WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR

THE FOUR FREEDOMS

The significance of the Four Freedoms is underlined again this week in the anniversary of the signing of the Atlantic Charter by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill one year ago. To make clear the goals of the United Nations, the Office of War Information has just issued a 16 page pamphlet.

The complete text of the pamphlet follows:

Beyond the war lies peace. Both sides have sketched the outlines of the new world toward which they strain. The leaders of the Axis countries have published their design for all to read. They promise a world in which the conquered peoples will live out their lives in the service of their masters.

The United Nations now engaged in a common cause, have also published their design and have committed certain common aims to writing. They plan a world in which men stand straight and walk free free not of all human trouble but free of the fear of despotic power, free to develop as individuals free to conduct and shape their affairs. Such a world has been more dream than reality, more hope than fact but it has been the best hope men have had and the one for which they have most consistently shown themselves willing to die.

This free-ness, this liberty, this precious thing men love and mean to save, is the good granite ledge on which the United Nations now propose to raise their new world after victory. The purpose of this pamphlet is to examine and define the essential freedoms.

To talk of war aims, shouting over the din of battle while the planet rocks and vibrates, may seem futile to some. Yet the talk must go on among free peoples. The faith people have in themselves is what the free have to build upon. Such faith is basic to them—man's not belief in man, a belief which suggests that human beings are capable of ordering their affairs. This is a high compliment paid by man to himself, an evidence or gesture of self-respect, of stature, of dignity, and of worth, an affidavit of individual responsibility.

The freedoms we are fighting for, we who are free; the freedoms for which the men and women in the concentration camps and prisons and in the dark streets of the subjugated countries wait, are four in number.

"The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

"The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

"The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

"The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world."

These freedoms are separate, but not independent. Each one relies upon all the others. Each supports the whole, which is liberty. When one is missing, all the others are jeopardized. A person who

lives under a tyrant and has lost freedom of speech, must necessarily be tortured by fear. A person who is in great want is usually also in great fear—fear of even direr want and greater insecurity. A person denied the right to worship in his own way has thereby lost the knack of free speech, for unless he is free to exercise his religious conscience, his privilege of free speech (even though not specifically denied) is meaningless. A person tortured with fears has lost both the privilege of free speech and the strength to supply himself with his needs. Clearly these four freedoms are so closely related, as dependent one upon another, as the four seasons of the natural year, whose Winter snows irrigate the Spring, and whose dead leaves, fermenting, rebuild the soil for Summer's yield.

The first two freedoms—freedom of speech and freedom of religion—are cultural. They are prerogatives of the thinking man, of the creative and civilized human being. Sometimes, as in the United States, they are guaranteed by organic law. They are rather clearly understood, and the laws protecting them are continually being revised and adjusted to preserve their basic meaning. Freedom from fear and from want, on the other hand, are not part of our culture, but part of our environment—they concern the facts of our lives rather than the thoughts of our minds. Men are unafraid, or well-fed, or both, according to the conditions under which they live.

To be free a man must live in a society which has relieved those curious pressures which conspire to make men slaves: pressure of a despotic government, pressure of intolerance, pressure of want. The declaration of the four freedoms, therefore, is not a promise of a gift which, under certain conditions, the people will receive; it is a declaration of a design which the people themselves may execute.

Freedom, of whatever sort, is relative. Nations united by a common effort to create a better world are obviously not projecting a Utopia in which nobody shall want for anything. That is not the point—nor within the range of human possibility. What unites them is the purpose to create a world in which no one need want for the minimum necessities of an orderly and decent life, for cleanliness, for self respect and security. It is an ambitious design perhaps too ambitious for the cynic or the faithless, but it is supported by the sure knowledge that the earth produces abundantly and that men are already in possession of the tools which could realize such a purpose if men choose to use them.

This, then, is a credo to which the representatives of 26 nations have subscribed: not a promise made by any group of men to any other group. It is only the people themselves who can create the conditions favoring these essential freedoms which they are now repurchasing in the bazaar of war and paying for with their lives. Nothing is for sale at bargain prices, nor will the house be built in three days with cheap labor. From a world in ruins there can rise only a slow, deliberate monument. This time, conceived by so many peoples of united purpose, it will rise straight upward and rest on good support.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

To live free a man must speak openly; gag him and he becomes either servile or full of cankers. Free government is then the most realistic kind of government for it not only assumes that a man has something on his mind, but concedes his right to say it. It permits him to talk—not without fear of contradiction but without fear of punishment.

There can be no people's rule unless there is talk. Men, it turns out, breathe through their minds as well as through their lungs, and there must be circulation of ideas as well as of air. Since nothing is likely to be more distasteful to a man than the opinion of someone who disagrees with him, it does the race credit that it has so stubbornly defended the principle of free speech. Even if a man knows anything at all, he knows that the principle is fundamental in self-government, the whole purpose of which is to reflect and affect the will of the people.

In America, free speech and a free press were the first things the minds of the people turned to after the fashioning of the Constitution. Farsighted men, in those early days, readily understood that some sort of protection was necessary. Thus when the first amendment to the Constitution was drawn (part of what the world now knows as the Bill of Rights) it prohibited the Congress from making any law which might abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of their grievances.

In the Nazi state, freedom of speech and expression have been discarded—not for temporary military expediency, but as a principle of life. Being contemptuous of the individual, and secretly suspicious of him, the German leader has deprived him of his voice. Ideas are what tyrants most fear. To set up a despotic state, the first step is to get rid of the talkers—the talkers in schools, the talkers in forums, the talkers in political rallies and in trade union meetings, the talkers on the radio and in the newsreel, and in the barber shops and village garages. Talk does not fit the Nazi and the Fascist scheme, where all ideas are, by the very nature of the political structure, the property of one man.

Talk is death to tyranny, for it can easily clarify a political position which the ruler may prefer to becloud, and it can expose injustices which he may choose to obscure.

Our Bill of Rights specifically mentioned the press. Today the press is one of many forms of utterance. Talk and ideas flow in ever-increasing torrents, through books, magazines, schools, the radio, the motion picture. The camera has created a whole new language of its own.

All these new forms are safeguarded with the ancient guarantees, but the essential danger of not being allowed to speak freely remains. Today the privilege is challenged more gravely than ever before; in the countries dominated by the Axis books are burned, universities are shut down, men are put to death for listening to a radio broadcast. Hitler's New Order seeks to prove that unity and efficiency are achieved most readily among people who are prevented from reading, thinking, talking, debating. This new anesthesia is a subtle drug. Under its quick influence men sleep a strange sleep.

The right to speak, the right to hear, the right of access to information carry with them certain responsibilities. Certain favorable conditions are necessary before freedom of speech acquires validity.

The first condition is that the individual have something to say. Literacy is a prerequisite of free speech, and gives it point. Denied education, denied information, suppressed or enslaved, people grow sluggish; their opinions are hardly worth the high privilege of release. Similarly, those who live in terror or in destitution, even though no specific control is placed upon their speech, are as good as gagged.

Another condition necessary for free speech is that the people have access to the means of uttering it—to newspapers, to the radio, the public forum. When power or capital are concentrated, when the press is too closely the property of narrow interests, then freedom suffers. There is no freedom, either, unless facts are within reach, unless information is made available. And a final condition of free speech is that there be no penalties attached to the spread of information and to the expression of opinion, whether those penalties be applied by the Government or by any private interests whatsoever.

The operation of a free press and the free expression of opinion are far from absolute rights. The laws of libel and slander set limits on what men may say of other men. The exigency of war sets limits on what information may be given out, lest it give aid and comfort to the enemy. Good taste sets limits on all speech.

Freedom of speech, Justice Holmes has warned, does not grant the right to shout fire in a crowded theater. When ideas become overt acts against peace and order, then the Government presumes to interfere with free speech. The burden of proof, however, is upon those who would restrict speech—the danger must be not some vague danger but real and immediate.

THE FACES OF THESE MEN tell us what we are fighting for. V their expressions. (The "New York Times" Press Bureau gives th in a German conce

We are not so much concerned with these inevitable limitations to free speech as with the delight at the principle in society and how greatly it has strengthened man's spirit, how steadily it has enlarged his culture and his world. We in America know what the privilege is because we have lived with it for a century and a half. Talk founded the Union, nurtured it, and preserved it. The dissenter, the disbeliever, the crack-pot, the reformer, those who would pull down as well as build up—all are free to have their say.

Talk is our daily fare—the white-bosomed lecturer regaling the Tuesday Ladies' Club, the prisoner at the bar testifying in his own behalf, the editorial writer complaining of civic abuses, the actor declaiming behind the footlights, the movie star speaking on the screen, the librarian dispensing the accumulated talk of ages, the professor holding forth to his students, the debating society, the meeting of the aldermen, the minister in the pulpit, the traveler in the smoking car, the soap-box orator with his flag and his bundle of epigrams, the opinions of the solemn magistrate and the opinions of the animated mouse—words, ideas, in a never-ending stream, from the enduring wisdom of the great and the good to the puniest thought troubling the feeblest brain. All are listened to all add up to something and we call it the rule of the people, the people who are free to say the words.

The United States fights to preserve this heritage, which is the very essence of the Four Freedoms. How, unless there is freedom of speech, can freedom of religion or freedom from want or freedom from fear be realized? The enemies of all liberty flourish and grow strong in the dark of enforced silence.

For the right to be articulate the inarticulate airman climbs to his fabulous battleground. For this fight the grim-lipped soldier; the close-mouthed sailor; the marine.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

That part of man which is called the spirit and which belongs only to himself and to his God, is of the very first concern in designing a free world. It was not their stomachs but their immortal souls which brought the first settlers to America's shores, and they prayed before they ate. Freedom of conscience, the right to worship God, is part of our soil and of the sky above this continent.

Freedom of worship implies that the individual has a source of moral values which transcends the immediate necessities of the community, however important these may be. It is one thing to pay taxes to the state—this man will do; it is another to submit their consciences to the state—this they politely decline. The wise community respects this mysterious quality in the individual, and makes its plans accordingly.

The democratic guarantee of freedom of worship is not in the nature of a grant—it is in the nature of an admission. It is the state admitting that the spirit soars in illimitable regions beyond the collectors of customs. It was Tom Paine, one of the great voices of freedom in early America, who pointed out that a government could no more grant to man the liberty to worship God than it could grant to God the liberty of receiving such worship.

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