangerous focal point, the one location where U.S. and Soviet interests collided at a personal level on a daily basis. Although many of the Army's leaders never thought it a position that could credibly be defended, in the end their actions helped to transform the city into a symbol of what the Cold War was all about.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The primary repository for the U.S. Army's official records pertaining to the post-World War II occupation of Berlin is the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. The Army's records for the period 1945–1950 are broken down into several record groups (RG), many of which contain information dealing with the Berlin occupation. These include:

- A. RG 218: Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are more than 1,000 boxes of records that potentially cover the period 1945–1949. The Joint Staff Geog File, 1942–1945 contains four boxes labeled “Administration of Military Government.” The Joint Staff Decimal File, 1946–1947 contains a box labeled “Reparations” and a box labeled “Military Liaison Mission.” The Joint Staff Geog File, 1946–1947 contains three boxes labeled “Military Government on Germany.” The Joint Staff Decimal File, 1948–1950 contains one box labeled “Food Crisis in Germany.” The Joint Staff Geog File, 1948–1950 contains one box labeled “U.S. Policy Toward Germany.” The Chairman's File–Leahy, 1942–1953 contains one box labeled “Europe/German Occupation” and one box labeled “Berlin Airlift.” Most of the records are at the service and national policy level and do not directly address activities in Berlin. Major issues covered included currency reform, the potential rearmament of West Germany, and German political affairs.
- B. RG 260: Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II. There are approximately 175 boxes of records in this group that pertain to the occupation of Berlin. Most of these records were produced by Headquarters, Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS). These include nine boxes of intelligence reports and ten boxes of historical reports. Records from the Berlin Command or the Berlin Sector include reports from various staff sections of the headquarters element as well as unit reports of operations. All records have been declassified. Included are the minutes of General Lucius D. Clay's monthly staff meetings and an inspector general's report on an inspection of the Berlin Command in 1948. One series labeled “Records Maintained for the Military Governor, General Clay,” contains collections of communications between the U.S. and British military governments and between the U.S. and Soviet military governments. Almost all of the records within this record group pertain to the occupation of Germany as a whole rather than specifically to the occupation of Berlin.

- C. RG 319: Records of the Army Staff. This is an extensive record group with extremely large collections of decimal files and general correspondence that contains potentially useful materials. For example, a file labeled “General Classified Correspondence, 1948–1954,” (Declassified) contains 488 boxes. The collection has some good finding aids, but they do not identify any records specifically related to Berlin. Two possibly useful series are the “Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence Decimal Files, 1946–1948,” (289 boxes) and copies of Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Studies, some still classified (900 boxes).
- D. RG 338: Records of U.S. Army Tactical, Operational, and Support Organizations, WWII and thereafter. This group contains four boxes of “Activity Reports” for the Berlin District, 1945–1946. It also has three boxes of 82d Airborne Division records pertaining to their service on occupation duty in Berlin during the latter part of 1945. There are several series devoted to the 1st Infantry Division during this period but none related to those portions that participated in the Berlin occupation. Only one battalion, 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, actually remained in Berlin, and it is mentioned rarely and only in the sense that it did not participate in the activities of the rest of the division.
- E. RG 407: Records of The Adjutant General’s Office. This record group has two large file series whose documents are of definite value. The “Foreign Occupied Area Reports” contains 1,200 boxes, many of which are devoted to the activities of the U.S. Military Government in Germany. A lot of this seems to be duplicates of records found in RG 260. Nonetheless, this collection is so large that at least some of the material is unique to this series. These records cover thoroughly all aspects of military government in Germany. They include documents on denazification, displaced persons, economic studies, education reform, industry, agriculture, reparations, and war crimes prosecution. They also contain monthly reports from the military governor (including a monthly section on the activities of the “Monuments Men”), minutes from the four party Berlin commandants’ meetings, and weekly intelligence reports.
- F. RG 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, WWII. This group contains a large collection of records from OMGUS, Berlin District. It includes report of operations, diary and staff conference notes, operations reports, and weekly reports, about seventy-five boxes in total.
- G. RG 549: Records of U.S. Army, Europe. This record group contains eight boxes of records from Berlin Command. Most are from 1951, including a very good command report. Three boxes cover the year 1948 and contain some useful documents including a noncombatant evacuation plan, some intelligence reports, and some documents on the activities of the 7970th Counterintelligence Corps detachment operating in Berlin. All eight boxes have been declassified.

German Archives

Two records repositories in Germany provided documents related to the U.S. Office of Military Government in Germany, some of which were not included in collections at the U.S. National Archives. The Landesarchiv Berlin is the principal repository for records of the Berlin government and most of its district and local authorities. The Berlin office also holds personal paper collections for such public figures as Ernst Reuter and Otto Suhr. The Bundesarchiv Koblenz and its external office in Freiburg contain numerous records related to the American military presence in Germany.

British Public Record Office

The British Public Record Office in London, England, contains copies of correspondence between the British Foreign Office and officers of the military government in Germany. Collections also include copies of memos, briefs, and reports created in the development of policy regarding the Allied situation in Berlin.

Other Repositories

The Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, contains personal papers collections of Col. Frank L. Howley, Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin, and Maj. Gen. Floyd L. Parks. The collection also includes oral histories and interviews with several officers who served as part of the garrison in Berlin. Personal papers collections at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library include those of General Lucius D. Clay, Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Maj. Gens. Raymond Barker and Floyd Parks. Also available here are copies of SHAEF plans for postwar Europe and Eisenhower's prepresidential papers. The Columbia University Oral History Project in New York maintains a collection of interviews with and papers of General Clay.

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CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room
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The State Department publication, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, contains a wealth of presidential, National Security Council, and Department of Defense correspondence covering the U.S. military commitment to Europe. Volumes on Berlin, Germany, Western Europe, Yalta, Potsdam, and National Security are particularly useful. Newspapers *Tägliche Rundschau* (Soviet official

newspaper in Germany) and *Neues Deutschland* (Journal of the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin) contain commentary on daily events in Berlin. The *Berlin Observer* (U.S. newspaper in Berlin) and the *New York Herald Tribune* proved useful.

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ACRONYMS

AEG	Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft (General Electric Company)
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AHEC	Army Heritage and Education Center
AND	Allgemeine Deutsche Nachrichtendienst (General German News Service)
CARE	Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe
CID	Criminal Investigations Division
CMH	Center of Military History
COSSAC	Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander
DDRS	Declassified Documents Reference System
DM	Deutschmark
EUCOM	European Command
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GYA	German Youth Activities
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
NACP	National Archives College Park
NCO	Noncommissioned officer
NSC	National Security Council
ODI	Office of Director of Intelligence
OHRO	Oral History Research Office
OMGUS	Office of Military Government, United States
RIAS	Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor (American radio station)
RM	Reichsmark
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party)
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
USFET	U.S. Forces, European Theater
USO	United Service Organizations
WAC	Women's Army Corps

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