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Berlin Blockade

September 14, 1948

My dear Mr. Thomas:

I read your letter of September eleventh with a great deal of interest and I appreciate very much your writing me about the situation in Berlin.

Every step possible to maintain peace will be taken in regard to the settlement of this matter. I am still hopeful that a peaceful settlement can be reached.

x394

I certainly appreciate your interest in the matter and thank you for writing me about it.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

Honorable Norman Thomas
303 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, New York

x seen
PP73368

Norman Thomas
303 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

THE WHITE HOUSE

SEP 13 8 30 AM '48 September 11, 1948

RECEIVED

Hon. Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Truman:

This letter is not being written for publicity and will not be released at any time. I am writing because I want to tell you that I appreciate the firmness and patience with which the governments of the United States and the other Western nations have been conducting the negotiations about Berlin, and because I want to bring to your attention some remarks I shall deliver tonight at a dinner honoring Luigi Antonini, Vice-President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union.

In my talk I shall propose that the American government put before the Paris United Nations General Assembly the actions, in Berlin and elsewhere, by which the Soviet dictatorship menaces the peace of the world. I believe the Kremlin's actions fall within the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article II concerning the functions of the General Assembly.

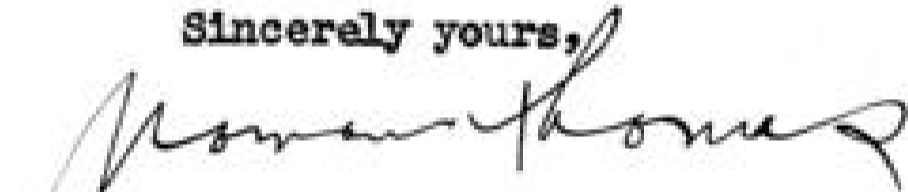
I shall also suggest that the State Department confer with all presidential candidates about referring the Berlin crisis to the United Nations so that - as far as possible - our critical relations with the Soviet Union may be taken out of the realm of campaign politics.

Such a conference would put Henry Wallace on the spot. If he did not go along, he would be even more isolated, and less harmful to the United States, than he is now. If he goes along, it will make things more difficult for Stalin.

In either case, it would demonstrate the essential unity of all American non-Communist opinion against Soviet aggression and would strengthen the chances of maintaining world peace.

I should appreciate hearing from you on your opinion concerning this proposal.

Sincerely yours,



Norman Thomas

NT:hf

x 85-J
x 228-Misc

x 85-A Misc

x 1170

Norman Thomas for President

Tucker P. Smith for Vice-President



William Becker, Campaign Manager

Harry Fleischman, National Secretary

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For Release papers SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

THOMAS URGES ALL NOMINEES MEET WITH STATE DEPARTMENT ON BERLIN CRISIS

Speaking at a dinner at the Hotel Commodore in honor of Luigi Antonini, first-vice president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Socialist presidential candidate Norman Thomas called upon the State Department to confer with all presidential candidates on the Berlin crisis to take America's critical relations with the Soviet Union "out of the realm of campaign politics."

Thomas urged that the actions in Berlin "by which the Soviet dictatorship definitely menaces the peace of the world" be referred by the United States to the United Nations General Assembly in Paris.

He added that, in such a conference, "even Henry Wallace might be made to face facts and recognize that he jeopardizes the peace he professes to serve by his apologies for Soviet cruelty and bad faith, and his trust in a policy of blind appeasement of Stalin."

Declaring that Stalin counts on "world weariness of war and American recognition that we could not afford the costs of victory in a world ruined by atomic warfare" Thomas proposed demonstrating to the Kremlin "a high degree of unity of world opinion "against Communist tactics of "violence and deceit."

Thomas insisted that "the most likely alternative either to war" or to appeasement that would only postpone war "lies through the United Nations."

Partial text of Mr. Thomas' remarks follows:

"Because Luigi Antonini, Local 89, and the whole International Ladies Garment Workers Union have played so honorable a part in constructive policies in support of democracy and peace in Europe, I think this a suitable occasion to make a proposal of great importance. It is this:

" We urge the American Government to put before the General Assembly of the United Nations at its meeting in Paris the whole complicated set of actions in Berlin and elsewhere by which the Soviet dictatorship definitely menaces the peace of the world. Certainly the actions of the Kremlin fall definitely within the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article II concerning the functions of the General Assembly.

"There is small doubt that in the present war of nerves the Kremlin counts heavily on the fact that this is a campaign year. It doubtless over-estimates the influence of Henry Wallace.

"I therefore urge that in support of this reference of a critical situation to the General Assembly, the State Department should seek conference with presidential candidates in order that - as far as possible - our critical relations with the Soviet Union should be taken out of the realm of campaign politics. In such a conference even Henry Wallace might be made to face facts and recognize that he jeopardizes the peace he professes to serve by his apologies for Soviet cruelty and bad faith, and his trust in a policy of blind appeasement of Stalin such as, between the years 1943 and 1946, did so much to create the present crisis.

"I am well aware how limited is the power of the General Assembly, yet I think its influence might be decisive. I do not believe that it is Stalin's present policy to bring on total war or even Russian expulsion from the United Nations. He is playing an extraordinarily dangerous game in a war of nerves in an effort to frustrate the Marshall Plan and any true recovery in Europe.

"He counts on world weariness of war and American recognition that we could not afford the costs of victory in a world ruined by atomic warfare. Our next step obviously should be to demonstrate to the Kremlin a high degree of unity of world opinion against the tactics of violence and deceit which are the Communists' stock in trade.

"So far the Western nations have conducted negotiations about Berlin with firmness and patience. But winter approaches and some settlement is imperative. By all means the next thing to try, the most likely alternative either to war or to a policy of appeasement that would only postpone war, lies through the United Nations. And this great appeal for a peace resting on some exercise of elementary decency should clearly have the support of all candidates irrespective of party. Labor unions and other civic and religious bodies should push this idea."