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FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

R E P O R T

ON

THE STATUS OF BERLIN AS IT AFFECTS THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE MAJOR POWERS, AND AUSTRALIA AS
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WESTERN WORLD.

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1. IMPORTANCE OF BERLIN.

It is considered by the Committee that Berlin must be regarded as one of the greatest dangers to the peace of the world and to the security of the world. As such it is of great importance to Australia. Although Western statesmen say that we must remain in Berlin to protect the freedom of 2½ million West Berliners who must retain the right to self-determination, it is difficult to see how 2½ million West Berliners are intrinsically more important than a similar number of Hungarians, Czechoslovakians, Poles or Vietnamese, for whom the Western Powers are not so deeply committed. The explanation lies in the fact that there were clear cut agreements with the Soviet over Germany and Berlin, and these agreements were broken. While Soviet power has spread, the Western position in Berlin has been maintained at great cost and difficulty, and it has therefore become a symbol of Western determination to resist Communism and aggressive power by all means that are necessary, including nuclear war.

West Berlin has become a pre-eminent symbol of freedom and of man's right to make his own choice concerning the kind of Government he wants. If Western Powers were ever defeated over West Berlin, the faith of those who fight Communism could be irretrievably shattered, no matter where they may be. It is for these reasons that West Berlin is so important. It has become the testing ground of the will and determination between the Western Powers and the Soviets. It does not matter where people may live, whether it be in Australia or Europe or in South-east Asia, they will judge the West's determination to stand and to fight and the West's ability to oppose Communism successfully on what happens in Berlin.

2. INTEGRATION OF GERMANY IN EUROPE AND GERMAN MILITARISM.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the present German situation is satisfactory. Germany is divided and Berlin is divided. A divided Germany provides a possibility for conflict in Central Europe, if the appropriate conditions should ever prevail. Although it has been Dr. Adenauer's policy to enmesh West Germany into Western Europe between NATO and the E.E.C., it is not inconceivable that different conditions could arise in which different policies may be pursued. However, it is a major part of Western statesmanship and of British policy in particular to see that conditions never occur that could lead to the revival of German militarism.

3. RUSSIAN FEARS.

The Russians clearly have a great fear of Germany. This may seem strange when we consider the difference between the military strength of the two countries, but the Russians would regard Germany as a spearhead for a Western attack, not just as an attack coming from Germany. In addition, Russia has her Eastern boundaries to protect against possible attack from her comrade, China. Many divisions have to be kept in Eastern Russia to allow for such a possibility.

The Russians claim 10,000,000 killed in the last war. Most Russians have personal experience of war in the loss of some relative or friend. Many could remember the intervention of 1919. It is not difficult, therefore, to see that the Russians in reality have a fear of Germany and of the West. Indeed, this is a centuries-old fear which the Communists inherited from former Russian regimes. It would be partly for these reasons, in addition to reasons of pure Communism, that make the Russians determined that Germany shall never be united if united Germany is to be a Western Power, a member of NATO. Alternatively, one might add that if there were any possibility of Germany joining the Warsaw Pact Powers under some united government, the West would be equally determined that Germany should not be united.

It is this context that makes the Committee wonder if the security arrangements offered the Russians in the 1959 Peace Plan proposals were adequate to calm Russian fears. For example, the security arrangements were to include agreements between the four Powers and other European countries against aggression, and if a re-united Germany joined NATO, the three Western Powers would join with other parties to European Security Arrangements in undertaking not to advance their forces further towards the East, that is, in the present area of East Germany. If a re-united Germany joined the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet would undertake not to advance her forces towards the West.

In these days of missiles, these provisions would add little to Soviet or to Western security, whatever the case may be, but, of course, the West anticipated the united Germany would not join the Warsaw Powers.

4. UNIFIED AND DISARMED.

This problem over what to do with Germany makes it worth examining in passing the proposition that Germany should be re-united, disarmed and neutralised. If such a proposition had been discussed by Allied statesmen before the end of the war and before agreements with the Soviets were signed, it is the Committee's view that they would have agreed that a united Germany could never permanently be disarmed; that this would be no way to ensure peace in Central Europe and that it would lead to constant dissatisfaction on the part of Germany. The Western statesmen were trying to re-build peace on a basis of joining Germany together in the community of free nations, encouraging her to play a full and vital part in that community. She could do so only if she were accepted as fully able to make her own policies.

5. RE-UNIFICATION.

It is long-term German Government policy and Allied policy that the only peaceful future for Germany lies in free elections throughout Germany and in ultimate re-unification of Germany under one Government. German and Western statesmen realize that such objectives are impossible of achievement under present circumstances. If it were possible to give the Russians greater security guarantees, perhaps there would be

some possibility of action. As matters stand at present, there is no possibility. Western objectives are therefore impossible to attain under present circumstances. Equally, Soviet objectives cannot be attained. The West will oppose Russian domination of West Berlin or of West Germany proper if necessary by nuclear means.

6. SHORT-TERM POLICY.

Under present circumstances the immediate policy is to maintain the status quo. However, there will be constant danger, firstly, as a result of Russian action to provoke a crisis, as has been done three times; secondly, as a result of possible German action to try and hasten the process of re-unification. The kind of circumstances under which this might arise are obvious. If the circumstances ever do arise in which German initiative could be taken, the West could not rule out of court the possibility of a German deal with Russia.

The Committee believes that the threat of war arising over Berlin is a real and ever present danger which would come, not so much from a deliberate act of war but from miscalculation. If the Soviet ever adopted the view that the West would not stand and fight over Berlin, then the danger would be acute. The Berlin situation is a function of the balance of nuclear power between the East and West. Any major attempt to alter this situation could, and probably would, result in nuclear war. The fact that the Western powers and the Soviet have been able to live with this danger since 1948 underlines the effectiveness of Allied policy. Provided these policies are pursued with firmness but without provocation there is every probability that they will be able to live with it for many years in the future.

The Committee sees as a prerequisite of any softening of the position a change of heart on the part of the Russians and greater security arrangements offered by the West to the Russians to put understandable Russian fears at rest so that free elections could be held throughout Germany.

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APPENDIX to -

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF BERLIN AS IT AFFECTS THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MAJOR POWERS, AND
AUSTRALIA AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WESTERN WORLD.

I. HISTORY.

A study of the history of Germany and Berlin will not reveal Berlin's present day significance. However, it is necessary to understand how the situation developed to realize the crucial part that Berlin and Germany play in the relationship between the Soviet Powers on the one hand and the United States, the United Kingdom, France and her Allies on the other.

The war-time Allies had agreed, before the war ended, that Germany and Berlin were to be jointly administered by the three conquering powers. Germany was divided into three zones for this purpose. Berlin, in the Russian Zone, was divided into three sectors for administrative purposes. Later agreements put a portion of the United Kingdom and the United States Sector and Zone into the hands of the French. Thus, there was four-power control in Berlin and four zones in Germany itself.

War-time agreements, notably the Potsdam Agreement of August, 1945, had defined the principles to be followed. The different sectors and zones were to be administered as one economic unit, and the conquering powers were to work towards free elections throughout the whole of Germany, starting with Municipal elections. The Allies had considered the permanent division of Germany before the war ended, but had rejected these proposals on the grounds that it could lead to no permanent peace in Europe.

The Potsdam Agreement was almost immediately broken. Germany was never administered as one economic unit, and only once did the Russians throw their political philosophy open to the challenge of free elections. This was not in the whole of Germany but in Berlin. On October 20th, 1946, all Berlin elections were held. The Non-Communist Social Democratic Party received 48.7%, the Christian Democratic Party 20%, the Socialist Unity Party 19.8%, the Liberal Democratic Party 9.3%. The Socialist Unity Party was the Communist Party. Under conditions which must have been as favourable to Communism as would ever prevail, it received less than one-fifth of the votes cast.

Free elections throughout Berlin have not again been held. The Soviet could not prevent free Municipal Government in the Western Sectors of Berlin, but the Soviet Sector was never again given a choice. These Municipal elections may have been a crucial turning point in the affairs of Germany; if the Communists had done well, the Soviets may have been prepared to put the Potsdam Agreement to the test and risk elections throughout the whole of Germany. The Soviets were not prepared to run this risk, however, once they realized their chances of electoral success were nil. From this time forth, the Soviets went ahead rapidly in strengthening their own control of East Germany and of the Soviet Sector of Berlin. In 1945, Herr Ulbricht had returned to Germany as a Colonel in the Soviet Army. As we know, he later became Premier of the puppet regime in East Germany. He was and is Chief Soviet Agent in East Germany.

2. AFTER 1946.

Since the Soviets were refusing to co-operate with the Western sectors and zones, the Western powers began to plan the unification of their own areas of authority. However, it was not until March 6th, 1948, with the agreement of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg that the Western Allies agreed to fuse their zones economically and politically. At the same time, the West Germans were to be allowed to create their own Federal Government. In addition, currency reform was instituted, which was to be an essential element of West German recovery.

3. BLOCKADE.

On March 20th, 1948, the Soviets walked out of the Allied Control Council for Germany. On April 1st, restrictions on rail and road transport to Berlin began. On June 24th, the day after currency reform was introduced to West Berlin, the Soviet imposed a complete blockade on all land or water transport between West Germany and West Berlin. This forced the Allies into the airlift which preserved West Berlin. The purpose of these moves was clearly to push the Western powers out of Berlin.

The Soviets probably regarded the currency reform with such disfavour because they regarded it as an effort to integrate West Berlin with West Germany, and this would be contrary to their long-term objective of absorbing West Berlin into East Germany.

On September 1st, 1948, the Western German Parliamentary Council, convened at Bonn under the Chairmanship of Dr. Konrad Adenauer. The Council's work was completed in the next year, and on August 14th, 1949, Germany voted in the first free elections Germany had seen since 1932.

On October 7th, 1949, Soviet Authorities established their Communist Puppet Government in East Germany. Their former Colonel and Agent, Herr Ulbricht, became Premier. The Soviet Sector of Berlin was proclaimed as the capital of East Germany.

Although in point of time West Germany was established as a political entity before East Germany, it must be remembered that the Soviets had continually refused to adhere to the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement and to other agreements relating to the occupation and administration of Germany. There was no economic co-operation with East Germany. Free elections were not allowed, even on the Municipal level, and it had become clear that the re-unification of Germany would only take place under terms that would be unacceptable to the Western Powers; terms, which would, in fact, have placed Germany under Communist control.

The Soviet Union began to re-arm East Germany in 1950. By the end of 1953, East Germany had 140,000 military personnel in addition to 100,000 armed police. This was more than one year before the establishment of an armed force by the Federal Republic of Germany, which had only 150,000 regular police for a population three times that of East Germany.

When Western Germany began to re-arm in late 1954, its Chancellor undertook not to produce atomic, biological or chemical weapons. The Federal Republic of Germany is the only member of NATO to place all its military forces under NATO command. By deliberate policy, the Federal Republic has bound itself closely to Western Europe, not only through NATO but also through the European Economic Community. This has been a deliberate policy on the part of the Government in an effort to make it impossible for German militarism to regain the ascendancy.

4. 1958.

In 1958, the Soviets began a second major attack on the Allied position in West Berlin. In a note sent to the Allied powers, the Soviet Union said that the Agreements with the Western Allies concerning Berlin were null and void. The Soviets demanded the withdrawal of the Western forces from Berlin. It proposed that Berlin become a demilitarised free city, and it proposed that the two German States enter negotiations concerning the re-unification of Germany. A deadline of six months was set, after which Russia was to sign a separate Peace Treaty with East Germany. It is important to bear in mind that a signing of a Peace Treaty with East Germany of itself would not be important. It is what Krushchev implied would come with the signing of a Peace Treaty that would be important. It was said that the Allies had no place in Berlin, and the implications were and are that if he signs a separate Peace Treaty he will take steps to see the Allies are removed from West Berlin. Alternatively, if the East Germans closed the land and water routes to West Berlin and so harassed the Western corridors that a new Berlin airlift were impossible, the Russians would surely support their East German puppets. Indeed, the only assumption could be that the East German Government was acting with the knowledge and agreement of Soviet Russia, but whether Mr. Krushchev signed a Peace Treaty with East Germany or not, the Soviet Union cannot take away the rights of the Western Powers to remain in West Berlin. They are there by right of conquest; they are not put there by the Soviet and not by any agreement with the Soviet. In addition, the Soviet cannot abrogate the Western powers' right of access to Berlin, which does rest upon agreements with the Soviet Union. These agreements can only be altered by the consent of all concerned. Mr. Krushchev clearly recognized the dangers of trying to carry out his threat in 1958, and the deadline of six months which he had given for his plan was lifted.

5. WESTERN PEACE PLAN, 1959.

Largely in response to the Berlin crisis of 1958, the West put forward a peace plan on May 14th, 1959. This was ultimately to involve free elections in all Germany to lead to the re-unification of Germany. In the 1959 Peace Plan, the West recognized legitimate Russian fears of a military revival in Germany, and included security arrangements to meet them. However, no agreement was reached and the Soviet put forward a plan which was totally unacceptable to the West. The plan was, in fact, designed to weaken the grip of Western powers, not only in Western Germany but also in Western Europe. For example, under the Soviet plan, the NATO powers were to withdraw their forces and dismantle military bases on foreign

territory. In return, the Soviets would withdraw their forces from Poland, East Germany and Hungary. Thus, the United States would withdraw its forces for 3,000 miles, the Soviets a few hundred.

The Soviet plan for a demilitarized "free city" is also senseless. Since West Berlin is already "free", the only essential new element of their plan is "demilitarized". This would, in fact, involve a weakening of the Western presence in West Berlin to such an extent that West Berlin would probably be absorbed by East Germany. The military forces in West Berlin are now so small that they could not possibly overcome a threat by the Soviet forces in East Germany. It is the Western presence that guarantees West Berlin's freedom. If that presence is watered down or destroyed, so, too, will West Berlin be destroyed.

6. 1961.

On June 4th, 1961, Mr. Krushchev repeated his threats to sign a separate Peace Treaty with East Germany if agreement was not reached with the West. It should be repeated that it was not the threat to sign a Peace Treaty itself that would create danger of a third war, but the claim made by the Russians that such a Peace Treaty would annul Western rights in Berlin. Although a time limit was set for the signing of the Treaty, Krushchev has, for a second time, shown himself prepared to postpone a final settlement or final argument over the Berlin question.

7. THE WALL.

On August 13th ¹⁹⁶¹ ~~last year~~, the Berlin wall was built. This was a desperate step to cure the economic ills of East Germany. In 16 years, 3,300,000 Germans fled East Germany, most of them through Berlin. Approximately 50% of the refugees were under 25 years of age. Thus, many of them were 9 years of age when the Soviets tried to make them into Communists. The building of the wall had become necessary for the economic survival of the Communist regime in East Germany. In July, the previous monthly average of refugees fleeing to West Berlin was doubled to 30,000, and in the first twelve days of August 20,000 refugees arrived in West Berlin. The population of East Germany was ageing and falling; its best technicians and workers were crossing the border in great numbers. If East Germany were ever to become a viable economic State, this strain on manpower resources had to be stopped, and thus the wall was built, since all measures, short of absolute blockade, had failed to stem the tide.

Little has happened since the building of the wall to alter the Berlin situation. The West, particularly the United States, has repeated its pledges to defend its position in West Berlin and to protect the people of West Berlin. On the other hand, Mr. Krushchev of the Soviets, has, from time to time, muttered threats to sign a Peace Treaty with East Germany with all the implications that he puts on such a signing.

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2nd April, 1963.