East Side, West Side, All Around Berlin

Administrator of Greatest Program of Reconstruction in World History Draws Contrast between Economies of Free Democracy and of Communism.

The difference between West Berlin and East Berlin is the difference between economic life and economic death. No more impressive demonstration of the contrast between the live and helpful hand of democracy and the dead hand of Kremlin Communism can be found anywhere than in Berlin.

Thus spoke Paul G. Hoffman, retiring ECA administrator, Oct. 1 after he had completed a tour of both the Russian and Western sectors of Berlin. He was in the city for the inauguration of its International Industrial Exhibition.

MR. HOFFMAN, who for two and a half years has directed the greatest program of reconstruction in world history, continued: "In West Berlin I saw rebuilding in every block. The scars of war are disappearing. I saw new stores, new office buildings, new workmen's houses, new apartment buildings. I saw lights, I saw life.

'I got out of my car to visit rebuilt workmen's houses where scores of families are now living. I was told that reconstruction is being done so efficiently that it is costing only $250 per apartment.

'I visited the rebuilt power station, one more element of strength in the face of Soviet pressure. The Marshall Plan made a major contribution to its rebuilding. The reason it is an element of strength is the fact that West Berlin has been depending for its electric power largely on the power plant located in East Berlin and dominated by the Soviets. Whenever the Soviets wanted to put pressure on West Berlin they turned off the current.

'They did so again just four days before the opening of the Berlin Industrial Exhibition. But what was their surprise to find that, with the turning of a switch, power came on from the new plant in West Berlin sufficient to supply the Allied sectors of the city. The power plant is one of the newest and best-looking in Europe."

THEN MR. HOFFMAN TOLD of his visit to East Berlin.

"In the Soviet Sector of the city," he said, "my prime and almost only impression was that of desolation heaped upon desolation. Rubble and the ghosts of once stately buildings were everywhere. From the time we entered the Soviet Sector at the famous Brandenburg Gate until we left it, the picture was one of almost utter destruction. Here and there a dim little shop had been built at a corner, or windows had been boarded up on a house, but of rebuilding in the ordinary sense there was none.

'Oh yes, I saw some rebuilding. But what was it? One was the Soviet so-called House of Culture, the propaganda headquarters of the Soviets. Another was the magnificent headquarters of the East German Communist Party.'

Another was the still more magnificent building which it is rumored will be the Soviet Embassy.

"The meager will to reconstruct in East Berlin was almost all being regimented in the direction of these public buildings. Of sound economic reconstruction I saw virtually none.

"In block after block the rubble lay where the bombs had blasted it. Building after building looked so crazily ruined that they seemed dangerous to passers-by."

Paul G. Hoffman, retiring head of the Economic Cooperation Administration, and Mrs. John J. McCloy, wife of the US High Commissioner, tour the George C. Marshall House, in which American exhibits were displayed at the Berlin Industrial Exhibition Oct. 1 to 15. Mr. Hoffman visited the Marshall House to attend a reception on Sept. 30 prior to the official opening.
BUT THE OUTGOING administrator, who was making a tour of western Europe at the request of President Truman, was even more impressed by the contrast between the people of West Berlin and those of East Berlin than he was by the physical contrast of reconstruction and the lack of reconstruction.

"To me," he said, "there seemed to be a world of difference in the aspect of the people of West Berlin and the people of East Berlin. Those of the Western sectors thonged the streets; they looked at the brightly lighted shopwindows; they seemed to have some place to go; they seemed brisker, happier.

"I would guess that there were 20 times more people on the streets in West Berlin than there were in East Berlin. In the Eastern sector the people were few and far between; they seemed to have nothing to do, nowhere to go, there was literally nothing for them to do outside, for I saw not a single place of amusement.

"About all they had to look at were stupendous monuments to the Soviet Army and gaudy posters urging them to vote for candidates of the East German Communist Party — the only candidates permitted to offer themselves at the elections on Oct. 15."

Mr. Hoffman said he could imagine nothing more useful to the cause of the free nations than for East Germans to visit West Berlin and see for themselves the vast difference existing between living conditions in the two sectors.

"I'd like them to see for themselves the development that has occurred in West Berlin, particularly since Marshall Plan aid came to the city," he said. "Even a short visit will refute all the lies told about us by the Soviets."

Mr. Hoffman said he had been told that the lack of initiative in East Berlin on the part of workers, in view of the fact that there was little to buy with their wages, had led to a serious decline in working efficiency.

"I was informed," he said, "that in a power plant in East Berlin there are three times as many workmen as before the war, but the power output today is just one-half what it was then. They say that a man on relief in West Berlin is better off than a man with a job in East Berlin.

"If conditions in East Berlin, as I saw them and had them described to me," he concluded, "are indicative of conditions in the other satellite areas, then sooner or later the day will come when the peoples of those lands will rise to the heights of heroism and throw off the yoke that oppresses them." +END

---

Typical of Free Europe

*Address*

By EDWARD PAGE, Jr.

Director, Berlin Element, HICOG

IT IS NO SMALL MATTER to be asked to receive the key to a building of this size and importance — into which so much effort has already gone and will continue to go. I believe I can say that no one realizes better than I what this structure, the George C. Marshall House, means in terms of value, or hours of labor, or just plain sentiment.

It would also be appropriate, I believe, to take this opportunity to congratulate the hundreds of West Berlin workers who labored together, co-ordinated as a team, to bring this job to completion in time for the opening of the Berlin Industrial Exhibition. I need not remind anyone here that not more than a few short weeks ago — it seems like yesterday — this ground was bare of any permanent developments. In the space of about 14 weeks — since late July — a fine exhibition hall has been erected.

The job called for continuous night and day work at top speed, under all conditions of weather. Yet you see the result: the George C. Marshall House, finished and just about ready to receive the first visitors.

As one of the workers here expressed it the other day, "it could only have happened in Berlin."

* Mr. Page gave this address of appreciation at a ceremony Sept. 29 when he received from a Berlin worker a golden key to the George C. Marshall House. For pictures see pages 12-13 and 70.

THE FACT THAT the George C. Marshall pavilion was built with funds supplied by the Economic Co-operation Administration does not detract in the least from the building’s significance as a triumph of construction. On the contrary, it serves to point up the importance of the German-American co-operative effort involved. Neither of us could have brought this building into being, on this spot, without the other’s fullest co-operation.

Actually, this building typifies the phenomenon that is taking place all over Free Europe today: the application of ECA aid to provide constructive and profitable employment for thousands of Europe’s workers. Thus, in my view, this building could not have been more appropriately named. It is a “George C. Marshall House” in every sense; it not only bears the name of the founder of the Marshall Plan — it was built with funds allocated under the program of European aid which he originated.

My own personal wish is that the Marshall House shall be a major element in registering a resounding immediate triumph in the Berlin Industrial Exhibition, 1950.

Whatever happens, it will stand as a symbol of ECA assistance and of America’s heartfelt desire to complete Berlin’s economic restoration. +END