

Subject master

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 July, 1984

Dear Roger,

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNING MAYOR
OF BERLIN, 11 JULY AT No.10

The Prime Minister received a visit from Herr Diepgen, Governing Mayor of Berlin, this morning. Herr Diepgen was accompanied by Herr von Alten, the German Chargé d'Affaires. Sir Julian Bullard was also present.

Herr Diepgen said that the Prime Minister's visit to Berlin was still remembered. He would like to present her with a memento of her visit, a film 'The British in Berlin'. The Prime Minister said that she had been thrilled by her visit and found it a deeply moving experience. Viewing East Berlin from the observation platform had given her a vivid picture of the reality of life on the other side. The Prime Minister continued that she had been surprised to learn of the growing numbers of people allowed to leave East Germany. She would be interested in Herr Diepgen's views on the reasons for this.

Herr Diepgen prefaced his remarks by saying that Berliners had a strong interest in East/West dialogue and in particular in contact between the two parts of Germany. On the specific point raised by the Prime Minister he thought that the GDR leadership had made a misjudgement. They had thought by letting out a large number of people they would ease pressure for the lifting of restrictions. The opposite had been the case. The expectation had been created that a lot more would be allowed to leave. The Prime Minister enquired whether those who were coming over from the East were mostly older people. Herr Diepgen said that, on the contrary, they were mainly young families with children. The Prime Minister asked whether Berlin could cope with the influx. Herr Diepgen said that in general they could. A number of those who came were people with personal problems and they found it difficult to integrate whether in East or West Germany. Skilled workers could be integrated within a few weeks. But there was more of a problem with professional people, particularly teachers,

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whose qualifications did not match the guidelines laid down in Berlin and the Federal Republic.

The Prime Minister commented that the influx of so many people offered a remarkable opportunity to learn more about how people thought in East Germany. Presumably a lot of them already had a clear picture of life in Berlin and the Federal Republic from television. Herr Diepgen said that interestingly the greater part of those leaving East Germany came from areas beyond the reach of West German television. There were many factors affecting their decision to leave. For instance the desire for religious education, concern about the prospects for their children. But in his view the strongest reason was their refusal to be treated by the East German regime as babies, with everything decided for them. They wanted to arrange their lives as they wanted. Sir Julian Bullard said that he had received very much the same impression when he had visited East Germany last week. The Prime Minister wondered whether the same was true of other East European countries. Herr Diepgen thought there were differences. There was indeed general pressure throughout Eastern Europe for more freedom. But the special links between the two Germanies, the fact of a shared culture, language, even the same pop idols, gave a particular incentive to East Germans to want to move. Herr Diepgen expected the easing of travel restrictions to be one of the main issues for discussion during Herr Honecker's visit to the FRG in the autumn.

Herr Diepgen said that he wished to raise a particular problem concerning the construction of a firing range at RAF Gatow. This was an environmental problem which raised considerable emotion in West Berlin. Litigation had been initiated in the United Kingdom. This raised sensitive legal problems affecting the status of Berlin. The issue could also affect relations between Berliners and the protecting power. The Prime Minister said that British forces had to be trained. They could not provide protection for Berlin without it. If Berlin wanted one it must accept the need for the other. Herr Diepgen agreed that training was necessary but the problems caused could not be ignored. Herr von Alten added that limitations on legal redress in West Berlin were a political problem. There was also the risk that a decision by the High Court could have implications for the legal status of Berlin. The Prime Minister commented that those who had brought the action should have thought of that.

Herr Diepgen said that he also wished to raise a problem about conscientious objectors in Berlin. As the Prime Minister would know, Berlin was a demilitarised zone. Some 10 - 12 thousand conscientious objectors had come to West Berlin to escape military service in the Federal

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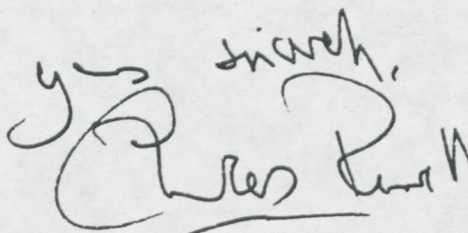
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Republic. A significant minority was therefore growing up which expressed strong anti-Western feelings. The people of Berlin did not want this. The Prime Minister asked whether they were genuine conscientious objectors or draft dodgers. Herr Diepgen said that they were predominantly the latter. He continued that he wanted it to be possible for draft dodgers to be served with their call-up papers in Berlin or summonsed by courts in the Federal Republic. However Allied instructions prevented this. This was another example of how Berlin's special status gave rise to problems. If the Senat started returning draft dodgers to the Federal Republic it might lead to Soviet protests. Sir Julian Bullard pointed out that it was not simply a question of Soviet protests. The allies themselves had to have regard for the special status of Berlin. Herr Diepgen said that the status must of course be preserved but should be interpreted in a way to allow the City to be viable. The Prime Minister said that she agreed that Berlin should not become a city of draft dodgers. That could affect the will to defend it. But the legal questions were complex and Herr Diepgen should discuss them in more detail during his call at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

I should say that the Prime Minister was rather surprised that Herr Diepgen raised these two rather detailed points in his call on her. She notes that one of them was referred to only in passing in her brief, the other not at all. She would have liked warning that Herr Diepgen was going to raise these matters and to have been more fully briefed on them.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

yes sincere,


Charles Powell

R. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

13 July 1984

Dear Governing Mayor

I should like to thank you again for the kind gift of the film 'The British in Berlin'. I look forward to watching this in a quiet moment.

I found our talk very useful and am grateful to you for bringing me up-to-date with developments in Berlin.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Herr Eberhard Diepgen.

EC

Der Regierende Bürgermeister von Berlin

CF

No reply
required
2.30/18



15. Oktober 1984

Lia

The Rt. Hon.
Margaret Thatcher, PC, MP
Premierminister des Vereinigten Königreichs
Großbritannien und Nordirland
10, Downing Street

London, SW 1

Exzellenz,

vom Gesandten und Stellvertretenden Stadtkommandanten in Berlin, Herrn D. J. Wyatt, wurden mir von Ihnen signierte Aufnahmen als Andenken an meinen London-Besuch übersandt, für die ich Ihnen herzlich danke.

Gerne denke ich an meinen Aufenthalt in London und den dort geführten offenen Gedankenaustausch zurück.

In der Hoffnung, unser Gespräch eines Tages - vielleicht in Berlin - fortsetzen zu können, verbleibe ich

mit freundlichen Grüßen

Eberhard Diepgen

GERMANY: Visit by Mayor of Berlin

March '79



15. Oktober 1984

The Rt. Hon.
Margaret Thatcher, PC, MP
Premierminister des Vereinigten Königreichs
Großbritannien und Nordirland
10, Downing Street

London, SW 1

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kommandanten in Berlin, Herrn D. J. Watt,
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Eberhard Diepgen