

Editorial

Berlin: pawn in a policy swindle

Right after Christmas, the ambassadors of the United States, France, and England in Moscow presented a *démarche* for a change in the status of Berlin, which was accepted by the acting Soviet Foreign Minister Kovalyov. The procedure was unusual, and indicates that more is involved than Berlin, since otherwise, the three Western city commanders in Berlin would have applied to the Soviet administration in the Eastern Zone. Even the government of the Federal Republic of Germany received only an "outline" of the content of the *démarche*.

Keep in mind that over the past 12 months, the Soviets have repeatedly used Berlin as the target in an ugly show of military threats against West Germany. *EIR* highlighted this in a May 15, 1987 cover story, and in the second edition of the *Global Showdown* special report on the Soviet war build-up, subtitled, "The zero option and the Berlin crisis of 1987." During this entire year, other Western press, anxious to promote a false climate of *détente* in the prelude to the INF Treaty, have been silent.

What is going on now with Berlin? The word in Bonn and the Berlin Senate is that it has to do with Ronald Reagan's June 12, 1987 "Wall Speech," in which he requested that Berlin be changed into an air traffic center between East and West, and exclaimed, "Mr. Gorbachov, tear down the wall!"

It also has to do with making Berlin into a center of diplomacy between East and West, on the model of the United Nations in New York and the large international conference centers in Geneva and Vienna. As the U.S. ambassador in Bonn, Richard Burt, intimated on Jan. 13, the divided city has been selected as a symbol of INF diplomacy: "Cooperation should become manifest in Berlin."

Burt's remark makes clear that what is *not* afoot, is any step toward fulfillment of German hopes since 1945, for eliminating the sector boundaries and paving the way to reunification; it is rather a matter of "cooperation among the Allies." As Berliners in particular have

learned time and time again, these are two very different things. Berlin is subordinate to the supreme power of the four victors of World War II, which view the city primarily as a focal point of conflict among themselves, and only secondarily as the "connecting bracket of the Germany question."

Berlin, therefore, is for the Allies a place like the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, or Afghanistan, on which symbolic agreements will be made or even conflicts be settled, which exclusively concern global political differences between the World War II victors.

After the withdrawal of the Soviets from the Allied Control Commission in 1948, the Berlin Blockade, and the subsequent Berlin crises, as well as the demolition of the Spandau Prison after the death of Rudolf Hess, the Air Control Committee is the last remaining institution in which all four of the powers still sit at a common table. Here is the origin of Reagan's initiative to make Berlin into an air traffic center between East and West. The goal of the *démarche*, however, according to government circles in Washington, is not primarily to settle the air traffic question, but rather a "symbolic cooperation" in the efforts to make the Germans warm up to the INF era.

Precisely because Berlin has a great political-emotional value for Germans, here is an appropriate starting point for the massage of minds with which Reagan and Gorbachov intend to psychologically lather opponents of the INF Treaty in the Federal Republic in particular. Quite possibly, certain political concessions will be made that will irritate the East German Socialist Unity Party and their claim (contrary to the Four Power Agreement) that Berlin is the "capital of the German Democratic Republic."

We can expect that all these developments will be adroitly packaged for the West German public as "great gains on the German question." In truth, they are meant merely to distract the Germans from the devastating strategic effects of withdrawing American troops from the Federal Republic, with a swindle over Berlin.