

Record of Soviet Obstruction

The first attempt at repudiation of these agreements was made by the U.S.S.R. in June 1948, when a blockade was imposed. Had that blockade been successful, it would have strangled Berlin. Berlin was saved by an airlift unique in history. Finally, in May 1949, by agreement between the Western powers and the U.S.S.R., provision was made that all restrictions imposed before the blockade by the U.S.S.R. on communications, transportation and trade would be removed and ended. This was followed by a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, which, on June 30, 1949, issued a communiqué containing, inter alia, the following provisions:

"...The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, and the United States agree that the New York agreement of May 1949 shall be maintained. Moreover, in order to promote further the aims set forth in the preceding paragraphs and in order to improve and supplement this and other arrangements and arrangements as regards the movement of persons and goods and communications between the Eastern Zone and the Western Zones and between the Zones and Berlin and also in regard to transit, the occupation authorities, each in his own Zone, will have an obligation to take the measures necessary to ensure the normal functioning and utilization of rail, water, and road transport for such movement of persons and goods and such communications by post, telephone and telegraph...."

These arrangements were arrived at in the mistaken belief and assumption by the Western allies that wartime co-operation with the Soviet Union would continue and that the occupation of Germany would not be indefinite.

These agreements are still in effect and the Western rights of occupation and access are beyond question. Yet, Mr. Khrushchov has declared his intention to terminate these agreements unilaterally and to transfer Soviet responsibility under the Four Power Agreement to the East German régime, professing that Soviet withdrawal is not intended to interfere with Western rights in West Berlin.

If Khrushchov Manoeuvre Succeeds

His action in practice would mean that in the future the Western powers would be obliged to apply to the East German régime for rights of access to West Berlin. For the West to be compelled to deal with the East German régime without guarantees would be to place Western rights of access in jeopardy. To agree to the Soviet demands would be to consign the West Berliners to the mercy of their Communist compatriots.