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(C.W.B. February 25, 1949)

THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

6. It seemed clear from these incidents that all religious faiths were involved and that a general attack was being launched on the fundamental freedoms of human society. Fresh emphasis was given to the repressive character of these arrests by the conditions under which the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty was conducted. It can hardly be said that these proceedings bear any resemblance to what we understand by a "fair trial". From official sources in which we have confidence, we learn, for example, the following facts about the conduct of this case.

7. The trial which involved seven persons and four different charges, including capital charges, was concluded in three days. No witnesses were called for the defence. The Counsel for the prosecution made no attempt to establish his case but confined himself for the most part to enlarging on the political fairness of the trial. The Counsel for the defence put no case for the defence and did not contest easily refutable statements made by the Counsel for the prosecution; and the material evidence consisted of statements taken outside the court before the trial. It may be added that no representatives of non-Communist governments were permitted to attend the trial. We are informed also that the representative of the Government of Australia attempted to visit Budapest for this purpose, but though a visa was promised on six occasions, it was not forthcoming.

SEEK OTHERS' VIEWS

8. Meanwhile the Government is continuing to seek the views of like minded governments, signatory to the Treaty, on the character and desirability of any further action that may be taken jointly or independently. It has been suggested, for example, that the Treaty of Peace be invoked. Unfortunately, the procedures which are immediately available under the Treaty of Peace all depend for their effectiveness on the co-operation of the Soviet Government. Since the U.S.S.R. not only supports but even encourages governments which it can influence in their hostility to religion, it is not likely to give the other signatories to the Peace Treaties much assistance in putting a halt to religious persecution in Eastern Europe. It may be, however, that the signatories to the Treaties, even without the support of the Soviet Union, could through joint representation based on these provisions of these Treaties have some influence upon the governments which are responsible for these acts.

9. Provision is also made in the Treaty for a procedure leading to the establishment of a Commission of three to act in regard to any dispute arising out of the execution or interpretation of the Treaty. The majority decision

of this Commission would be binding on the parties to the dispute.

10. If this procedure were used, the obstruction of the U.S.S.R. to action under it could not become effective until efforts were made to give effect to the decisions of the Commission.

11. A further possibility that has received some public notice is that the matter be referred to the United Nations; because it would seem obvious that the spirit of repression and persecution that pervades the events under review is clearly not in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations or the Declaration of Human Rights.

12. In any case it is the view of the Government that a state which fails to carry out its Treaty obligations in letter and spirit, cannot expect to be supported in its application for admission to the United Nations; and indeed might expect formally to be condemned by the world organization.

13. But, Mr. Speaker, in examining these or any other suggestions that may be made the Government's course will be guided by considerations that are more significant than tactics or gestures. While giving the fullest expression to our profound abhorrence of religious persecution, however it may be disguised, we shall seek to take only such action as appears to offer a reasonable prospect of promoting the principles in which we believe and at the same time of ameliorating the situation with which we are faced in the Communist countries.

EVENTS IN HUNGARY

14. The events in Hungary have, as hon. members know, been followed by similar action on the part of the Bulgarian Government. On February 10 that Government issued its indictment of 15 Protestant leaders in that country, charging them with espionage, and other crimes.

15. The Government has instructed the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires in Prague to apply for visas to visit Hungary and Roumania in order that he may make inquiries on the spot and report to the Government. Canada is not a signatory to the Bulgarian Treaty, but in any joint action that may be considered advisable, this country would find no difficulty in associating itself with such action. The principles of religious freedom and fundamental human rights are not confined to the articles of a Peace Treaty.

16. The clear and common sense conclusion, Mr. Speaker, is that the cases of each Church, each Bishop, or each group of religious leaders, are horrifying incidents in what appears to be a Grand Design, a calculated policy of persecution aimed not perhaps at the immediate extermination of the Christian Communions, but at their ultimate subjugation and servitude.

By its nature and its dogma Marxist Communism must secure the total obedience of its subjects and cannot tolerate the free speculations of the human spirit and conscience.

17. A plain recital of a few only of the incidents in this process reveals the pattern of persecution which is swiftly being drawn over the unhappy Christians of these lands. We are already familiar with the fate in Hungary of leaders of three different churches and I have mentioned the indictments on February 10, by the Bulgarian Government of 15 Protestant leaders in that country. It is noteworthy that while these clergymen, all members of the United Evangelical Church in Bulgaria, were apparently arrested some months ago, no indictment was made until this time.

18. In Poland some 26 priests have been detained and 8 arrested for having read a pastoral letter from their Bishop, in which the anti-religious actions of government officials was severely attacked.

19. In Czechoslovakia towards the end of last year two members of the Greek Catholic Church were tried for alleged espionage activities, and early this month a new campaign was started against the Church.

20. In Roumania in December, 1948, the Roumanian Uniate Church, a branch of the Roman Catholic Church, was practically extinguished by government decree and its property confiscated.

21. It cannot be expected, I am sorry to say, that the tale is ended. From the Baltic to the frontiers of Greece the ceaseless pressure to impose a total Communist pattern goes forward. The middle way of life, the only way broad enough to contain in peace and tolerance all creeds and all faiths, is being steadily cast aside and nowhere is this clearer than in the realm of religious belief. There is no quick or simple solution: the problem is too vast and too many-sided. Old in essence, it is here new in form and it has the ruthlessness of new things.

22. The Government will continue to use whatever means are available to support every effort to assert the principles of religious and political liberty and to restore their practice.

FOOD FOR MIDDLE EAST: The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Pearson, announced on February 24 that 600 tons of wheat flour are being shipped at once for the relief of refugees in the Middle East. This shipment, which is in response to a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, will be followed by approximately 50,000 cases of canned fish and 50,000 bushels of white beans. Mr. Stanton Griffis, Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees, has "acknowledge with deep gratitude" the Canadian Government's offer of wheat flour, fish and beans.

An estimated number of 700,000 refugees, both Arabs and Jews, have been driven from

their homes in Palestine. Most of them are women, children and old people and are now living in the adjoining states of Lebanon, Transjordan, Syria and Egypt. People in these states have done a remarkable job of sheltering, clothing and feeding the refugees, but they are now near the end of their resources and cannot carry on unless they receive outside help. Transjordan alone, with a settled population of less than 200,000, is now attempting to care for an estimated 100,000 refugees.

To illustrate existing conditions in these Middle East countries, Mr. Pearson quoted from a press despatch:

"Children are said to be dying of measles in considerable numbers. There is nothing particularly virulent about the measles epidemic itself but the children are so weakened by pneumonia and dysentery that they are unable to resist the disease."

In November the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution asking member countries to contribute money, goods and services to a total of \$32 million, in order to keep the refugees until the next food crop in the Middle East becomes available in August, 1949. Some countries have already made gifts of tents, medicines or clothing, according to what each can offer.

Mr. Pearson said that in Canada there are surplus supplies of several kinds of foodstuffs for which no commercial market exists, and arrangements are being made through the various Commodity Prices Support Boards to donate some of these foodstuffs to the United Nations Director for the Relief of Palestine Refugees.

Several months ago the Canadian Government donated about a quarter of a million dollars worth of such supplies to the Canadian Red Cross Society for relief purposes in the Middle East.

RECORD TRAVEL PROFIT: International travel was more profitable to Canada in 1948 than in any other year, resulting in a net credit of \$150 million compared with \$84 million in 1947 and the previous peak profit of \$90 million in 1929.

Expenditures in Canada by travellers from other countries rose to a new height of \$282 million, according to first estimates by the Bureau of Statistics. At the same time, expenditures of Canadians travelling in other countries took a substantial drop from \$167 million in 1947 to \$132 million.

Last year's gain was entirely the result of travel between Canada and the United States. American spendings on travel in Canada -- advance figures for which were released earlier this month -- reached the estimated record total of \$270 million, up 12 per cent over the previous high of \$241 million in 1947, while Canadian expenditures on travel in the United States dropped from the 1947 peak of \$152 million to \$112 million.