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ERIKA MANN

As an American ~~War~~ ^{post} Correspondent, I drove into Berlin on July 3rd, 1945, the very day the Western allies first entered the German capital. It had not been easy to get there. Countless detours, stops and formalities - all Russian-enforced -- had served continually to remind us that we were travelling through Soviet controlled territory and that while our right to be in Berlin had been clearly established, all was different when it came to getting in and out of the ruined city. There did not then - and there does not now - exist any written agreement authorizing us to pass through the Soviet Zone on our way to or from Berlin. This is a fairly important fact, and one which the Russians are certain to deem very important. For all their alienating inaccessibility and their habitual disdain of the truth, the Russians are not in the habit of breaking written treaties. And had our diplomats and top-ranking specialists but remembered that a person's right to be at a certain place doesn't mean a thing unless it includes his right to get there, the present crisis would scarcely have arisen. - But why, you may ask, if the Russians might have blockaded Berlin from the outset, did they wait until now? Here is why: Until recently we had a very good reason for being in Berlin. As long as both the Russians and the Western powers held on to the concept of one Germany, governed by the Allied Control Council at Berlin, we were obviously entitled to be in Berlin and any Russian move to deny us road and rail access to the city would have been utterly unjustifiable in a Shylok-like sort of way. This ~~change~~ ^{picture} changed radically the moment we declared our intention to establish an independent Western ^{German} state with Frankfurt as its capital. By doing so, we served official notice that we had ceased even theoretically to consider Germany an entity; that the four power government had ceased

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to function; and that, consequently, our presence in Berlin, more than a hundred miles inside the Soviet Zone had ceased to make ^{any} ~~any~~ sense whatever. Unfortunately, this last conclusion was never arrived at by our policy-makers. If it had, we could have left Berlin, carrying our heads very high, and without the loss of one penny's worth of prestige. Instead, we stayed and waited for the Russians to take the inevitable action. And once they'd acted, once the blockade and the squeeze were on, ~~hphh~~ departure was out. We would not and could not yield to pressure but insisted that no Russian step short of war would prompt us to quit. In Washington, the strongest measures were being pondered. Should we invade the Soviet Zone with armed convoys? Would full scale economic sanctions against the Soviet Union do the trick? But then, our recent contributions to the economic recovery of the U.S.S.R. had been infinitesimal; if we now stopped all deliveries, the Russians might not even notice. To make matters worse, our European allies failed to appreciate our proposed Berlin policy. They ~~were~~ frightened. War, they know better than we do, is something unspeakably horrid, and much, though any Marshall-plan-country is bound to like the face of America, nobody wants to risk war just to save that face.- Somewhat lonely for all their toughness, our policy makers eventually decided to negotiate rather than force the issue. The Berlin problem, we discovered, is not an isolated one but closely inter~~p~~related with all questions pertaining to Germany and Europe as a whole. Unless general agreement can be reached with Russia~~y~~ on this entire complex, any possible solution of the Berlin dilemma would be temporary and insufficient.- As we speak here tonight, the scope and essence of our present talks with the Soviets are still unknown. But only if these talks are being conducted in a spirit of give and take, may worthwhile results be expected. If the Russians are to lift the blockade and sign an agreement authorizing us to use certain Soviet controlled land corridors,

on our way to and from Berlin, we shall have to give them something in exchange. Just what this something might consist of, it is hard to say. Most probably the Russians would want us to abandon the plan for the establishment of a Western German state; and equally probably, we'd refuse to do so. For, this projected state forms an important part of the American Masterplan for the economic and military control of Western Europe and is considered indispensable to the success of the Marshall Plan. Russia, of course, could simply be offered a little money; small loans might be granted to Poland and Czechoslovakia; and Eastern Europe might be promised a modest share in the production of the Ruhr. But no matter how little we may be prepared to pay, we shall have to pay something - or get out of Berlin.

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