

15. The Government has instructed the Canadian Charge 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.