

Research Report

Historical Security Council The situation in Berlin



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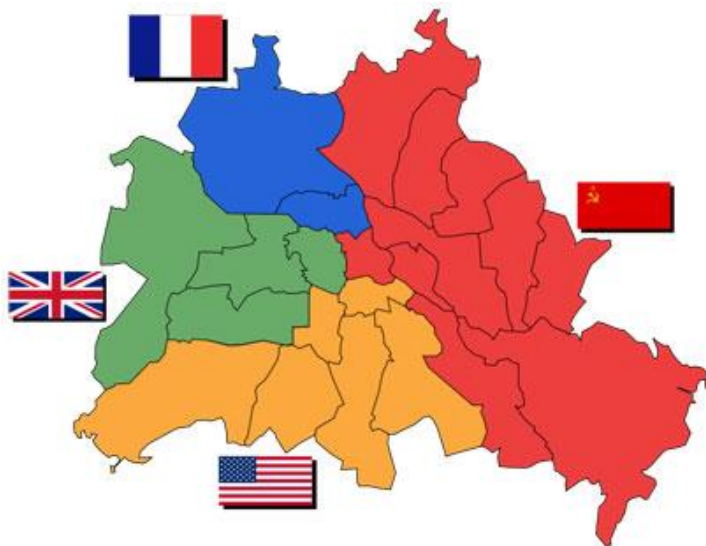


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Forum	Historical Security Council
Issue:	The situation in Berlin
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Introduction

Berlin is a low-lying German city approximately 60km from the Polish border to Germany's northwest. Having existed as a settlement for over 700 years, Berlin's influence peaked in the 1940s. After the Thirty Years War, the city was left insignificant with a population of 6,000 in 1648. By the turn of the 20th century however, it had grown enormously and then housed 1.9 million people, a figure which would double in the following 2 decades establishing Berlin as Europe's then largest city. 1940s Berlin was one of the most strategic cities in the world. It is for this reason that both the post-war Soviet Union *and* Allied forces occupied different regions of the city at this time.



As part of the Treaty of Potsdam, Berlin was divided into 4 sections, each of which given to one of World War Two victors. France, Britain and the United States of America (USA) each received a portion, as did the Soviet Union; this is shown in figure 1. In 1945, when three quarters of central Berlin had been destroyed by war operations, the city was dubbed the 'eyeless city' as hardly any

windowpanes remained intact. Berlin was

important to the Allies because it was an island in the Soviet Union-led East Germany. In 1948, as the Cold War dawned, the West was trying to prevent the spread of communism in Eastern Europe; for this purpose, Berlin was incredibly important.

Figure 1 - Map of Berlin showing occupation zones as of 1945

Definition of Key Terms

Communism

The political ideology of communal living; money is pooled via the government and then redistributed amongst the population equally. Stalin, the then-ruler of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was of this ideology, and wished to promote it elsewhere and extend his rule outside Eastern Europe.

Blockade

Blockade is defined as the isolation of a certain region. The USSR did this to West Berlin on 24 June 1948 by suspending rail and road links, and blocking water transport into and out of West Berlin. Because Berlin was situated in the then-called East Germany, West Berlin was surrounded by Soviet-controlled areas, none of which would provide for its citizens.

General Overview

Berlin, located in the middle of Europe between the East and West, was always going to be a strategic standpoint for East-West relations. To Germany's west, lay the colonial powers France and the United Kingdom, and to its East, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It was only after Germany's key role in the World Wars however that these superpowers preyed on Berlin's potential.

First World War and its outcomes

The First World War (WWI) saw the Berlin's 2 million inhabitants suffer from hunger and war-weariness. Large-scale strikes ensued towards the end of the war. On November 9th, 1918, King Wilhelm II was forced to abdicate, ceasing to be Germany's king and emperor of the German Reich. Chancellor Prince von Baden handed governmental power to Friedrich Ebert of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The Weimar Republic was founded, and both the "Free German Republic" and the "Free Socialist Republic of Germany" (by the communists) are simultaneously declared. 2 days later WWI ended. 1918 also saw the formation of the German Communist Party (KPD), though their uprising the following January was unsuccessful and they failed to seize power. In 1920, they tried again, unsuccessfully; the Kapp Putsch was retaliation against the Treaty of Versailles which stated the German army/military organisations must disarm.



As the population of Berlin continued increasing throughout the 20s, hyperinflation set in and citizens could no longer afford basic necessities with the German mark. In 1929, matters only worsened due to the Great Depression, leading to angry protests and violent demonstrations. Consequently, the National Socialist party (NSDAP) grew slowly in popularity. Widespread unemployment peaked in 1932, and violence erupted in Berlin's streets between opposing political groups. The NSDAP became the strongest party in German government.

On January 30th 1933, Adolf Hitler ascended to power, causing the NSDAP takeover and the ending of democracy throughout Germany. The Reichstag Fire, ignited by a left-wing radical on February 27th, allowed Hitler to disregard the constitution. Later that year, Communist politicians were removed from government, as were Social Democrats, and Berlin's first concentration camp was opened. The 1930s, under NSDAP (Nazi) ruling, saw widespread scapegoating of Jews and political opponents and their selective removal from society. It was only during August 1936 when Berlin hosted the Olympic Games that anti-Semitism was not clearly shown in the city.

1938 witnessed the foundation of the Greater German Reich (Germany and modern-day Austria) and November 9th, "Kristallnacht", the night of broken glass, when 1200 Jewish citizens were arrested and taken to concentration camps. 1/3 of German Jews were living in Berlin in 1933; of these, 90,000 of the 160,000 fled before 1941, and only 1,400 survived in hiding in the city.

Second World War and its aftermath

On September 1st, 1939, World War Two (WWII) broke out in response to Germany's declaration of war upon Poland. Both French and British forces began bombing of Berlin in 1940. Hitler had demanded his military not to provoke such attacks, but misled bombing of London in August began years of attacks on the German capital; retaliation took place in London, Manchester and other British cities. In 1942, Nazi Germany drew up the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question', a plan to systematically transport and annihilates Jews from Europe. In 1943, American and British allied attacks on Berlin begin in earnest, killing over 50,000 before the war is out.

The Battle of Berlin was launched by Harris in November 1943, an air attack against Berlin, though simultaneously targeting other German cities to wear out German forces. The first raid took place on 18-19 November, though due to weather conditions the damage was

insignificant. Another, more successful raid was followed on 22-23 November. This damaged homes and started many fires due to the dry weather.

The Battle's major air raids took place on 17 December, when Berlin's rail system was broadly damaged and later on 28-29 January 1944, before war industrial sites were hit on 15-16 February. Individual attacks killed hundreds and rendered thousands more homeless'. By the end of the 16 raids, around 4,000 Berliners had perished and 450,000 had unliveable homes. Despite the loss of life and major devastation caused by these air raids, German morale remained strong, and war production continued to rise. The RAF however had incurred unsustainably large losses, and the plan was terminated after a final raid on 24-25 March 1944, having failed to achieve its aim. From 1943-1944, the German government tried to evacuate as many people as possible from the city to safer homes in the countryside: 1.2 million 'non-essential people' were rehoused within the year, though many returned before the war was over.

The RAF ignored Berlin for much of 1944 to focus instead on D-Day plans. In early 1945 however, they returned: the RAF commenced 36 consecutive nights on bombing, using 40-80 bomber planes per night, ending on the night of 20-21 April 1945. The Race to Berlin refers to the competition of Allied generals to enter Berlin's borders in the last few weeks of the war. French, British and American troops approached from France, following D-Day arrivals, whereas the Soviets approached from the east, and entered first.

On April 21st, 1945, the Red Army first entered the city of Berlin, commencing the Battle for Berlin. Soviet troops stormed the city, outnumbering the German soldiers there threefold. The invasion resulted in Berlin's surrender (Hitler and his mistress commit suicide) on May 2nd, and later, the capitulation of German forces elsewhere in Europe 6 days later. WWII ended, and 1.5 million of Berlin's original population had fled or been killed.

On May 8th 1945, a capitulation treaty was signed in Allied presence; this document outlines that Berlin is to be divided amongst France, Britain, USA and the Soviet Union.

Throughout World War Two, Berlin was victim to a total of 363 air raids: by RAF Bomber Command from 1940-1945, American Air Force (USAAF) 1943-1945, and by the [Soviet] Red Army Air Force in 1945. Death tolls in the city from air raids were at least 20,000; potentially thousands more.

A then-poor Berlin still had issues with inflation making necessities unaffordable, and 2/3 of residents collected cigarette butts as a form of legal tender. Also during this time, a large influx of refugees arrived in Berlin from Eastern provinces where Soviet leadership



made their family hungry, as the USSR starved its provinces of resources to pay its reparations for WWI.

The Potsdam Conference was held from June 17 to August 2 1945, culminating in the Potsdam Agreement. This document laid out the borders of a divided Germany and Berlin amongst the Allied victors (USA, Great Britain, France, and USSR).

In late 1946, a new city assembly was elected in Berlin. The SPD became the majority party, attaining almost half the votes, with the Christian Democrats (CDU) as the second favourite with 22%.

The Soviets ran their zone so as to keep Germany weak; they thereby would never face attack by Germany. They also took resources from their zone of Berlin and Germany to use in the Soviet Union itself. The Allies however, tried to make their regions prosperous so that democracy could be reinstated. They combined their three zones into one Allied region, called West Berlin, and introduced a new currency on June 23rd, the Deutschmark, to overcome inflation. Having been ignored in negotiations of this decision, but promised consultation by their presence in the Four Power Allied Control Council, the Soviet Union was angered. They left the Council, and refused to cooperate in future discussions with the Allies. Soviet-controlled Berliners knew of the prosperity of their neighbours, and were therefore enraged at their Soviet-induced poverty. Stalin, Russia's then-leader, wanted to eradicate the allies from Berlin to end this problem. He therefore decided to end communication with West Berlin – with no road, rail or river contact between Berlin and West Germany (where Allied supplies were delivered), food and fuel supplies were blocked and West Berliners would slowly starve. This began on 24th of June, and was called the Berlin Blockade. In response, the Allies pledge to provide their citizens with supplies by air; the Berlin Airlift began on June 26.

We will discuss this issue as though it is June 30th 1948. The Berlin Airlift has just begun, and it is unknown for how long it will be able to keep it up.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), commonly called the Soviet Union

The USSR was one of Europe's greatest powers at this time. It did not own an atomic weapon by 1948, so cannot over-provoke the USA for fear of annihilation, though the USSR did fiercely compete against other economic powers of the time. It comprised a vast land

mass, and more territories it would later conquer, and used Berlin as a strategic standpoint to keep Germany weak. The Soviet Union wanted the Allies out of Berlin; the Berlin Blockade demonstrates this. Having collaborated with the USA and other Allies throughout WWII, differences in ideology distanced the USSR from its previous allies.

The Allied powers

Consisting of Britain, France and the United States, the Allied powers occupied the majority of Berlin and Germany. In their regions, or 'zones', they aimed to encourage prosperity to make a stable, democratic Germany which would encourage economic growth in Europe. They were in favour of capitalism and opposed to the communistic ideas enforced by the Soviet Union.

Germany

Germany is Berlin's host nation, which was occupied by the USSR and the Allies after World War Two. The Allies took control of West Germany, while the USSR maintained control of East Germany as it later became known; this encompassed Berlin, though the non-Soviet zones of Berlin remained out of their control, and opposed to communism which the USSR promoted elsewhere in its territories. Events in Berlin in many ways reflected the broader picture of what happened in Germany; the zones given to WWII victors, hyperinflation, rising unemployment etc.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1918	End of World War One, Weimar Republic founded
1920s	Hunger rife in Berlin due to hyperinflation.
January 1933	Hitler takes power; gradually his party removes political opponents and slowly but systematically eradicates Jews from society
1939	World War Two breaks out
1940	Bombing of Berlin by RAF forces in retaliation for attacks on London; Hitler responds with The Blitz
1943-45	Systematic, continued bombing of Berlin
1945	Race to Berlin, Battle for Berlin, German surrender. Potsdam Agreement divides Berlin; in the next 3 years the occupiers (the Allies and the USSR) strengthen or weaken their areas respectively



1948 Deutschmark introduced, West Berlin and West Germany named leaving East Berlin and East Germany self-evident, Berlin Blockade begun on 24 June, Berlin airlift begun 2 days later

Relevant UN involvement, Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Most relevant events have been mentioned already in the General Overview, though a few treaties are worth a clarification here:

- Treaty of Versailles – 1918; this treaty made Germany pay immense war reparations to France, Britain and the USA for the damage caused during World War One. Germans were furious that such a treaty was signed, but their surrender meant they were obliged to abide by its terms even when it made them impoverished and hungry.
- Treaty of Rapallo – June 24, 1922; this document established friendly relations/cooperation between the German Reich and the nation that was to become the Soviet Union
- Potsdam Agreement – August 2nd 1945; divided Germany and Berlin into its respective zones

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Having formed treaties between one another following the World Wars, there were no other previous attempts to resolve the issue prior to 1948. Having witnessed the Soviets' blockade of West Berlin, the Allies pledged to airlift supplies to the inhabitants there. While this solved the problem of their definite starvation, it has not yet done anything to ease tensions between the powers at odds here. It is unknown how long this programme will be sustainable for, as it costs a great deal to airlift supplies somewhere let alone for so many hundreds of thousands of people for a sustained period.

Possible Solutions

The issue at hand is what to do to avoid future tensions between the ruling factions in Berlin and Germany as a whole. Looking back, we know that the Cold War resulted and we want to avoid this being sparked in our resolutions on this topic. Political solutions need to be found to prevent a war beginning due to the Stalin's wish to eradicate allied forces from Berlin. Berlin poses a threat to his rule because it allows the East Germans to see the prosperity and 'better life' of Germans elsewhere. It might be possible to establish a new capital city for West Germany outside of Berlin; this would eliminate this threat to Stalin, although leave him open to further invasion west of the current East German border. One of the USA's main goals at this time was containing the spread of communism however; their policy would be to take over Berlin in its entirety and rule Germany as one democratic nation. The Republic of China (as it was then) also retains a veto power in this council however; communism was still their ideology of choice so no clauses expressing outright favouring of democracy would pass.

The airlift begun by the Allies is widely known to be an unsustainable solution; what should the Allies do in the long run to secure their position in Berlin? They could attack East Berlin militarily, thereby attempting to control the whole city. Alternatively, they could abandon Berlin and hope that Stalin's power does not take over Germany. None of these solutions consider Germany's reactions; as a non-member state in the 1948 Security Council, it will be down to other nations to secure Germany's sovereignty, bearing in mind it is already controlled by external powers.

The Allied forces worked together throughout the Cold War, especially in the 1940s, in their favour, but bear in mind that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) also had a permanent seat in the Security Council at this time; decisions only favouring them would have been vetoed. Take note also that there were only 6 non-P5 members in the Security Council at this time; this means there are fewer votes available to achieve a majority in the case of P5 abstentions.

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Appendix

- I. Some nations that were in the Security Council no longer exist! In 1948, the member states were: Republic of China, France, United Kingdom, USA, USSR, Argentina, Colombia, Canada, Ukrainian SSR, Syria and Belgium. Try to find information on your nation's goals/issues in 1948; these will, for the most part no longer be relevant.