

BERLIN: BARRIERS SHOCK WEST

The Kaiser Wilhelm Church (preserved as a bombed ruin) and the magnificent new buildings of West Berlin today beckon East Berliners in vain. The mass exodus from the Communist side is ended, at least for the time being. The steady migration to the West side had increased since the news that Russia would make a treaty with East Germany. People had to escape now or, they feared, live the rest of their lives under the Red tyranny. This year alone 144,000 have fled to the West; since the war, 3 millions.

Most of the people left nearly everything behind them. They valued freedom above all. From West Berlin the refugees were flown to Western Germany, a well organized traffic which had been going on for years.

As fast as one batch were cleared others took their places. East Berlin and Moscow were at first annoyed, then alarmed; for the Red part of the city was being seriously denuded of essential workers. Somehow the flow of refugees had to be stopped.

Disused for years and guarded by Communist police have been many of the railways and roads between East and West Berlin. Now the barricades are going up everywhere. Many of the 50,000 East Berliners who worked daily in the West sector have no job. Tanks are along the boundary; the guards have been redoubled.

This is East Germany's complete admission that the people can be kept on their side of the border only by force. If ever any regime stood discredited, it is the puppet government of Dr. Ulbricht in East Germany. Theirs is rule by threat of machine gun and barbed wire. How sad the plight of those East Germans who read that the boundaries had been sealed and that they had left their escape attempt too late.

But, somehow, 7,000 new refugees have escaped since the barricades went up. West of the Brandenburg Gate the flame of freedom still burns.