



THE EAST FINALLY SEALED OFF

On August 13, 1961 Khrushchev and Ulbricht cement German division

SITUATION ON THE GROUND

"The pneumatic drills have been rattling since about one in the morning, cutting a trench straight down Ebertstrasse here at the Brandenburg Gate. The trench is about half a meter deep and half a meter wide. The People's Police are here in their work clothes and the Fire Department as well... On the other side of the Brandenburg Gate stand some 30 trucks that brought the men here. Approximately... 50 uniformed men are guarding the Brandenburg Gate... They look over this way, some even smiling... One of them looked at me, and his expression said, 'listen to that sound, I'm making it especially for you, so you can get it on tape.'"

RIAS report of August 13, 1961.

**FOCUS ON
BERLIN!**

Fears the Allies have long expressed in secret dossiers become reality on the night of August 13, 1961. With political and military support from Moscow, GDR head of state Walter Ulbricht closes off access to the West once and for all in order to prevent the mass flight of his citizens and halt the economic decline of his country. The border strip of kilometers of barbed wire barriers and trenches slowly grows into a wall around

and through Berlin. It divides the city actual and the world symbolically into two power. The U.S.A., Britain, and France do not want take a risk at this moment, and they protest rather than march in. "This is not a very nice solution, but it is a hell of a lot better than says U.S. President John F. Kennedy, speaking the protecting powers.



Divided City



A final farewell

Special issue for the temporary exhibition "The Berlin Crisis and the Construction of the Wall"

Allied Museum +++ Aug. 12, 2011 to Jan. 8, 2012 +++ admission and the newspaper are free

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LETTER FROM BERLIN

"THAT WAS PRETTY CLOSE TO STARTING A WAR..."

This is how the U.S. soldier David A. Rabert experienced the halting of the U.S. convoy in Babelsberg

"A Russian came into the checkpoint here and said he wanted to speak to a representative of the checkpoint. He was a Russian Officer and was here for about 10 minutes and had a conversation with one of our interpreters on the phone. They were holding the convoy and wouldn't let the 3 drivers or 3 vehicles return until they searched the vehicles. The drivers wouldn't let them as it was against their orders when they left this checkpoint. Naturally there was [sic] a lot of Officers and other people interested in it with discussions between the Russian & American representatives. Finally the commanding General here had 5 tanks load up with 90MM shells and alerted the Infantry and was going to send them to the Russian checkpoint here to get the men back. The tanks had just started to pull out of Tank Co. when a man ran out & stopped them as a call come through that the 3 soldiers and 3 vehicles were just released. That was pretty close to starting a war..."



Excerpt from a letter of Dec. 5, 1958 from David A. Raberts to his parents.

Khrushchev's Ultimatum

Khrushchev Threatens to Throw the Allies Out

Soviet head of state presents Western Allies with an ultimatum. The Americans, British, and French have six months to leave West Berlin



27. 11. 1958 Moscow/Berlin

The situation in Berlin has been worsening for weeks. Allies traveling to West Berlin are subject to repeated harassment. Only a few days ago, in a show of power, Soviet soldiers stopped an American truck convoy at the Babelsberg checkpoint. This was only a prelude to the ultimatum issued by Soviet head of state Nikita Khrushchev. On November 27, he holds a gun to the collective heads of the Western powers. In a diplomatic note,

he threatens to make a peace treaty with the GDR within six months and turn over the rights of control for West Berlin. It is his wish that West Berlin become a free, demilitarized city. Khrushchev's demands are tantamount to an eviction order. The Allies remain unyielding, however: as a symbol of the free world, West Berlin remains a militarily and politically indispensable outpost in the Cold War. The second Berlin crisis after 1948-49 begins.



WESTERN REACTIONS

Dwight D. Eisenhower

"The United States has to stand firm even should the situation come down to the last and ultimate decision, although neither I nor the State Department believe it will ever be allowed to go to that terrible climax. You should not think of this as the beginning of the end, but don't think it is possible to end tension by walking away from it."

Harold Macmillan

"The Berlin issue is in fact an ultimatum with six months to run. We shall not be able to avoid negotiation... Will it necessarily lead to discussion of the future of a united Germany and possibly disengagement plans? ... It would certainly not be bad politics for us to take the lead in suggesting it."

Charles de Gaulle

"You have our unwavering support... Let us keep a cool head and wait and see what happens. I do not think that the Russians want to force a showdown... Besides, they do not have the necessary strength."



Konrad Adenauer

"It has, after all, been our experience that the Soviets have backed off every time they encountered energetic resistance, and I am convinced that in the case of Berlin, too, the Russians will undertake nothing to endanger the peace if the powers responsible for the city maintain a clear and unambiguous line on the city's freedom."