

religion. In view of the basic tenets of Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism, this could not be represented as simply anti-clericalism of a kind which had long been known in Western Europe. It was obviously the first step in an effort to extinguish religious belief. The campaign reached its height in the trial and imprisonment of Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary, in February 1949, and in similar measures against Protestant leaders in Bulgaria. The indignation provoked by these and other extreme acts of persecution found spontaneous expression throughout the non-Communist world, and led to allegations by the Western democracies that the Governments of Hungary, Bulgaria and Roumania had violated the human rights clauses of the Peace Treaties of 1947.

The question of the observance of human rights in these countries was first placed on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its session in April 1949. Before that date, several governments which had been signatories of the Peace Treaties with Hungary, Bulgaria and Roumania had sent notes of protest to these governments. On January 26 the Canadian Government protested to the Hungarian Government concerning the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty. On April 2 Canada, Australia, and New Zealand associated themselves with United Kingdom notes of protest to Hungary and Roumania. These communications listed typical violations by the two governments of the human rights articles of the Peace Treaties, including violations of the guarantee of freedom of religion. In addition, the notes called upon the governments concerned to adopt prompt remedial measures in respect of these violations. At the same time, Canada was associated with similar notes sent by the United States Government to Hungary and Roumania and, although not a signatory of the Peace Treaty with Bulgaria, was informally associated with both the United States and the United Kingdom protests to the Bulgarian Government. All this took place before the United Nations began its consideration of this matter.

The General Assembly was asked in April 1949 to consider "the question of the observance in Bulgaria and Hungary of human rights and fundamental freedoms including questions of religious and civil liberties with special reference to recent trials of church leaders". In the General (or Steering) Committee the Representatives of the U.S.S.R. and Poland opposed the inclusion of this item in the Assembly's agenda, stating that the matter was exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of Bulgaria and Hungary; that these states were not members of the United Nations and could not be bound by its Charter; that the machinery provided in the Peace Treaties would be the correct procedure to use in settlement of the dispute; and that the United Nations had no right to supervise the execution of these Treaties.

These arguments notwithstanding, the General Assembly decided to debate the item. In the discussions, the non-Communist majority protested vigorously against the actions of the Governments of Hungary and Bulgaria and pointed out that the Peace Treaties contained specific provisions guaranteeing the observance of basic human rights in those countries. Although the matter was considered to fall within the competence of the United Nations, it was not deemed appropriate at that stage for the Assembly to investigate the acts allegedly committed by the two accused Governments until the signatories of the Peace Treaties had exhausted the machinery for settlement provided in the Treaties. Nevertheless, as a