Visit to United States

THANK YOU very much for giving me a chance to make some short remarks with regard to my stay in the United States. I hesitated somewhat to accept this invitation, since the incidents and events in this city rendered it difficult for me to leave.

But in view of the fact that the mayor of the City of Berlin was given a chance to address the broad masses in America and to discuss over there the conditions of our city, we were all convinced that this trip was necessary and expedient.

I spent 10 days in that great country which is of such extraordinary importance for us, and as I review this short trip, I can only say that I am thankful for having had this chance, and that after my return I am convinced that my stay there was not in vain for our city...

It was not my task to make complaints about the present Berlin situation, and I did not do so. I said that things were difficult for us... and that our city is ruined. But I said that we are not in ruins ourselves; rather, we are facing our fate and will do anything in our power to master it. I also said that it is impossible for us to see this through if we do not have on our side the assistance of the great American nation, and I have expressed the hope that this aid in the future will not be withdrawn from us. I returned from the United States with the firm conviction that we may rely on this American assistance.

Mayor Reuter attended the recent United States Conference of Mayors in Washington as a special guest. During his 10-day visit to the United States, he also visited New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Grand Rapids, Detroit and Pittsburgh. On his return to Berlin, he made a detailed report to the City Assembly on April 7. The highlights of the text furnished by Mayor Reuter's office comprise this article. Translation from the German is by the Information Bulletin staff.

I drew attention to the fact that our city cannot exist if it is not assisted; that the blockade as it is at present cannot become permanent, and that we absolutely must come to a solution. Before we arrive at this solution the possibilities for better living must be increased in our city; the tonnage brought by airlift to Berlin must be raised, and the connection between Berlin and the west must be strengthened.

Mayor Reuter—filled with strong hope (DEN)
I particularly referred to the fact that the city of Berlin does not like to live on funds lent to it, but that we want to work, and that we must have an efficient industry and economy to surmount difficulties. Paul G. Hoffman, economic cooperation administrator, was not, to my regret, in New York during this time. But as a result of several discussions with his representatives I hope a study of the industrial and economical capabilities of our city may be achieved, and that then perhaps a number of very important problems will at last be successfully solved...

There is also no doubt that Berlin in its present situation is subject to extraordinary financial difficulties; that our industry and economy should have an opportunity to profit from their former vast and abundant possibilities, and that the city should be included in the great sources of aid open from the West.

MAY I SAY briefly that in general my impression of the United States is this: my American friends often did not like me to say so, but I think from our point of view it is correct to state that this enormous continent did not participate in two wars in our European sense (of involvement in wars), but only lived at their margin and did not experience the destruction and devastation which now belong to our daily life.

That great continent, during the 20 years since I have seen it, has changed to an incredible degree. When I consider the improvements which I could note while driving through New York—I studied New York 20 years ago in all its details—if I consider the enormous new traffic installations, the automobiles lanes on the two sides of Manhattan along the Hudson river and East river; the enormous bridges... if I consider the huge new apartment buildings taking the place of former slums... if generally I let the whole picture of today's New York pass before my eyes and compare it with the impression I had 20 years ago, then it is clear to me that that continent has made enormous and imposing progress.

International civil air service through Bremen was inaugurated April 5 with the arrival of the first Scandinavian Airlines System DC 3 passenger plane (above) on its scheduled flight from Copenhagen to Geneva via Bremen, Duesseldorf and Frankfurt. SAS flight facilities from Bremen to almost all countries of the world can be used by American and Allied personnel as well as German nationals, the latter are being charged in D-marks for flights within the German border.

The difference between us and that country, owing to the events of the past 20 years, undoubtedly has changed to their advantage, and the essential fact in this development is that the people of the United States... have recognized that the continuation of this progress will be possible only if they participate closely in the development of the whole world and particularly Europe.

AMERICA is conscious of the fact that the world has become smaller, and that it must take part positively in the building and reconstruction of Europe and the world. America obviously has decided to leave us alone in this development. This is the most important impression which I bring from America, and this impression fills me with strong hope...

Something else became clear to me in America: This development will not be possible in Germany unless we succeed in developing good relations with all other European nations. We cannot naively expect that American public opinion is interested only in Germany. It is interested in Germany as part of the European continent, and it is evident that our future development always will depend on our relations with our neighbors, not least, with France.

American public opinion in respect to our condition will not depend merely on our own opinions. It will also be conditioned by the opinions predominant in our neighbor countries, and it will be our German, particularly our Berlin, task to show that we are able to look beyond the borders of our city and to understand how much our problems are rooted in greater European and universal problems.

THE UNDERLYING reason for my trip was less the political discussions than the opportunity of addressing the American public... I think that the Americans at least understood the way in which I addressed them, and in spite of many language difficulties which are unavoidable, I think they understood what I wanted to say.

From the welcome I received I at least gained the impression that the trip was not in vain and from numerous individual discussions I have the feeling that the sorrows and desires of our city will perhaps play an important part in decisive decisions which may be made in forthcoming months. We shall not be abandoned, and we shall not be surrendered. We shall be and remain a free city.