Germans Take Stock of Conditions On Anniversaries

By JOSEPH B. FLEMING
United Press International

Berlin – (UPI) – West Berlin this week marks a victory and defeat – anniversaries of the Soviet blockade and the East German workers revolt.

Both anniversaries always are a time for stock-taking, for looking back and ahead and asking "can it happen again?"

The answer is "yes." But a repetition of either event is considered most unlikely in the near future.

So far as a blockade goes, the Russians are playing down their four and a half year old campaign to get the western allies out of Berlin. And western diplomats believe the Communists with Russian backing are firmly in control in East Germany although as always there is discontent aggravated by shortages and now the Berlin wall.

The 10th anniversary of the revolt in Germany June 17 overshadowed the 15th anniversary of the beginning of the blockade even though the revolt was crushed by Russian tanks and an allied airlift beat the blockade.

Recall Defeats

Germans appear to recall their defeats more vividly than their victories, perhaps because they have had more of them in recent times.

June 17 is an annual holiday in West Germany and every year the same discussions arise on how the day should be spent.

Rallies and observances are held in West Berlin and West Germany to pay tribute to the 50 known dead who laid down their lives for freedom. Many West Germans use the day for fun or rest and pay scant attention to its original meaning.

But many others regard the anniversary as an occasion to consider the whole problem of the future of Germany, its split and the Berlin wall.

The problem is so involved, seemingly so incapable of solution, that many consider a picnic or beach trip on the day an unpatriotic act, a sign of indifference to Germany's future.

The revolt anniversary is a suitable day to consider the 18-year-old division of Germany and the uncertain future because the revolt showed that the Russians would not allow East Germans to throw off their Communist regime.

The revolt began as a protest of East Berlin construction workers against a speed-up that called for more work for less pay.

This spark fanned an uprising that swept away Communist rule in many East German cities.

BERLIN UPRISING – German workers are shown throwing stones at Russian tanks during anti-Soviet uprising in East Berlin in 1953. The date of the 36-hour revolt is a national holiday in West Germany. (UPI)

As in Hungary little more than three years later, brutal Russian force crushed the revolt. As in Hungary, the Russian claim that the people supported Communism was exposed as a myth for all the world to see. But what of the future?

Will the Russians ever allow East Germans to be reunited with the West as they wish? Will free elections ever be held to reunify the nation? How long will the division of Germany continue and how will the division ever be ended?

These questions were in the back of German minds on June 17. And there appeared to be no answers.

This has caused frustration, some bitterness and some voices have been raised to assert that the western allied plan, the West German government's policy, cannot lead to unity.

There even has been some advocacy of acceptance of the Communist plan to form an East-West German confederation.

Confederation Plan

This East German confederation plan is based on the neutrality of Germany, on the withdrawal of West Germany from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in fact, on the withdrawal of West Germany from its pro-Western course.

The dangers in such a plan are obvious. It is rejected by the West German government and by the Socialist opposition.

If the Russians want to take the risk of war they might blockade Berlin again.

But the United States has made it plain time and again that it will not allow itself to be forced from Berlin.

"Airlift" has become a magic word because Anglo-American aircraft kept West Berlin alive during the 320-day blockade.

But since those post-war days West Berlin has become the largest industrial city in Germany. Its 2.2 million people no longer could be expected to put up with the near-starvation rations of the blockade days.

Even with larger transport planes in the long run a modern industrial city cannot be kept prosperous and thriving supplied by air.

Blockade Doubted

Therefore it is extremely doubtful that the Western Allies again will allow their land routes to Berlin to be blockaded.

An airlift would be of value, however, for a limited time to allow the West and the Russians to negotiate.

At the beginning of the 1948-49 airlift, no one thought it could be done. It surprised both the Western Allies and the Russians.

Eight days after the Soviets closed down the last land links through East Germany to West Berlin 15 years ago two U. S. B-17 flying fortresses landed at Templehof airfield with medical supplies.

The two aircraft grew to 32 the next day–June 26, the official day listed as the start of the airlift. Soon a vast fleet roared into three West Berlin bases day and night through rain and fog and winter cold. But the situation looked grim and war very near June 18, 1948, when the Soviets announced their total blockade.

It took the Soviets 320 days to admit their mistake. They ended the blockade May 12, 1949.

Peacetime Operation

The Berlin airlift was the greatest peacetime military operation in aviation history. It delivered 2,343,301 tons of food, coal, building material and other supplies in 277,264 flights.

From all over the world U. S. C54 skymasters, C47s, British Dakotas (DC3's) and Yorks were summoned to Germany to form the combined Anglo-American task force.

Planes landed at Templehof at the rate of every three minutes and less. On the record day of April 16, 1949, a plane landed at Templehof almost every minute of the 24 hours. On that day, 12,940 tons were carried to the city in 1,398 flights.

The airlift cost the lives of 31 American airmen, 39 British airmen and seven German passengers.

West Berliners learned to live with the blockade just as they have learned to live with the wall.

As the blockade dragged on it hardly was news any more. But there were many brief stories like this one that illustrated the knowledge of West Berliners that only the lift kept them alive:

"The two little girls said 'we want to thank you for keeping us from being hungry' and they handed the pilot who had just landed at Templehof a bouquet of flowers."

Religion in America

Vacation Bible Schools Given Credit for Effective Teaching

By LOUIS CASSELS
UPI Correspondent

During the next few weeks, millions of American children who attend public schools will be exposed to an intensive experience in religious education.

Many of them will learn more about the Bible than they learn at Sunday school all year long.

With public schools shutting down for the summer, churches across the nation will seize the opportunity to claim a somewhat larger share of young people's time than the one hour a week customarily allotted to formal religious training.

The chief agencies for intensive religious education are (1) vacation Bible schools; and (2) summer camps and conferences.

More than 100,000 Protestant churches conduct vacation Bible schools each summer. Total enrollment last year was estimated at more than 8 million. The typical school is in session three hours a day, five days a week, for two or three weeks.

Do Effective Job

Even with time out for handicrafts and play activities, the total teaching time approximates that available in a whole year of Sunday classes. Because it is "consecutive time"—without a week's lapse between classes—and because there's no competition with public school requirements if the teachers wish to assign homework, vacation Bible schools can do an effective job of Christian education.

They also have proved to be great evangelistic agencies for reaching children who don't attend Sunday school. Many congregations report that about half of the children enrolled in vacation Bible schools come from previously "unchurched" families.

The first vacation Bible school was organized in Hopedale, Ill., in 1894 by Mrs. D. G. Miles, wife of a Methodist pastor.

"Although churches were slow to recognize its values, vacation Bible school is accepted today as one of our most important resources in Christian education," says the Rev. Charles F. Treadway of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Catholic church has its own version of vacation Bible school in the Summer Schools of Religion conducted throughout the country by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. About 2 million Catholic children who attend public schools will be enrolled in Confraternity summer schools this year. They will go to school three hours a day for four weeks, or six hours a day for two weeks.

Derive More Profit

"We find that our public school children derive more profit from the summer school of religion than from the entire year of once-a-week Catechism classes," says the Rev. John Gutting, a Catholic priest in Sun Valley, Calif.

Vacation Bible schools and summer schools of religion mainly draw younger children. Older youths are more likely to attend church-sponsored camps or "conferences" as they are sometimes called.

"Church camping represents one of the most rapidly growing phases of Christian education today," says the Rev. Robert S. Clemmons of the Methodist Board of Education.

About 2 million young people, mostly teen-agers, are expected to attend upwards of 10,000 church camps this summer. They will spend a week or two living out-doors and discussing their religious problems in small groups under the guidance of carefully chosen adult leaders.

A report from the board of Christian education of the United Presbyterian Church, which operates nearly 200 summer camps, says that church camping provides unique opportunities to discover and meet "individual needs" in religious growth.

It also gives young people from cities a chance to become intimately acquainted with nature so they can experience the very basic kind of worship which simply acknowledges the wonder and beauty of God's creation.

Watson Named to Vice President Post

Rollin D. Watson, manager of Equitable Savings and Loan Association's Medford office, has been appointed assistant vice president, Ralph H. Cake, Equitable's president, has announced.

Watson has been manager of Equitable's branch in the Medford Shopping Center since it opened in January. He is a graduate of Medford High school and the University of Oregon.

Watson has been active in civic affairs. He is a member of the Medford Lions club, the Medford Elks club, and the Jacksonville Mason Lodge.

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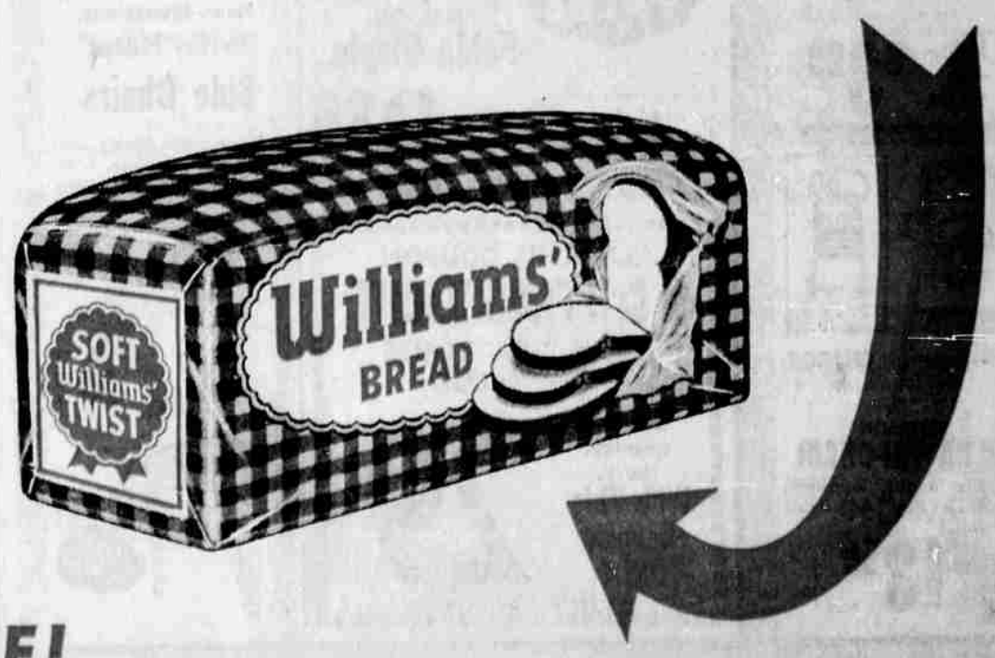

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