

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 52/20 ISRAEL'S ANSWER TO RACIAL PERSECUTION

A speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, delivered at a meeting of the Jewish community of Toronto, on June 1, 1952, sponsored by the Jewish National Fund in the interests of the Forests of the Martyrs.

There may have been at some period of human history in some regions of the world fortunate generations which have not had to struggle against oppression. Our own generation, however, has had no such fortune. The minds and indeed the very lives of many men, to whom pursuit of the arts, letters and sciences would have been far more appealing, have been and continue to be absorbed by the effort to limit the spread of despotism, and prevent man's inhumanity to man. It is therefore fitting that we should reflect tonight on the circumstances that have made this necessary; on the tragedy of loss and destruction sustained by the civilized world in the recent past and on how we may help to prevent its recurrence in the future.

An essential part of this task is to find ways of diminishing the force of hatred in the world. Another part is to assert and protect the right of civilized human beings to plan and live in their own environment, remembering that those whose history and traditions differ from our own have an equal right to develop along lines which they consider to be right for their own needs.

There are many other things waiting to be done. Progress throughout the world, both in the development of national life and in the sphere of international co-operation, must be protected by plans for effective resistance to possible attacks from totalitarian barbarism. Yet the very purpose of that protective effort would be defeated if we allowed it to swallow up all our energies to the detriment of constructive pursuits; or if in the name of protection we sacrificed tolerance and freedom. The basic problem will not be solved until the principles of democratic liberty are embraced everywhere; a liberty which is far wider and deeper than the right merely to govern ourselves. This subject is a large one; tonight I can touch on only one small segment of it, our response to the challenge of savagery and oppression.

An inspiring symbol of this response to oppression in its basest forms is the Forest of the Martyrs, the first groves of which have already been planted in Israel. They commemorate those six million Jews who perished in the holocaust in Europe before the tide of barbarism was stemmed by the arrival of Allied military forces, who themselves suffered grievously in their struggle to defeat a brutal, powerful foe and bring aid to the survivors. The Forest of the