Note by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Henderson, on his visit to Germany, dated 7 July 1948

SECRET

Berlin

There is complete unanimity of view in support of your declared policy not to leave Berlin. This view is held not only throughout all ranks of the Control Commission personnel whom I met, but also by the German representatives (S.D.P., C.D.U. and L.D.P.)[[1]](#footnote-1) with whom I talked. In both these quarters it is recognised that the exclusion of the Western Allies from Berlin would be the first step to their exclusion from Western Germany, and that Russian influence up to the Rhine would endanger both France and Italy. The moral resistance of the Germans is good. But there is no doubt that they are apprehensive lest we should for any reason allow Berlin to pass into exclusive ambit. If this should happen, confidence in the Western Allies would completely disappear.

The next point which is exercising the minds of the Germans most at the present moment is currency reform in Berlin. They are disappointed that the Deutschmark has not been made the sole currency in the Western Zones of Berlin and they fear that the present arrangement will virtually ensure that the economic life of the Western Zones will inevitably become an integral part of the economic life of the Eastern Zone and the Russian Sector of Berlin.

The air lift in the British Zone is increasing daily. The total lift between Saturday midday and Sunday midday reached a substantial total (about 500 times), and it is expected that during the present week the maximum will be achieved on the basis of the number of planes available.

While Russian intentions may be unpredictable I found no one who believed that they were thinking in terms of war to achieve their objectives in Berlin. It is considered that a political and diplomatic policy of firmness without provocation, supported by sustained air lift of supplies to Berlin, is the one best calculated to bring about a resumption of our freedom of movement into and out of Berlin through the corridor.

[TNA, CAB 129/28/176]

Keywords: post-war Germany, great power relations

1. The Social Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Union, and the Liberal Democratic Party, founded in July 1946. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)