

# BERLIN: A LESSON for the West

By JOHN M. HAFFERT

Most of what has been written on the world peace flight is from news clippings and historical notes. But I am writing this one in my own name because my reaction to Berlin was very personal and involves a strong personal judgment.

We had just come from Poland where we saw people slowly and painfully...day by day...literally giving their lives for their faith through privation and hunger. What faith we had just witnessed!

## To What Had They Fled?

In Berlin, the reception was formal. Even though the invitation had come directly from the Cardinal, only the pastor of the church where the statue would be received was at the airport. The church itself was not even quite full despite our own large group of 176.

Yet we were an island of freedom in the Communist world. We had flown over the wall where hundreds died trying to flee from Communist slavery. But to what?

At the wall, at the foot of the platform from which one could see into East Berlin, I saw some pictures in color framed in glass. One was a picture of Our Lady crowned as Queen. Above it was a picture of a

naked woman. How and why was it there??!

Shortly before our trip around the world I had been reading an article published in SOUL around the time of the Berlin revolt in 1953 illustrated with a photograph of two youths actually throwing stones at a Russian tank. It was a picture of total desperation in the face of ruthless Communist power.

Now there was a new generation in Berlin, like most of the same generation in the West: born in opulence, spending its freedom as easily as its wealth.

## Flagrant Pornography

*It seemed that the East under Communism [as in Poland] was finding its soul, while the soul of the West...abusing its freedom in licentiousness...was being lost.*

*Nowhere in the world, including the Times Square area of New York, have I seen such flagrant pornography as in Berlin. Pornographic films were advertised along the main street (one of the most opulent and beautiful city streets in the world), and near the reconstructed ruins of a church which has become the actual symbol of Free Berlin were pornographic shows advertised by actual*

showing of sex films on small screens in front of the theatres.

I asked myself: "Why did we make the great sacrifice...in time and a cost of over \$20,000...to come to Berlin...just to take the statue to the wall?...just to have the 'Messenger of Her Royalty' touch down in that symbolic island of freedom within the Communist bloc?"

*When we arrived at the wall with Our Lady's statue, I knew it was worth it.*

We had finished Mass in the Church of St. Mathias, where the National Pilgrim Virgin of Germany is enshrined (it has never gone on a national pilgrimage, since it never left Berlin after having been brought there by the Bishop of Fatima on a Blue Army Pilgrimage in 1967).

## We Could See Red Guards

As our large group boarded the coaches outside the church, several Berliners asked to join us. Behind me in the coach a woman began to speak with emotion of her husband and son in East Germany, and that she was never able to see them.

We came to a place along the wall marked by crosses commemorating many who had died trying to escape to freedom at that particular point. A



*Above: Four priests hold statue of Our Lady at Berlin Wall last May 8th during recitation of the Rosary. Crane at left, behind wall, was working during the prayer as the Communists strengthen the wall on eve of the 33rd anniversary of the Berlin Treaty...by which Eastern Europe became Communist...but Berlin remained an island of freedom. Building in background at right is the historic Reichstag.*

crane just behind the wall was reinforcing the wall...on the Communist side. Beyond it we could see Red guards in a watch tower.

Our four priests held the statue and turned it slowly in all directions towards the East as we recited the Rosary...while the crane clanked and labored...strengthening the wall that separates the enslaved and the free. Many had predicted that this wall would long since have been torn down...but on May 8th, it was being made stronger, more impassable.

I knew then that it was worth all the sacrifice. It was right that we had come here with the symbol of the Queen of the World who had promised at the very hour of the rise of Communist power in Russia that if Her requests are heard, Russia will be converted and there will be peace.

*And She came for us!*

She came that we in freedom might hear Her requests and fulfill them!

Instead of being discouraged by the crime and licentiousness that has begun to flourish in our midst, we must see it as the devil's way of jumping the wall to conquer us, to dissuade us from our purpose, to discourage us from believing in Our Lady's triumph.

And it is promised! She said:

"In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph..."

*There Was Reason for Hope!*

Somehow, suddenly there in the opulence and apparent indifference of so many in West Berlin, we looked at Her white image facing the wall under the gaze of the Red guard...and we knew that at least for the people of the East there was reason to hope.

The following day was May 9th, the most important day for the Communists in Eastern Europe. It is the day of the Berlin Treaty, celebrated in countries like East Germany and

Poland with more fanfare even than May 1st. The Russians call it "The day of the German capitulation," but the enslaved nations know that the Russians celebrate May 9th because it was the day of the enslavement of Eastern Europe to Communism.

In the "Queen of the World" plane we said the Rosary before taking off from the Berlin airport that morning. We wove the Rosary around the mystery of the visit of the "Queen of the World" to Berlin on this 33rd anniversary of the Berlin Treaty...being celebrated in the Communist world around us...in Budapest and in Warsaw...with speeches and great parades to commemorate Communist power of the enslaved peoples.

The Rosary finished, the "Queen of the World" jet climbed into the blue May 9th sky to the limits of 10,000 feet prescribed for the corridor across East Germany...for a nonstop flight to Lourdes.

## WHY the World Peace Flight?

All the prophecies made at Fatima have come true: the Second World War—exactly at the time prophesied; further wars caused by the spread of militant atheism from Russia throughout the world; persecution of the good, etc. The recent television series we completed in March, 1978, is composed of thirteen programs just on the fulfillment of the Fatima prophecies. Many have not appreciated the extent of the fulfillment of the Fatima prophecies before seeing this TV series. For example: "There will be further wars..." (after World War II) and there have been 178 wars directly caused or assisted by the spread of Communism throughout the world since the Second World War! The persecution which Our Lady prophesied has been unparalleled in the entire history of the world. Not until we analyze the persecutions of the past fifty years do we realize that the persecutions of Roman times were very small by comparison. Some twenty million have been put to death in Russia alone.

So we wanted the world to know that this tremendous supernatural intervention took place at Fatima in 1917, and that it affects everyone. Three times before we had made efforts like this. Twice we went around the world and once around Africa. Then in 1971 we arranged to have images of Our Lady of Fatima crowned simultaneously in fifty different countries around the world.

But none of these efforts seemed to break through to the general press.

An emissary of Chou En Lai, then Prime Minister of China, contacted us in Bangkok in 1974 when we took the Pilgrim Virgin to Vietnam and invited us to bring the Pilgrim Virgin to Communist China.

We thought such a trip would be quite a breakthrough to attract the attention of the world to the Fatima Message.

But Chou En Lai died, followed by Mao Tse Tung, and there was a political turnover in China.

We prayed for light. The turning point came during an All-Night Vigil in Minneapolis. I had gone there to help with the first Vigil in the area and met Father Slaby from Korea. I took this as more than a coincidence because just prior to that Vigil I had had the nagging thought that if we did not go to China we should still make this trip particularly because of Korea. And Father Slaby was there just by the odd coincidence that he had been given the job of accompanying orphans to the U.S., and had come to Minneapolis for a couple of days to see his family. He happened to see the notice of the Vigil, and there he was!

After we finished the Vigil Saturday morning, I flew to Ft. Lauderdale just a few hours later to meet with Frank Schaefer, a captain with Eastern Airlines, who had called me the previous Wednesday with news about a plane for the trip around the world. His first words to me were: "Why don't you buy a plane?"

Capt. Schaefer himself became co-pilot, and the decision was made!