

subservience to the state. It was the culmination of the relentless persecution to which the Catholic Church as well as the other churches have been subjected during the last six months. By now, it is generally recognized that almost eighty per cent of the Catholic priests, for instance, in Bulgaria have been arrested or otherwise persecuted, and the one remaining Bishop, the Bishop of Sofia and Plovdiv, has finally been arrested as a result of the latest "revelations" which the Bulgarian Government has pretended to have obtained during the course of the trial which I have just described.

We are still uncertain as to the ultimate fate of all those persons who were judged at this trial. According to certain rumours which have reached us, some of these unfortunate victims have already been hanged. At the same time, we have reason to believe that some of them are still alive. In the present circumstances, we cannot afford to be too optimistic about the success of our representations; but, in the event that the Government of Bulgaria and its leaders still have a minimum sense of justice and humanity, we like to hope that our appeal will be heard and that it will be possible to save the lives of those persons who have been so crudely tried and so unjustly condemned to death.

This example I have just cited, like earlier persecutions, deportations and purges, is a further example of a ruthless attack upon that most precious of all freedoms -- the freedom of conscience -- which is, after all, the cornerstone of our civilization. For, indeed, we should never forget that the only crime of these people was to practice their religion and, in so doing, perhaps to oppose Communism spiritually and morally. The government responsible for this latest act of suppression of freedom of conscience is not represented in the United Nations and it is unlikely that the censored and controlled press will give the Bulgarian people an adequate or, indeed, any idea of the indignation and anger with which the freedom-loving world regards such mockeries of injustice which I have just described. For this reason my delegation wishes to call upon those governments which are members of the United Nations and which still maintain diplomatic or consular missions in Bulgaria to inform the Bulgarian authorities of these protests which are coming from all the peoples of the free nations, including the Canadian people, against this flagrant violation of the most elementary principles of humanity. Those who are guilty cannot close their eyes to the clamour of justice and of liberty.

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