

### A HUMANE APPEAL FROM CANADA TO THE U.S.S.R.

The following statement was issued recently by Prime Minister L.B. Pearson:

For several years, the Canadian Embassy in Moscow has been making representations to the Soviet authorities on behalf of many individual persons in the U.S.S.R. who wish to be allowed to come to Canada to join their families in this country and whose applications for exit continue to be refused by the Soviet authorities. In June 1962, our then Ambassador made further representations to the Acting Foreign Minister on behalf of a considerable number of active applications, which were collated in a list submitted on that occasion; and in November of that year he made representations to Mr. Khrushchov personally about the problem. On August 8 of this year, our present Ambassador delivered a personal letter of July 3 from me to Mr. Khrushchov on this subject. To this Mr. Khrushchov has replied in a letter of September 21. I acknowledged Mr. Khrushchov's letter in a letter of 3 November, which was delivered to Mr. Kosygin on December 2.

It will be noted that I appealed to Mr. Khrushchov on humanitarian grounds to end the sufferings of these families, some of whom have been deprived of family life for up to two decades. Since Mr. Khrushchov responded promptly to this appeal, and in a positive way, and since we have received formal assurances from the Soviet Government that it intends to make no change in its policies following the resignation of Mr. Khrushchov, we hope that an increasing number of persons will be allowed in coming months to leave the U.S.S.R. and to join their families in Canada.

The correspondence with Mr. Khrushchov and Mr. Kosygin follows:

(1)

Ottawa, July 3, 1964

Dear Chairman Khrushchov:

I am certain that we can both take some satisfaction from the development and improvement that has taken place in relations between our two countries in recent years. The extension of cultural and scientific exchanges and the expansion of commercial relations have, I believe, been mutually advantageous in breaking down the barriers of mistrust and misunderstanding which too long have served to divide us. Unfortunately, certain problems remain; but I am confident that you will agree that these problems should not be insurmountable, given a genuine spirit of co-operation and understanding between our two countries.

You will recall that our former Ambassador, Mr. Arnold Smith, spoke with you personally in late 1962 about the problem of divided families, I have been glad to see that in recent months an increasing number of Soviet citizens have been allowed to join their relatives in Canada. We Canadians, living in a country which, over the years, has been privileged to receive many thousands of people, welcome those from various cultural backgrounds who are making a many-sided contribution to our national life.

Unfortunately there remain a very large number of families which are still divided despite an express

wish on the part of many to join their relatives in Canada; and I would remind you, Mr. Chairman, that some of these unfortunate people, largely as the result of a long and cruel war, have suffered from separation for periods of up to 20 years. Whatever the reasons and the difficulties, I am sure you will agree that separation over so many years is a tragedy. You and I, who know what family life means, must surely do everything we can to see that such suffering should not be prolonged. Knowing your readiness to give due weight to humanitarian factors, I hope that, against the background of the general improvement in the relations between our two countries, the problem of divided families will soon become a thing of the past.

A decision by your Government to expedite a solution of this human problem, about which the Canadian public is becoming increasingly concerned, cannot fail to increase goodwill between Canada and the Soviet Union.

Yours sincerely,  
L.B. Pearson.

(2)

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I have received your message, which was forwarded to me by Mr. Ford, the Canadian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.

I share your satisfaction at the development and improvement of the relations between our two countries in recent years. It is gratifying to note the expansion of cultural as well as of scientific and trade links and exchanges between the U.S.S.R. and Canada. We consider that there is every possibility to develop these contacts still further in the interests of both countries, and to achieve greater mutual understanding and the improvement of the international situation as a whole.

I think you will agree with me, Mr. Prime Minister, that we must all spare no effort to prevent the unleashing of a new world war, which, given modern means of mass extermination, would inflict innumerable sacrifices and suffering on all the peoples on earth. I am sure that, in circumstances of goodwill and of a genuine desire for strengthening the peace, the point can be reached at which controversial international questions will be solved by negotiations, and at which states with different social systems will base their relations on the principles of peaceful co-existence, and will prevent the development of situations which can give rise to military conflicts. This, in accordance with the highest humanitarian principles, is the main and basic requirement of our day.

Your message, Mr. Prime Minister, touches upon the question of the so-called separated families. To a considerable extent this question arose as a direct result of the Second World War, which brought much sorrow and unhappiness to the peoples. The Soviet people, who had to bear the main blow of the Hitlerite hordes, were compelled to suffer especially great losses. To this day, millions of Soviet families are suffering from the loss of their nearest relatives, who perished in battles for the liberation of their Motherland from the Hitlerite invaders, and