

283 941

DULLES

LESSONS OF BERLIN

1958

HARVARD
LAW
LIBRARY

76F
1661

76F
1461

76 F
1661

Be
④

JOHN FOSTER DULLES
Secretary of State



The Lessons of Berlin ^{copy}



THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MAY 8, 1958

Generated at Library of Congress on 2022-06-18 01:04 GMT / <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044052383941>
Public Domain, Google-digitized / http://www.hathitrust.org/access_use#pd-google

Address by
JOHN FOSTER DULLES
SECRETARY OF STATE

At a reception given in his honor
by the Berlin City Government

Berlin, Germany, May 8, 1958

76F
1661

THE LESSONS OF BERLIN

It is an inspiration to be again in Berlin--my fourth visit since the end of World War II.

I was here a few months after the close of hostilities. I then saw Berlin as a mass of rubble. It seemed that the city was beyond the possibility of reconstruction. I felt at the time that the plight of Berlin presented a challenge which was beyond human response. But that almost unbelievable challenge was in fact met through a display of human energy and human faith which has few parallels in history.

Then, in 1948, I rode the airlift to Berlin. The Soviet Union was at that time imposing an economic blockade which it seemed would force the city to succumb. But the courage and resourcefulness of the people of Berlin, and of the free nations which mounted and sustained the airlift, demonstrated that freedom had a resourcefulness and resilience which the despots had grossly underestimated. Berlin was not isolated. The attempted blockade was abandoned, and Berlin continued proudly to demonstrate within the captive world the good fruits of freedom.

I was next here in January 1954 to attend the four-power conference which it was hoped would bring about the reunification of Germany in freedom and the liberation of Austria. We were spurred in our effort by the tragic events of the preceding June and July, when the workers in East Berlin and the Soviet-occupied zone rose in a rebellion usually known as "June 17." This spontaneous, courageous, and brutally repressed demand by the workers for decent conditions made it the more urgent that the alien occupation should be ended and the liberation of Germany accomplished.

The Western representatives struggled valiantly, but in vain. The conference failed to achieve its specific goals. But the conference itself was not a vain thing. All the world judged the issues, and I said on my return home from that conference, the conference "cleared the way for other things.... The unification and the strengthening of West Europe may now go on." It did, in fact, go on. Sovereignty was restored to the Federal Republic of Germany; it

became a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a party to the Treaty for Western European Unity. And today the Federal Republic not only helps to build the institutions which, militarily and economically, will unify Western Europe, but, under its great Chancellor Adenauer, it plays a major role in the councils of the free world.

Today I am in Berlin for the fourth postwar visit and marvel at the accomplishments of your people, who, in the face of unprecedented handicaps, make Berlin a center of cultural and intellectual life and of industry.

On behalf of the President and people of the United States, I say "all honor" to the people of Free Berlin. It has been for us a privilege and an inspiration to be associated with you.

On the basis of my experience, Berlin ought to be required visiting, or, if that is impossible, the story of postwar Berlin ought to be required reading, by all who would understand the significance of the worldwide struggle which now preoccupies so much of the human race.

Berlin, a Tragic Symbol

A first lesson of Berlin is taught by your environment. You live here encircled by a surrounding ring of Communist rule. Your position in this respect is itself a tragic symbol of disregard for the pledged word. The Potsdam agreements of 1945 made it perfectly clear that the purpose of the military occupation was not to dismember Germany or permanently to divide it. And indeed until recently the Soviet Union admitted that it shared a responsibility to bring about the reunification of Germany. At the Geneva summit meeting of July 1955 President Eisenhower, together with the Prime Ministers of France and the United Kingdom, obtained formal recognition by the heads of the Soviet Government, including Mr. Khrushchev, that the four powers had "common responsibility for the settlement of the German question and the re-unification of Germany," and they agreed that "the settlement of the German question and the re-unification of Germany by means of free elections" should be carried out. Those engagements, it now seems, are evaded by the Soviet Union.

This illustrates the great difficulty of dealing with the Soviet Union.

Most governments believe that a moral sanction attaches to their engagements. They do not undertake solemn and precise international undertakings except with the intention of carrying them out. Their record of performances is not always perfect. But at least they do not look upon the making and their breaking of agreements as a legitimate technique for advancing their interests.

In the case of the Soviet Union it is otherwise. Its rulers are atheistic materialists. So far as they are concerned, their agreements carry no moral sanction. It often seems as though they treat the making and breaking of agreements as a legitimate international technique and that their promises are, as Lenin said, "like pie crusts, made to be broken."

That is why we find it so difficult to make progress in resolving political problems and in achieving limitation of armament. The attitude of the Soviet Union toward its agreements constitutes a grave obstacle.

You yourselves here in Berlin, you who are a living exhibit of Soviet violations of international agreements, surely understand. And your plight ought to teach the world that it is reckless to make concessions in reliance on Soviet promises merely because those promises are alluring.

Also you here see about you the tragic results of the application of the Communist thesis that individuals are not spiritual beings but merely physical particles to be used to promote the glorification of the Soviet Communist state and the extension of its dominion throughout the world. The steady flow of refugees from East Germany which continues at the high level of about 20,000 per month is an indisputable demonstration of which of our societies provides the most in the way of human opportunity, both in terms of economic livelihood and in terms of spiritual and cultural satisfaction. This steady flight from the East to West is the more significant because those who seek the West are in large part young people who throughout most of their mature lives have been subjected to the intense application of Communist doctrine and practice.

The Lesson of Faith

A second lesson that Berlin teaches is the immense capacity of human beings who are endowed with faith.

To me one of the most inspiring portions of the Holy Scripture is found in the letter of Paul to the Hebrews, where he recounts the great acts of faith which had marked the history of the Hebrew people. He concludes, "Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, . . . let us run with steadfastness the race that is set before us."

Surely the people of Berlin are writing a new and epic chapter in the history of steadfast faith and works. And even since these lines were written, you face a new obstacle in the arbitrary action of the Communist authorities in imposing what in effect is a confiscatory tax on waterway traffic between East and West Germany. But in the face of such discouragements and obstacles the like of which

few have ever had to encounter, you have rebuilt your city from its rubble. You have established here your Free University. You have reconstructed the Hall of the Technical University within the shattered ruins of its former imposing structure. You have rebuilt the Hansa Viertel as one of the most impressive urban developments in Europe. You have rebuilt your churches. And there has been a revival of drama, music, and of religious and intellectual life which demonstrates that the physical shackles to which you were subjected could be broken, and were broken, by faith in your great destiny and by hope and expectation of a richer and freer life to come.

No one can see the West Berlin of today without recognizing the extraordinary courage and inspiration that is making Berlin one of the great cities of Europe.

Let me say to you that I believe that your faith and hope in the future are not misplaced and will be rewarded.

I recall the somber meeting here in 1954 when the Soviet delegation adamantly opposed both the liberation of Austria and the reunification of Germany.

But in 1955 the Soviet Union suddenly decided to liberate Austria. That decision came as a surprise and in reversal of the uncompromising position which the Soviet Government had held for nearly a decade.

It shows that we need not despair for Germany and for Berlin. The day will come when, probably unexpectedly and without predictability, the Geneva pledge of 1955 will be fulfilled and Germany will be reunified in freedom.

Cooperative Action of the Free

A third lesson of Berlin is that there is a vast potential in the spiritual unity and practical cooperation of those everywhere who love freedom. Free Berlin and free Germany would never have achieved their present advances without the faith and works of their own people. But equally indispensable was the support of other free peoples.

Americans are proud of the part they have been privileged to play in this connection. The first clearing of the city and the reestablishment of the basic facilities--light, heat, power, sewers, and transport--were all carried out with German labor and planning, and with financial contributions from the United States.

The airlift which surmounted the Soviet blockade was conducted by the Western powers.

Following the end of the blockade there has been a well-planned development in the way of construction, both industrial and cultural, in all of which the United States has been glad to help. Here in Berlin cooperation has become real in stone and mortar, in halls of learning, in places of work and conference, in labor and in recreation.

Perhaps most important of all is the shield of power behind which these tasks of peace are carried forward.

I recall here the declaration which the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom and France and I made on October 3, 1954. We said:

The security and welfare of Berlin and the maintenance of the position of the Three Powers there are regarded by the Three Powers as essential elements of the peace of the free world in the present international situation. Accordingly they will maintain armed forces within the territory of Berlin as long as their responsibilities require it. They therefore reaffirm that they will treat any attack against Berlin from any quarter as an attack upon their forces and themselves."

I went over that declaration with President Eisenhower an hour before I left. We read it together. He authorized me to say that it stands and can be reaffirmed as a declaration of the solemn determination of the United States.

I know that the people of Berlin realize how significant for them has been the military deterrent which has provided the shield behind which their works of peace have gone forward. I hope that you and others will realize that the peace and security of all of the free world equally depend upon such a shield.

The Soviet Government is attempting by every device of propaganda to compel the abandonment of that shield. It claims that those who create that shield are proved by that fact to be evil militarists. It claims that those who draw together to get protection from that shield are "aggressive groupings." It claims that those who seek only defense should prove it by renouncing all but inferior weapons, leaving modern weapons to be a monopoly of those who have a tragically long record of expansion by the use of violence.

It claims that certain of our aerial defense precautions are dangerous and frightening. But when we try to make it possible to revise them on the basis of reciprocal international inspection that will give a large measure of assurance against surprise attack, the Soviets say "nyet." They did so again at the United Nations Security Council last week.

The Soviet Union professes not to want to use nuclear weapons but insists upon continuing at a feverish pace to multiply such weapons in its own arsenals. It calls the free world to rely upon Soviet promises not to use its nuclear weapons in the event of war despite the long record of broken promises to which I have alluded.

This Communist propoganda line is designed to produce a world dominated by the military power of the Sino-Soviet bloc. Freedom would have no adequate defense. There is a duty to look behind words that sound alluring and to see and reject the underlying plot against freedom.

I hope that the lessons of Berlin--the lesson taught by its surroundings, the lesson taught by its faith, and the lesson taught by the cooperative action of the free--will be applied to the larger context of world affairs.

All peoples in all the world, including the peoples of the Soviet Union, look with horror at the prospect of a new war. All would take any dependable steps to reduce that prospect and, above all, to eliminate the new weapons which threaten humanity with virtual extinction. But Berlin teaches that there cannot be confidence in mere Soviet Communist promises, that there cannot be safety in weakness. It also teaches that man is a spiritual being able, by faith, to perform miracles and that men of faith are not prepared to succumb to a rule that is atheistic and militaristic merely in the hope of thus insuring continued existence.

All men who are free--and all who having lost freedom would regain it--can pay homage to Berlin and learn and apply the lessons that it teaches.

This address may be quoted or reproduced without permission.

Department of State
Washington 25, D.C.

Public Services Division
Series S - No. 66

GPO 941785

