

Rox

THE STRUGGLE MUST GO ON

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara once more expressed American determination to use nuclear weapons to enforce so-called Western rights in Berlin. Judging by official statements, the United States is ready to risk nuclear annihilation over the question of whether Russian or East German guards stamp travel permits on the territory of East Germany.

The erection of the Berlin wall provided Western propaganda with an opportunity for melodrama; but those acquainted with the situation in the city must wonder whether the East Germans had any choice other than to resort to minimal measures of protection against constant abuse. I have seen the Berlin wall from both sides. It is not a pretty sight, and nobody pretends it is. But while the Western press calls it the "Wall of Shame", and while I have heard West Berliners criticizing the United States for not tearing it down on the day it was built, I have heard people in Berlin expressing other sentiments. Their general reaction to the wall went something like this: We don't like it, but it was necessary. One woman, who had suffered in the days of the Hitler regime and was twice incarcerated for her resistance to the Nazis, told me: "This may surprise you, but since the wall has been erected we have felt safe for the first time in years. Before, there daily occurred some provocative incident. Western agents would come over and blow up a station of the S-train. Occasionally, they would assassinate an official. Or they would deliberately start rumors about the imminence of war, urging the people to rush to the stores and hoard food and supplies. Even without these provocations, each of which could result in an armed clash, the situation was quite intolerable. Thousands of people who lived in East Berlin but worked in West Berlin indulged in black-market currency transactions."

A professional couple confirmed this state of affairs and half-jokingly added: "At least now we can get a good seat in the theatre; before, the West Berliners would buy all the tickets."

The most serious threat to the economy of East Berlin and to that of the whole German Democratic Republic was the ease with which people could leave for the West by simply taking a trip on the S-Bahn. The drain on trained technicians, engineers, doctors and other professionals was severe. Young professional men who had just concluded their education in the GDR, where all education is free, were lured by Western agents. These agents made the most fantastic promises, including those of car and house gifts to those selected people who would move to the West. Many individuals who were so seduced, later found that the glittering promises were rarely kept. But the damage to the economy of the GDR was done.

While many of the "refugees" responded to bribes or promises, others fell for the massive daily propaganda which pictures life in the West as that of complete freedom, prosperity and unlimited opportunity. Another reason for defection, however, was the same as that which has caused many another exodus in history. When there is a revolutionary change in the social and economic

The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee is an organization which Bertrand Russell characterized as one which "has never taken the course of championing only popular causes in the comfortable knowledge that they were nominally unpopular." The 1962 recipient of the Committee's Tom Paine Award is Bertrand Russell, whose acceptance message on that occasion follows.

By Bertrand Russell

You honour me in a way I deeply appreciate. Tom Paine symbolises for Americans the articulation of a radical consciousness that human welfare and intellectual integrity depend upon courageous insistence upon freedom for men and women. Freedom can not effectively exist where it is understood to mean no more than the toleration of occasional differences about matters which are of small importance.

Disputes, for example, about the comparative merit of consumer produce or the total of farm expenditure may be cited as examples of freedom, but only by those who are dead to its life and deaf to its death. The vision of Tom Paine was that of a serious public involvement in the direction of those affairs which affected peoples' lives. He struggled for the right to partake in radical change and in the constant debate as to how the good life might be provided for to the American people.

Values and great beliefs live on after their institutional expressions have ceased to live. So it is with the nominal civil liberties enjoyed today either by Americans or by citizens of other countries.

Thousands of years of human effort, of great suffering, of unique achievement are in daily jeopardy because the absence of the freedom striven after by Tom Paine prevents men from forestalling consummate folly.

Today, the exercise of power is so remote from the daily lives of men and women, and the control of the very springs of thought so concentrated in the hands of those sycophantic to power, that freedom is increasingly an abstraction with which we are deluded.

Delusion takes the form of public incanta-

tion over values and beliefs which are honoured even as they are invoked. President Kennedy speaks of human freedom; he takes actions which may condemn hundreds of millions of human beings to agonising death. Future generations are forfeit to the paranoia of those who compulsively act for garrison states.

So it is that power possessed by the few condemns us all to futile death and empties our formal rights of meaning or of vital life. Only to the extent that we are able to remove those who would perpetrate a crime against humanity can "freedom" seriously our possession or our right.

I feel honoured in a way I do not find easy to acknowledge. I am an Englishman and so was Tom Paine by birth. I believe that human freedom and the civilised society to which that freedom was to have been directed, are not spoken for by the Governments of either of our two countries. I find it difficult to express the feelings I have upon receiving this award because I know I know Tom Paine would feel about the country left and the nation he helped to found.

The pity of it. The disgrace to all the best in man's long odyssey. The intolerable affront to the dignity of us all, contains the readiness to annihilate whole continents in pursuit of the insane dictates of power.

If there is one message, one sentiment I should wish to give to you, it is that I do not bring myself to believe that mankind so base that none of his representatives struggle for a more excellent way of life matter the chances of success. Thank you for your honour to me. We share the conviction that the struggle must go on.

structure of a society, the privileged classes refuse to occupy their lowered place in society. Think of the large numbers of Russian emigres after the October Revolution. Or the rich emigres from Cuba today. To conclude on the strength of such an exodus that the new regime is intolerable and hated by all who remained behind is the same kind of wishful thinking as that which made so many an "expert" on Russia predict the imminent collapse of the Russian Revolution.

In Berlin, the erection of the wall has stopped the exodus, thereby bringing greater stability to the German Democratic Republic. But West Berlin remains a time-fuse sputtering deep inside the socialist bloc. It must be defused lest it ignite a world conflagration. The freedom of the West Berliners, such as it is, is not in any danger. It would be safeguarded in a neutralized

city under the auspices of the United Nations. The question is: Will the West be to agree to any reasonable solution in order to hold on to what one American spokesman called the "cheapest atom bomb of the West"? The Soviet Union has delayed signing of a peace treaty with the GDR, and again. But it would be a dangerous calculation to assume that she will indefinitely. Berlin is not Cuba. Logically any Soviet display of determination in Cuba. In the case of Berlin, however, only logic but also logistics favor the United States. A peace treaty will eventually be signed. It is the moral duty of every dedicated American to tell his government that no nuclear war should be risked in the Berlin controversy. If there were intentions in the State Department, no doubt would be easier to resolve at the international conference table.

Not to be reproduced without written permission of the Western Reserve Historical Society, 10825 East Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44106. This material may be protected by Copyright Law, Title 17, U.S. Code.