

that the majority of member nations immediately applied themselves with determination and singleness of purpose to the formidable task of seeking satisfactory solutions to these problems -- solutions that would be consistent with justice, honour and the principles of the U.N. Charter.

The Korean issue, better than anything else, underlines the closing of ranks among the free nations and the complete isolation of Soviet Russia and its satellites from those nations that are honestly seeking peace.

I cannot stress too much the unanimity of purpose displayed by all members of the United Nations with the exception of the Soviet bloc. There was unanimity in the desire for peace. There was unanimity on the necessity for a realistic armistice agreement. There was unanimity that hostilities should be brought to an end as quickly as possible in Korea. Finally, there was unanimity that the sole issue holding up an armistice agreement, the prisoner-of-war issue, must be resolved on terms that would guarantee the sanctity of the individual's free will.

The prisoner-of-war issue had a significance apart from its immediate importance to the settlement of the Korean problem. Seven years ago, the Prime Minister of this country, together with the representatives of many other countries, signed the United Nations Charter. In doing so, we not only pledged our support to an organization dedicated to keep the peace through the implementation of the collective security principle, but we re-affirmed our faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person.

The prisoner-of-war problem in itself was a concrete test of the sincerity of that affirmation. Human beings were being detained in prisoner-of-war camps in Korea for long and weary months while lengthy negotiations concerning their future were underway. United Nations negotiators at Panmunjom, knowing that some prisoners would resist return to Communist control because of the fate that would await them, took the firm stand that no prisoner-of-war could be forced at the point of bayonet to return to the other side. The Communist Command for its part insisted that all prisoners-of-war should be returned regardless of their individual wishes.

Stripped of all the mumbo-jumbo of Russian rhetoric, here is the issue:

Will the Korean war prisoners be set free
or will some be driven to other prisons,
to vengeful privations and even death?

Since Communism was first concocted, no such acid test has yet emerged by which to test its Uriah Heep concern for suffering humanity.

In the discussions of the Assembly, I took issue with the stand of the chief Soviet delegate, Mr. Andrei Vyshinsky, on the repatriation of prisoners-of-war. In my examination of what he had said, I asked whether, in all humanity, he seriously proposed that any prisoner unwilling to return to his Communist-controlled homeland should be driven there by troops of either side under orders to club, bayonet or shoot him if he resisted.