



The Candy Bombers: The Untold Story of the Berlin Airlift and America's Finest Hour

By Andrei Cherny

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The Candy Bombers is the true tale of the ill-assorted group of castoffs and second-stringers who saved millions of desperate people from a dire threat. By feeding and supplying West Berlin by air for nearly a year, these brave men won the hearts of America's defeated enemies, and inspired people around the world to believe in America's fundamental goodness. Their valor and kind acts helped the country avoid World War III, and won the greatest battle of the Cold War—without firing a shot.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1948, West Berliners were suffering and hungry, existing on food rations transported by trucks, trains and barges primarily by the occupying American forces. The Russians, trying to control the divided city, blockaded the transports on June 24, 1948, and American and British pilots risked their lives to airlift in 4.6 billion pounds of food and supplies until the blockade was lifted in May 1949. Pilot Hal Halvorsen won Berliners' hearts by secretly dropping his and his buddies' candy rations by parachute into the waiting hands of the city's children. In the process, says Cherny (*The Next Deal*), Berliners became devoted to democracy, and Washington foreign policy and military brass learned that the Cold War needed to be won not primarily with bullets but by appealing to hearts and minds. This book could have been cut by a third for better effect; Cherny's prose and his references to 9/11 are manipulative, and his subject, particularly the nuts and bolts of the airlift, will appeal primarily to WWII buffs, who should still find much to savor in this exhaustive, often absorbing and lucid account of America's successful standoff against the Soviets. 16 pages of b&w photos. (Apr. 17)

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From [Booklist](#)

Accounts abound about the Berlin crisis and airlift of 1948–49, when the West thwarted the attempted Soviet takeover of the entire city. To distinguish his book from the pack, Cherny places his emphasis on the episode's political effects in Washington, D.C. Ultimately, argues Cherny, Harry Truman's decisiveness, above all his rejection of high-level advice to retreat from Berlin, contributed to his victory in the 1948 presidential election, a case he makes in recounting junctures between the political campaigns and players in the Berlin crisis. Sufficient as this would be for book-level treatment, Cherny augments his text with the organization of the airlift operation. Perhaps justified because of the airlift's tremendous material and propaganda success, which drew the West's line against further Communist expansion in Europe, including the airlift narrative nonetheless competes with Cherny's announced angle on the impact of the Soviet blockade on American politics and foreign policy. Emphasizing figures prominent in the crisis—military governor Lucius Clay, Truman critic Henry Wallace, and pilot Gail Halvorsen—Cherny readably synthesizes this milestone cold-war confrontation. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"A successful work of popular history...an enjoyable, timely narrative."

-*Dallas Morning News*

"Andrei Cherny tells this story vividly, placing it on the broader canvas of the incipient Cold War."

-Michael Barone, *U.S. News and World Report*

"A gripping, suspenseful narrative history... Reminds me of Stephen Ambrose at his best."

-Douglas Brinkley

"A fine eye for character and detail."

-*Bloomberg News*

"An exciting, inspiring, and wonderfully written book."

-Walter Isaacson, author of *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*

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Natalia Burton:

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