

FRONT PAGES FROM HISTORY

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If the division of Germany at the end of the Second World War set the world on the path to the Cold War, the attempt by the Russians to strangle Berlin and get the allies out was the first decisive "cold shot".

Churchill had warned a year before of an iron curtain descending across the Continent in the form of a Soviet menace aimed at the whole free-world. The sombre warning became a reality with the Soviets taking power in very unconventional ways all over Eastern Europe, an area they were converting into their own backyard.

The West was slowly recovering from the ravages of six years of war. Those were days of shortages, food rations, the lack of energy supplies, austerity, pessimism. The balance of power in the heart of Europe was uncertain and Stalin made a push to grab what he could.

After months of travel restrictions be-

The image shows the front page of the Daily Mail newspaper from Thursday, June 24, 1948. The masthead at the top reads "Daily Mail" in a large, stylized font, with "FOR KING AND COMMONWEALTH" underneath. The main headline is "RUSSIA CUTS LAST LINK" in large, bold letters, followed by "Berlin railway stops at 1 a.m." in a slightly smaller font. To the right of this headline is another prominent headline: "DOCKERS BACK IN 2 DAYS - DEAKIN". Below the main headline, there are several columns of text and smaller headlines. On the left, there is a "Comment" section titled "BEFORE THE STRIKE". In the center, there is a headline "SANCTIONS IN MONEY WAR" and another "BOY, 16, ON MURDER CHARGE". To the right of the "DOCKERS" headline is a section titled "YOUR FOOD IN 2 DAYS - DEAKIN". At the bottom of the page, there are more headlines, including "Guards save tomatoes" and "Wom finds injur in ro". The page is filled with dense text and small illustrations, typical of a newspaper front page from that era.

tween East and West Berlin, Russia cut its last link with the closure of railway traffic, isolating the western part of the city and its two million inhabitants from their vital supplies.

From then on, food and other needs could only come by air. And so they did. Defying the Russians, challenging them, the biggest round-the-clock airlift ever started slowly afterwards to defeat the

blockade and keep the city fed and alive. Every one of the hundreds of small planes arriving and building a sort of huge air-bridge into the city was cheered by residents. Berlin would survive.

But the confrontation would take years to subside. What little trust left between the conquerors of Germany, the Russians on one side, and the Allies on the other, was falling apart.

As the Daily Mail said: "In Whitehall, the developments in Berlin are regarded most seriously. It is recognized that the attempt of the Russians to impose their currency on the whole of Berlin is not only a political move but it is the most determined bid yet to oust the Western Allies from the German capital".

In London, Paris and Washington it was decided to meet the challenge with equal determination and with no compromise. The immediate future of Europe was at stake.