

Since the times I am referring to, there have been some improvements. There have been greater contacts with the West and easier internal conditions. There has developed among the smaller Communist nations in Eastern Europe a greater freedom of action in defining national interests. The appeals of Western leaders have played a part in this process. And yet situations remain which are the most shocking examples of injustice and which throw a peculiar light on what Communist leaders may mean by coexistence.

Last year, in visiting Berlin, I had occasion to see how the most elementary human rights of free movement and family association are denied by that Wall which cuts a great city in half. In speaking at the West Berlin City Hall, I said that the Wall appeared to me, a Canadian, as the "cruel and desperate act of a regime which feared, for good reason, competition with a free society and could only resort to force".

In expressing their attachment to what they consider to be elementary principles of social justice, Canadian leaders have been influenced by the experience and insight of many groups making up Canadian society -- the Ukrainians, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Hungarians, Roumanians and many others who have had vivid experience of injustice. But I am not pledging the faith of the Government to any principles of human rights which do not also emerge from the beliefs of the founding races - the British and French, - or from the beliefs of other races who have entered into our society. The expression of strong feeling and the choice of a wise national policy to give effective expression to that feeling can only come from a national consensus of conviction and wise judgment.

I turn, therefore, to the third theme of my address, to the question of how, under present circumstances, we are to conduct our direct relations with Communist countries. The differences between us and them are only too obvious. Is there hope of achieving some amelioration of conditions which could be significant in the terms of the convictions which you and other Canadians share?

The firm insistence on maintaining our own defensive capacity is part of the relationship between ourselves and the Communist countries, but we cannot sit back behind our lines and neglect opportunities to lessen tension and change some political realities. Nor can we, unfortunately, count on common membership in the United Nations to achieve a better understanding without a considerable supplementary effort in bilateral relations.

In this area we cannot, of course, allow ourselves to lose sight of the stubborn issues still at stake between us and the Communist world: fundamental issues such as German reunification, European security and general and controlled disarmament. There is little visible evidence that the Communist world will be ready to co-operate in resolving these issues in the near future. These are hard facts.

But it is equally a fact that, since the Cuban crisis of 1962, there has been a tendency, at least on the part of the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries of Eastern Europe, to work towards a certain easing of tension -- the development of an atmosphere in which a realistic policy on both sides could produce some positive results.