

Statement by the Allied High Commission (10 October 1949)

Caption: On 10 October 1949, the Allied High Commission publicly refuses to recognise the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or its Government.

Source: United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446). p. 308-309.

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Statement by the Allied High Commission on the Establishment of the German Democratic Republic, October 10, 1949

The establishment in the Soviet Zone of a so-called “Government of the People’s Republic of Germany” has caused no surprise in Allied High Commission circles. The Soviets are obviously disturbed by the attraction exerted in Eastern Germany by the Federal Government.

The Soviet note accusing the Western Powers of violating their agreements concerning Germany clearly indicated the imminence of the present events. It is superfluous to recall the terms of the reply of the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and of France to this Soviet note.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the Western Allies strove for many months to reach an agreement with the USSR on a common policy to be applied to Germany as a whole. It was owing to the Soviet refusal to cooperate that these efforts failed. As the recovery of Germany could be no longer delayed, the Western Allies were compelled to take the decisions which permitted the establishment of the Federal German Government.

The Federal German Republic springs from the German people. It is based on the fundamental principles of democracy. A representative assembly prepared the basic law. Elections were held on August 13, 1949. The federal institutions, one after the other, have assumed their functions according to the procedure laid down by the Germans themselves.

The people of Western Germany have clearly demonstrated at the elections that they appreciated at their true worth the liberties that they have recovered.

The so-called Government of the German Democratic Republic is the artificial creation of a “popular assembly” which had no mandate for this purpose. The chamber which set itself up without any consultation of the popular will at once decided to postpone the elections for a year. The intention of this postponement is evidently to insure that the elections when they are held shall follow the pattern already set in other satellite states.

This so-called government, which is devoid of any legal basis, and has determined to evade an appeal to the electorate, has no title to represent Eastern Germany. It has an even smaller claim to speak in the name of Germany as a whole. The events which have taken place in the East will not modify the attitude of the Western Powers.

The Foreign Ministers declared at the close of the Washington Conference that “a major objective of the three Allied Governments was to encourage and facilitate the closest integration, on a mutually beneficial basis, of the German people under a democratic federal state within the framework of a European association.”

The High Commission will continue to be guided by this principle. It will encourage the development of the young German democracy and is conscious of the responsibilities which this implies. The people of the Western Sectors of Berlin may rest assured that the Allied Powers will continue to fulfil their mission in the former capital and that, as in the past, all steps will be taken in collaboration with the federal government to ensure to the inhabitants of Berlin a life of political and economic freedom.