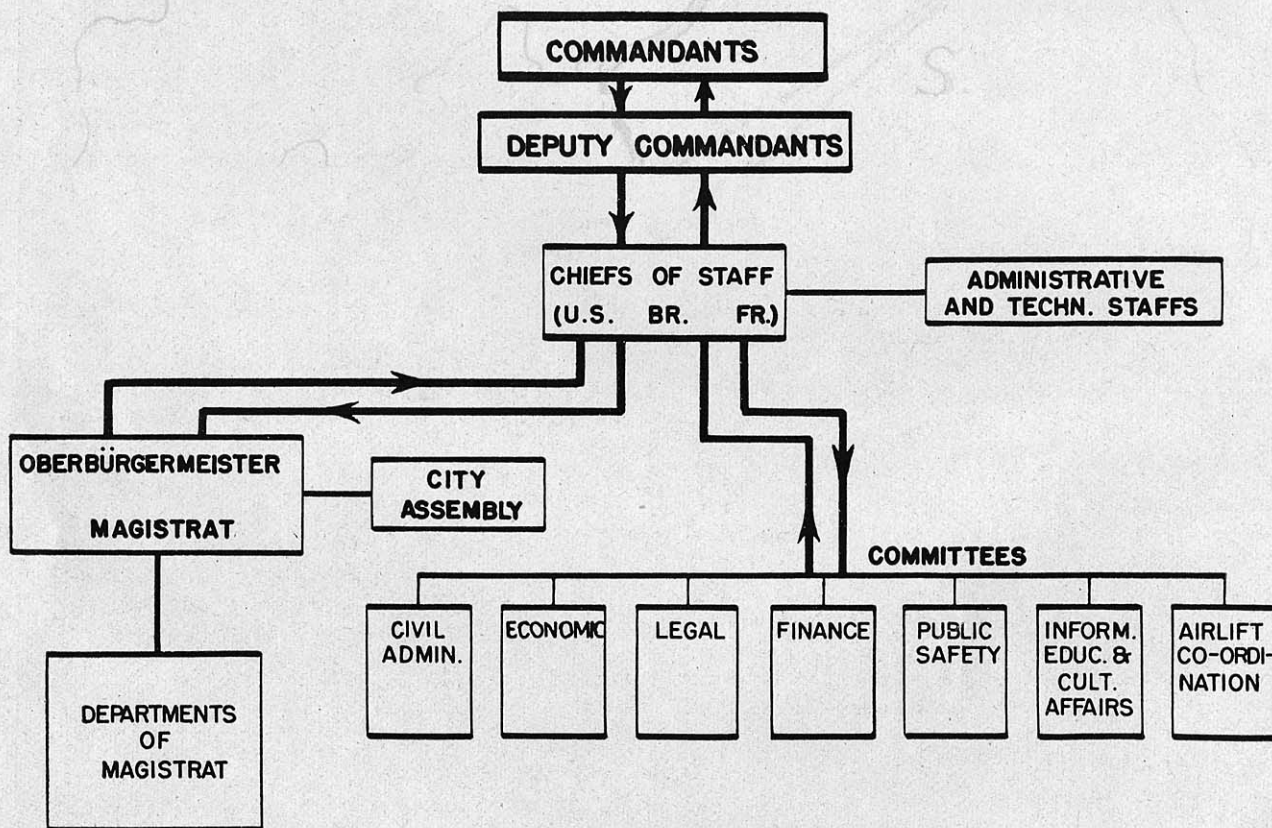


# STRUCTURE OF THE ALLIED KOMMANDATURA BERLIN

(Following the Devolution of Authority to the Magistrat on May 14, 1949)





Maj. Gen. Bourne (Brit.)      Brig. Gen. Howley (U.S.)      Maj. Gen. Kotikov (USSR)      Maj. Gen. Ganeval (Fr.)

# ALLIED KOMMANDATURA BERLIN

The Allied Kommandatura Berlin is a modest administration building in the southwest corner of the former German capital, a building which for the past four years has witnessed—on a down-to-earth level—the most crucial effort at international cooperation since the end of the war.

For here representatives of France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States have sought together to administer and to revivify the battered city of Berlin. And here has been played out in close focus the world-wide struggle for dominion of widely contrasting ideological concepts.

It was on July 11, 1945, while fires still smoldered and many of the war dead were still unburied, that the Four-Power Commandants first met, and two weeks later the Allied Kommandatura Berlin was formally established in its permanent headquarters. At their first meetings the Commandants agreed that the basic functions of Military Government—problems of communications, of food and fuel supply, transportation, education, and public health—would be handled by quadripartite committees within the Kommandatura.

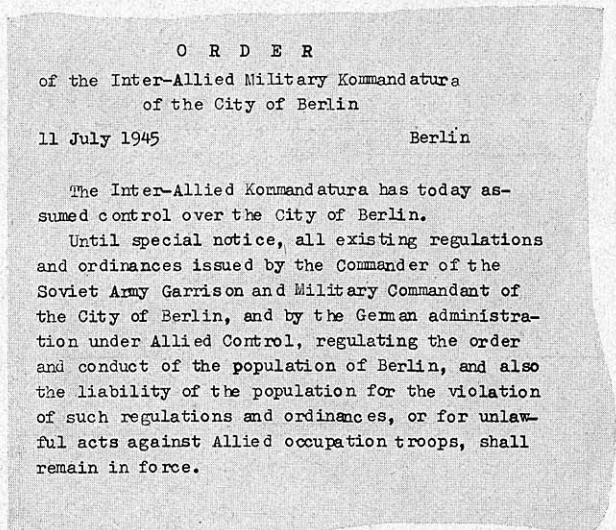
### Sectoral Autonomy Retained

Gradually the number of committees was expanded to more than twenty, covering nearly all aspects of Berlin life. The Kommandatura was concerned, however, only with problems common to all four sectors of Berlin. Questions peculiar to one sector were handled by the Sector Commandant without consultation with his colleagues. Committees were obliged to obtain unanimous agreement on all problems, and in the event of disagreement the subject was referred up to the Deputies or to the Commandants. Unless the Commandants could

reach unanimity, the paper was withdrawn, or—in the case of problems with ramifications beyond the city level—the Commandants could refer the problem to the Allied Control Authority, the highest governing body in Germany. The Kommandatura worked well during its first months of existence. It was not difficult to reach agreement as to the restoration of railroads and repair of essential buildings, the quantity of food to be rationed to the Germans, the security and public health measures to be taken.

### Soviets Force Political Issues

As the months passed, however, political aspects of the Kommandatura's work began to take on a



First of nearly 1,200 quadripartite orders to the Magistrat.



*Bitter wrangling increased month by month at Commandants' and Deputies' meetings as the Soviets used every trick to gain complete control of Berlin by quasi-legal tactics. Sessions which had previously lasted 5 or 6 hours now extended deep into the night.*



deeper tone. It became increasingly apparent that the Soviets intended to pattern Berlin political life as much as possible after that existing in Russia.

The colonizing of German city departments with puppet communists, the retaliatory measures taken against Germans who did not follow the communist "party line," the strident propaganda campaign undertaken against the Western Allies in the Soviet-sponsored press and radio—these and other tactics more and more characterized the attitude and activities of the Russians in Berlin.

In the Kommandatura itself dilatory and harassing techniques were increasingly employed by the Soviet delegation. Meetings, which previously had lasted from ten o'clock in the morning until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, now continued until midnight and beyond. It became clearly evident that the Russians, having failed to achieve their total aims in Berlin, were seeking an excuse to bring to an end the entire Allied Kommandatura.

### **Soviets Walk Out**

On the night of June 16, 1948—when rumors were circulating that the Western Allies would shortly institute a currency reform in the western zones of Germany—the Soviet delegation abruptly withdrew from the Commandants' meeting.

The meeting had been wrangling all day and there had been success in reaching agreement on only one minor subject. Towards midnight, Colonel Howley stated that he was tired, would ask to be excused, and would leave his deputy to carry on.



*Committee meetings also developed into heated exchanges of strongly opposing views. Four-Power agreement, towards the end, became difficult on even simple technical matters.*



Although it was perfectly proper procedure for a deputy to replace his commandant, the Soviets—after hasty consultation with their political commissar—decided to take offense at Colonel Howley's action. The Soviet Commandant, Major General A. G. Kotikov, declared that his group would not return until Colonel Howley had apologized for his actions, and,

to a man, the Soviet group walked out of the meeting.

Quadrupartite committees continued to function for nearly a fortnight, although the Soviet member did not appear at all scheduled meetings. On July 1, 1948, (nearly a week after the Soviet blockade had been imposed on West Berlin), the Soviet Chief of Staff announced that his delegation would no longer participate in the quadrupartite meetings on any level. A Soviet clerical staff remained in the building until August 1, gradually moving out its files and equipment. On that date, the red flag was pulled down and the four-power Kommandatura ceased to exist.

From the Soviet defection onwards, the three Western Commandants continued to hold unofficial meetings in the offices of their headquarters. Committees carried on their usual activities without their fourth member. Instead of issuing Berlin Kommandatura orders, however, the Commandants issued unilateral orders, each to his own sector, but simultaneously and in accord with each other.



This state of affairs continued until November 8, 1948, when it was decided that the committees would resume their work at the Allied Kommandatura. The Commandants and their Deputies followed them shortly after. Since that time, the Allied Kommandatura has operated as before, despite the absence of its fourth member.

During the Soviet-imposed blockade of Berlin, from June 24, 1948, until May 12, 1949, the character



*Kotikov scowls at a French proposal during one of the last quadripartite sessions of the Berlin Kommandatura.*

of the work at the Allied Kommandatura changed considerably. It was no longer possible to sit at committee tables and to work solely for the rehabilitation of the city. It was necessary during this critical period to maintain the basic life of the city on a minimum level of subsistence, and to counteract the repeated efforts of the Soviets to wean the German population from the ideals of western democracy to those of Russian communism.

#### **Firm Tripartite Cooperation During Blockade**

Cooperation between the three Western Allies, on all levels of the Kommandatura reached a new high. Disagreements were infrequent, but the strain of anticipating Soviet moves and of preparing counter-measures in time became very great.

Shortly after the blockade was imposed, the Air Lift Coordination Committee (see page 31) was added to the Kommandatura, and it became for the duration of the emergency one of the most important committees. Commandants' meetings, which formerly had been held on a regularly scheduled basis, were now called on very short notice as one crisis arose after another.

During this period also, the Commandants came into increasingly closer relationship with the elected German city officials. When, for example, the question of outlawing Soviet Zone currency in the western sectors was agreed upon, German officials were informed in advance and were asked to make suggestions to the Kommandatura Finance Committee. When the question arose as to whether Berliners should have more food or more coal, a German opinion proved valuable.

The population of the western sectors remained solidly behind the moves taken by the Western Commandants, even through the long, cold winter

of 1948-49. An increasing sense of responsibility on the part of elected officials and the people's growing consciousness of their role in the government made it possible on May 14, 1949, to alter considerably the relationship of the Kommandatura to the Berlin City Government.

#### **Sweeping Powers To City Government**

On that date, the Kommandatura issued a "Statement of Principles Governing the Relationship between the Allied Kommandatura and Greater Berlin". That declaration devolved great legislative authority to the Berlin City Government, cancelling more than half of the orders issued by the Kommandatura during the previous four years and retaining only a minimum of reserved powers for the Allied military governments.

The procedure of Kommandatura administration was revised. Commandant voting, which previously had to be always unanimous, was now to be on a majority basis, except in the case of reserved powers. Moreover, legislation passed by the German City Assembly, which was formerly required to have Kommandatura approval before becoming law, now automatically became operative twenty-one days after its submission to the Kommandatura, unless specifically disapproved.

In accordance with the four-power Paris Agreement in June, 1949, the four Commandants of Berlin met on July 12th to discuss a *modus vivendi* for the city. The meeting was short and not especially



*The Soviet member of the Kommandatura Guard—and the Soviet ilag—have been absent since July, 1948.*

successful. The three Western Commandants asked the Soviet representative why, for example, truck transport was not moving normally into Berlin, as had been required by the Lake Success order ending the blockade. The Soviet Commandant disclaimed any knowledge of such a situation and displayed the same specious tactics of evasion, quibbling, and equivocation as a year earlier. It is thus still impossible to determine whether the Russians have any desire to cooperate in solving the problems of a split city.