

provision for freedom of movement, the majority view (Indian and Polish) was that by May 18 the bulk of those wishing to do so had changed their zone of residence. As indicated in the Minority Note which is included in the Fourth Report, the Canadian Delegation did not accept this conclusion.

Canadian concern with freedom of movement had previously been expressed in a Note accompanying the Third Interim Report, recommending that the Geneva Conference Powers consult together to study such measures as might be necessary to ensure that the provisions of the Cease-Fire Agreement on freedom of movement were respected. As a result of this suggestion, an extension of the period allowed for the free movement of refugees was agreed to; however, owing to the failure of the parties to agree on details of the arrangements, only a comparatively small number of persons were able to move during the extended period which ended on July 20.

Communist Obstruction

The Canadian Minority Note illustrates by specific instances the extent of Communist obstructive tactics in the North and modifies the impression created by the majority report that the problem of freedom of movement was solved to a far greater extent than was really the case. According to the Canadian statement, the reports of the Commission's teams showed that individuals wishing to move South were not in fact permitted and helped to do so but in some cases were actually prevented from moving. An atmosphere of fear and suspicion, in part a legacy of the war years, had not been dissipated and served to inhibit and restrict effective investigation by the teams.

The Canadian Note states that reports of the teams also indicated that there was good reason to believe that Communist authorities in areas visited by Commission teams had taken special measures to prevent the complete facts from being brought to light and to inhibit effective contact between would-be evacuees and the Commission's representatives. Soldiers, political cadres and the local militia were frequently stationed in the homes of the Catholic population and prevented them from contacting the teams. In some cases, persons desiring to appear before the teams were called away to meetings organized by the local authorities to coincide with the arrival of the teams; in other cases, would-be evacuees were grouped in village churches and attempts made to keep the teams from interviewing them. In further instances of obstruction, organized groups presenting petitions complaining about forced evacuations demonstrated in such a fashion that the teams were unable to complete investigations and would-be evacuees were intimidated; and on at least a dozen occasions evacuees were physically molested and sometimes forcibly dragged away before they had an opportunity to meet a team, (on one occasion a crowd of 500 persons whisked away the director of a seminary before the eyes of the members of one team). In the Canadian view, these obstructive tactics on the part of local authorities were a part of an organized plan. However, it was impossible for the Commission to obtain absolute proof that such was the case.

Evasive answers and conflicting statistics also prevented the teams in the North from obtaining a complete picture of the extent of the non-implementation of the provision for "freedom of movement". However, it was evident by May 18 that action had not yet been taken on the majority of the more than 11,000 petitions in the North, and on about 1000 petitions in the South received from people wishing to change their zone of residence.