The mail must go through!

That traditional byword of the American postal authorities has taken on renewed glimmer in Berlin these days as the American occupation forces and the German postal authorities have combined efforts to foil attempts to sever the natural flow of mail and parcel post out of Berlin and isolate the city from contact with a large part of Germany.

Since March, Soviet authorities have striven without success to gain unilateral control of all postal facilities. Mail and parcel post packages are still going out of Berlin to their destinations in western Germany.

Four-power accord had characterized efforts in the communications field from the beginning of the occupation until the suspension of quadripartite meetings on March 20, and sustained progress had equalled that in any other field of quadripartite activity. Step by step, postal services had been restored to a point approaching the prewar level, zonal boundaries notwithstanding.

Then, 10 days after the last quadripartite meeting, a stubborn "curtail the mail" policy appeared under auspices of the Soviet Military Administration, despite its quadripartite commitments.

The first step was to impose a blockade on German parcel post from Berlin to the three western zones. The impetus of the normal service choked parcel post facilities in the city when the outlet was suddenly blocked. Before word of the blockade was spread in Berlin half a million parcels had piled up.

At Post Office SW 77 a short distance inside the US Sector line near the center of the city, 116 loaded mail cars were backlogged. On nearby railroad sidings and under special guard were 15 more cars filled with parcel post for the western zones. Every inch of storage space in that post office and others in the vicinity was crammed with packages.

Sacks containing three tons of German mail are loaded at Tempelhof Airport, Berlin, aboard a C-47 US Army plane by two enlisted men for a flight to Frankfurt.

(Army Signal Corps)
that would be accepted in Berlin for transportation through the corridor each day. However, bilateral negotiations between US Military Government and the SRA resulted in the prompt removal of the backlog. A similar situation arose again later in March, and was resolved with equal dispatch.

\section*{Without Notice}

On April 1, the Soviet Zonal Reichsbahn Transportation Division refused to accept from the German Postal System any mail cars loaded with parcel post addressed to the western zones. Immediate attempts by Military Government to reach a solution through the previously successful channels were fruitless.

The matter was under discussion throughout April among US, British, and French Military Government authorities on one hand and Soviet authorities on the other. At the same time Berlin postal officials made constant efforts to meet the somewhat obscure requirements quoted by local transportation officials so that the loaded mail cars would be acceptable for transport through the corridor. All efforts were without avail, and failed even to elicit from Soviet authorities an official statement in support of the unilateral ban.

Not until early in May was the situation clarified. On May 6 the Taegliche Rundschau, the official Soviet German-language newspaper of the Soviet Military Administration, published a new set of regulations for the parcel post service from Berlin to the western zones, as set forth by the Central Administration for Posts and Telecommunications, German Economic Commission for the Soviet Occupation Zone; and on May 8 the same newspaper published a "clarification" of the earlier item.

The regulations presumed jurisdiction by a Soviet zonal agency over the quadripartite-controlled city of Berlin. Further, by adding the restrictions applied by the Universal Postal Union on international parcel post to those approved by the Allied Control Authority, the new regulations in effect set up Berlin as a separate postal state from the viewpoint of the three western zones. In addition to these two sets of restrictions on contents, the unilateral enactment added "food, liquor, extracts, essences and spices."

Five post offices in the Soviet Sector were designated to accept all Berlin parcel post addressed to the western zones, regardless of the sector of the sender's residence. These post offices alone, according to the regulations, would have facilities for examination by postal employees of the content of all packages posted.

Any parcels held in post offices on May 19, the effective date of the promulgation, would be subject to inspection and forwarding under the newly prescribed procedure, or to return at the sender's request. Inclusion of prohibited articles would be grounds for confiscation of packages mailed on May 10 or after, but food, etc., would not be removed from parcels mailed prior to that date.

On May 19 an official of the Soviet Transport Division ordered German Postal System officials to unload the 131 mail cars. The postal authorities refused to observe the order on the grounds that Post Office SW 77, because it is located in the US Sector, was not under the jurisdiction of the Soviet agency.

A week later, the same official notified US Military Government that it would be billed for demurrage accruing on the unloaded mail cars. No bill, however, has been received to date; but if one should be computed at the standard rate it would exceed 2,000,000 marks.

\section*{DURING THE First Month of Parcel Post Service under the Unilateral Soviet Controlled Regulations Approximately 120,000 Packages were Transported from the Five Soviet Sector Post Offices to the Western Zones. That Quantity Represented Only Four Days' Volume When Parcels Were Freely Accepted under the Quadripartite Agreement.}

Parcel post service between the Soviet Zone and the western zones was never resumed after the war, although it was on quadripartite agendas as a US proposal for two years.

The Soviet-supervised agencies turned to first class mail after its initial success in stopping parcel post. For 11 days late in June while the western Allies were organizing the air-lift supply line to break the Soviet-imposed blockade of Berlin, no German mail got out of the city.

When sufficient space became available on June 30 in US cargo planes returning to Frankfurt, the US Air Forces came to the assistance of the German Postal System, and Berliners in the western sectors had airmail service at surface mail rates. The German Postal System simultaneously placed a temporary 50-gram (1.7-ounce) maximum on outgoing mail from the western sectors, to prevent flooding the limited air facilities.

A temporary post office was set up at Tempelhof Air Base to handle the unprecedented volume of airmail. Special military arrangements were made to escort German postal trucks onto the Rhine-Main Air Field near Frankfurt to pick up the mail bags. In three drays 110 tons of first class international and interzonal mail were flown out. Also, on July 1, the emergency airmail service began carrying out the backlog of parcel post.

Although space and time would not permit a speedy removal of the packages, the steady paring at the mass of accumulated parcel post has made appreciable progress by mid-July.

But most heartening to postal men in the Western World is that a principle has once more been maintained. Even in Berlin where postal stoppage has become a new political weapon, determined men are still saying, "The mail must go through," and making it stick.

\section*{Foreign Money Privileges}

Czech refugees residing in Hesse will be accorded the same foreign exchange assets privileges extended to displaced persons, according to the OMGH finance branch.

Hessian state banks will accept foreign currencies, including Czech money, for safe deposit from all Czechs who fled their homeland and entered the US Zone after Jan. 31. These assets will be returned to their owners upon their authorized departure from Germany.