

After money would
significantly paralyze
the development of



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After the failure of negotiations at the Potsdam Conference, the cooperation between the victorious powers came to a standstill. Germany was divided into two parts but in 1946 there is no FRG and GDR yet. Berlin was divided in four occupation zones; the former capital was now the focal point of the East-West conflict. Since Berlin was geographically in the middle of the Soviet occupation zone, the Soviet Union wanted to raise the claim over Berlin. After the Second World War, the Reichsmark had lost its significance as official mean of exchange. The high war costs and the inflationary monetary policy drive the German currency into ruin.

The Americans and the British were considering a currency reform because they knew that the decline in the value of money would significantly paralyze the development of the German economy, but the Soviets were against it. They feared that an economic boom in West Germany would induce many people in the eastern sector to flee their zone, consequently the Soviet military administration blocked all roads to West Berlin, forcing the western powers to give up their claim to Berlin altogether. June 1948, marked the beginning of the Berlin Blockade, one of the first crises of the Cold War but also the worst. In this regard, the western powers decided to build an airlift to provide food for people in West Berlin. It meant that the United States flew with its own aircraft to Berlin to overcome the blockade of the Soviet Union. From June 24, 1948 to May 12, 1949 the West Berliners were supplied with food exclusively from the air.

In the end, the Soviets finally gave in, as the Western occupying powers and West Berliners were eager to persevere. The attempt failed to place the entire city under Soviet rule. This first crisis was launched by the Soviets but

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their goal wasn't to launch a world war, they wanted to know how far the Westerners would go, what were they ready to do to save Berlin.

This airlift was a success in West Berlin because no one died of starving but this is not the case in East Berlin. The means implemented by the Westerners were spectacular in order to show that they will not let themselves be intimidated by the Soviets. The Soviets' attitude stayed in the limits allowing to avoid the irretrievable, this is typical from the entry in the Cold War.

In West two items predominate: the economic reconstruction and European security through the U. S. umbrella. It has as consequence an increase in the tensions between East and West and made an agreement impossible. In 1949, in addition to the German division, there was also the division of Berlin into East/West half. The following years were characterized by continuous violations of the transit routes between Germany and West Berlin. The Soviet government repeatedly demanded the withdrawal of Western troops from all over Berlin. After a decade of relative calm, tensions flared again and the climax of this conflict was marked by the Berlin crisis in 1958, when the Western powers and Germany were given an ultimatum. Nearly 3 million refugees fled from east to west since the end of the blockade while the Allies resisted.

The Berlin crisis lasted until 1961 and was marked in August 1961 by the construction of the Berlin Wall. Indeed, there was no wall that separates GDR from FRG, the only wall was the one built in 1961 in Berlin. Between 1949 and 1961, 3, 5 million West Germans fled via Berlin to West and on August 12 some 2, 400 defectors left East Germany in a single day which

is the largest number that was ever identified. During the night of the 13th August 1961 the wall was built, people wanted to leave East Berlin but it was not possible anymore.

That night, Khrushchev gave the East German government permission to stop the flow of emigrants by closing its border for good. In just two weeks, the East German army, police force and volunteer construction workers had completed a makeshift barbed wire and concrete block wall—the Berlin Wall—that divided one side of the city from the other. The construction was made in a hurry but it was planned for two years but people had no idea how it would take place and how to do it. Until 1966, West Germany considered East as a Soviet area of occupancy. The Government in West did not recognize GDR and GDR did not recognize the other part of Germany. People were German, but German from West Germany. What also happened is that East Germany did not want to recognize the Oder-Neisse separation, this geographic separation between Poland and Germany.

Before 1945 Germany incorporated a part of Poland. The border lines were sensitive with the Oder-Neisse line and it was not possible to access West. There was no diplomatic relation between FRG and the popular democracy. There is often a link that is made between the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, because the most notable border was marked by the Berlin Wall and its Checkpoint Charlie. The Iron Curtain was marked by the Berlin Wall that was practically impassable and that was built on the initiative of Khrushchev to separate the Soviet zone from the American-British-French West-Berlin zone. Its popularity as a Cold War symbol is attributed to Winston

Churchill that used this term in a 12 May 1945 telegram he sent to U. S. President Harry S.

Truman regarding his concern about Soviet actions, stating “ an iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. We do not know what is going on behind”.

He was concerned about “ another immense flight of the German population westward as this enormous Muscovite advanced towards the center of Europe”. The 26 June 1963 when J. F. Kennedy 35th president of the United States made a speech while he was visiting West-Berlin to celebrate the 15th year of the Berliner blockade and pronounced the famous words: “ Ich bin ein Berliner” in this speech Kennedy wanted to show the support of the United States to the West-German citizens that were living in the middle of communist territories that were at that moment demarcated by the Berlin wall and that feared an invasion from the army of the Soviet bloc.

These tests of force will leave marks during a long period of time, they were analyzed and considered as something typical from the Cold war.