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"A TEST OF NATIONAL CONSCIENCE"

ADDRESS

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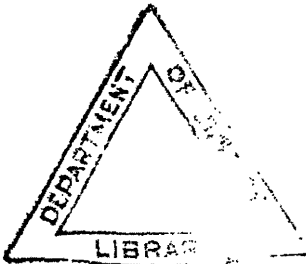
HONORABLE HERBERT BROWNELL, JR.

Attorney General of the United States

At Dedication Ceremonies

of the

Young Men's Christian Association



Syracuse, New York

February 10, 1957

I am pleased and privileged to join with you in celebrating this happy event. To all who took part in the planning of this newest Young Men's Christian Association building, I should like to offer my sincerest congratulations.

The erection of a building such as this is steeped in significance. At the very least, it demonstrates that we may look back with pleasure upon the fruits of a dedication to God, to country, and to youth. The returns, beyond dimensions for measurement, in terms of spiritual, cultural, educational, and physical improvement to the young have enriched the nation in outstanding degree. For the future, this structure, and others which inevitably will follow, offer the promise of a people firm in devotion to the lasting qualities of the higher virtues in life and to our rich and noble traditions.

We honor many today in these ceremonies, beginning certainly with George Williams, the humble dry goods store clerk, out of whose devotion and vision was born this great service to mankind. London, in 1844, witnessed the planting of the seed. When the seafaring American Captain, Thomas V. Sullivan, launched the first Y.M.C.A. in the United States, at a small church in Boston, he little realized that more than 1800 central meeting places for young men were soon to follow. We honor, too, not only other illustrious persons who have made outstanding contributions to the Y.M.C.A. movement over the last century, but those most important people who have brought fulfillment to this great program--the unsung and unnamed citizens of this community who, in a very real and practical sense, have made this progress possible through their contributions, however small or large, in effort, interest, and material gifts.

Our appreciation of the local benefits derived through the Y.M.C.A. units in the United States should not, however, obscure the efforts of the organization, through the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s in dealing with challenges in

other lands. The Y.M.C.A. plays an important part in the continuing and determined battle against evil forces of communism intent upon the capture and destruction of the minds and spirit of youths less fortunately situated than our own.

It is of this iniquitous, unprincipled force that I wish to speak about today.

Reflect for a moment on our system of criminal justice--the right of an accused to a fair trial by jury, to know the charges against him, to confront witnesses, the privilege against self-incrimination, the bar against detention without arraignment, the exclusion of coerced confessions, and the many other safeguards which are central to the concept of criminal justice. These same protective principles would be the death of any police state.

The means through which the communist leaders seek to corrupt those who become objects for their attention are many and varied. Under communist concepts and practices, the wronged individual has no enforceable legal remedy against the State for his protection. There is no security against abuses of even the most fundamental rights of man. No right to a fair trial is given, there is no freedom of speech or assembly, and forced confessions are the rule. In sum, a slave State exists.

Without freedom of expression, even knowledge of the existence of these abuses of justice largely can be suppressed; at least until the boiling point of a group is exceeded and an eruption of spirit, with its challenge to tyranny, follows.

History gives many examples of rulers who decreed what men must think and what views they must espouse. These periods in history make up some of the blackest chapters of man's inhumanity to man. We, on this continent, who enjoy

the fruits of a unique experiment in government sometimes find it difficult to fathom the extreme oppressions which minds devoted to enslavement can visit upon a people.

For over 10 years the forces of the Kremlin tried to mold the youth of Hungary into the image of Marx and Stalin. The communist rulers of Hungary well know that the strength of every nation lies in its youth, the heir of its tradition and culture. And so, by every possible means, including the hated A.V.H., the Hungarian security police, in the schools and factories, and wherever and whenever they could spread their poison, the communists tried to force acceptance of slavery for freedom. But they failed. Not by words, not by oppressive sanctions, and not even by guns and tanks did they extinguish the smoldering spirit of freedom.

The particular events which led those young men and women to rise up against the teachers forced upon them and risk their lives for a chance to be free are now well known.

The movement started at the university in Budapest on October 22. Several thousand students planned to demonstrate peacefully to show their solidarity with the people of Poland who had made a brave stand for independence. In the course of discussion, sentiment shifted toward demands for relief from oppressions on behalf of the Hungarian people. Leaflets were distributed to the factories by the students for a silent demonstration of workers. Quickly, by that immediate impulse which can never be completely smothered, the factory workers, Hungarian soldiers, and people of every background and occupation joined in a spontaneous mass movement. In almost minutes, hundreds of thousands came together for this demonstration. There was no violence. They did not come armed.

With the intervention of Soviet troops on October 24, the horrible massacre began. For 12 days the crushing might of the Soviet military forces sought to annihilate pitifully small numbers of Hungarian freedom fighters. Theirs were actions born in torture, written in blood, and comprising a lustrous page in freedom's book of the ages. It is a page which will ever stand as an inspiration to oppressed people.

Finally, however, by broadcast over the Budapest radio on November 4, Prime Minister Nagy made this dramatic announcement:

"In the early hours of this morning Soviet troops launched an attack against our capital with the obvious intention of overthrowing the lawful democratic Hungarian Government. Our troops are fighting. The Government is in its place. I am informing the people of the country and world opinion of this."

Eighteen hours later Radio Budapest announced that the Nagy government had ceased to exist. This announcement had been anticipated by Radio Moscow an hour earlier.

When the Russian tanks stormed into Budapest these valiant Hungarian fighters well knew the choice given them was destruction or surrender. But for many, yet another route was open. Surrender they would not. So, tearing themselves away from the aged and infirm, from fathers and mothers and other loved ones, they sought refuge--away from those who now sought to kill or deport them. For it had been shown, in the stark realism of street fighting, that the young men and women of Hungary would never submit to the slavery of the Kremlin. Their choice, then, was to look ahead, at whatever risk to themselves and their families. The future, as they saw it, did not exclude the possibility of going back to fight once again if their country somehow could be wrenched from the communist grip.

What is the composition of this great migration out of Hungary into Austria? First, there are remarkably few old people or invalids. At least three-quarters of them are less than 35 years old.

Second, the circumstances which forced the movement out of Hungary itself gives dramatic evidence of their deep-rooted affiliation with freedom. Anyone who has had opportunity to visit with these homeless people quickly realizes that these are not and could not be communist agents trading on compassion in order to infiltrate free nations for evil purposes. They are what clear vision easily shows: Hungary's bravest and finest!

But without in any way depreciating these high qualities, and without using a wide brush of suspicion, we have been mindful of our own security needs and considerations. Events have shown that in the face of substantial and various physical problems concerning transportation, housing, care and others of a difficult character, we have not been blinded to the possibility of an occasional or exceptional subversive attaching himself to the thousands seeking eligible admission into the United States. This is to say no more than that, throughout this migratory process, we have continued to be vigilant, while extending necessary refuge and hospitality.

In the Austrian camps, a first screening was made to weed out those we considered security risks or inadmissible for other reasons. Again, at Camp Kilmer, a second examination was made to further check admissibility with security considerations being most prominent in the review. Thus far, only a minute number were determined to be risks and these were returned.

Under our system, the investigative and intelligence process does not require, as a condition to the receipt of information, that the persons admitted be kept confined to one small area or that they be shadowed. Yet, you may be assured that the responsibility for keeping this nation free of espionage, subversive, and other agents of destruction has been kept firmly and immediately in mind.

The exodus from Hungary created a need and a challenge with which the Y.M.C.A. has become familiar through its long years of service. The Y.M.C.A., through the World Alliance, is able to enter and make available its magnificent gifts without contending with the problem of international politics or partisan domestic position.

As soon as the need appeared in Austria, the World Alliance put into immediate effect an educational, cultural, recreational, and religious program for those friendless, destitute people who needed the warmth of fellowship and understanding as much as bread and a roof. Physical facilities, including temporary structures, were made available at the expense of the World Alliance so that this important and useful program could be put into operation.

The value of that program is not limited to a satisfaction of religious or cultural needs alone--important as they are. It embraces, for example, the teaching of English to those destined for English-speaking countries, and other languages suited to the new location of the refugees. Another outstanding benefit of the World Alliance program concerns the opportunity for physical improvement. This, of course, is one of the important Y.M.C.A. contributions, here and abroad, to a better, happier life.

The Y.M.C.A. units in the United States also have an important relationship to the Hungarian refugees. After their arrival in the United States, many of these parolees experienced the traditional display of helpfulness which we have so long associated with this great organization.

Although the domestic part of the Y.M.C.A. refers to its activities as constituting an "auxiliary service," they have a practical significance far beyond the seemingly indirect connotation of the phrase. Some of the refugees have been given employment within the Y.M.C.A.'s themselves. Other young men have been placed in positions through the interest and warm-hearted cooperation

of the members. I do not point to these things as an example of America at its best. I prefer to think that it is simply the American way of treating strangers in need of help. Prominent among those who make possible this national pride is the Y.M.C.A.

This is not to overlook, of course, other voluntary agencies who have so magnificently responded, both here and abroad. The need for food, clothing, and other material wants was and remains great. These organizations have continued to perform those tasks and render aid of a kind which this Government, by reason of its Constitutional functions and national position, cannot extend.

There still remains the test whether our public conscience is sufficiently detached from selfish national interest and political purpose to recognize the quality and quantity of injustice in other parts of the world and the measure of our responsibility in that situation. How well do we appreciate the desperate urgency which must command the prior attention and humanely-tempered judgment of a free people?

The Executive branch of the Government has demonstrated its serious and determined views of the tragic displacement problem. As President Eisenhower stated in his January 10 State of the Union Message to the Congress:

"The recent historic events in Hungary demand that all free nations share to the extent of their capabilities in the responsibility of granting asylum to the victims of communist persecution. I request the Congress promptly to enact legislation to regularize the status in the United States of Hungarian refugees brought here as parolees."

On January 31, the President followed up his request with a special immigration message to the Congress which forcefully restated the pressing need for a more humane and sensible immigration policy. The President's message understandably stresses the need to offer asylum to those "who have fled or in the future flee from communist persecution and tyranny." This would be done by authorizing the emergency admission, within certain numerical limits, of

escapees who, because of persecution on account of race, religion or political opinion are forced to flee to a non-communist area from any communist or communist-controlled area, and who cannot return to any such area.

The President also asked that the Attorney General, subject to Congressional review, be authorized to grant permanent residence to parolees, including the Hungarian refugees already admitted.

This moral obligation of the world community of free nations to offer shelter to homeless exiles who risk their lives for freedom hardly can be questioned. The necessity for granting asylum for those who seek freedom from communist tyranny is imperative. We optimistically look forward to the prompt and vigorous support of this program by the Congress.

The President also has pointed to the need for reforms in the present immigration laws to remove certain inequities so that relief from some of its harsh provisions may be had. Prominent among the inequities is the national origins quota system. The President requests an increase of about 65,000 quota numbers annually. Our economic growth over the past 30 years, and the present state of our economy, justify such an increase.

Other changes urged by the President include provisions for the admission of orphans adopted or to be adopted by United States citizens.

If, in these remarks, I have over-weighted the needs of the Hungarian parolees, and our personal and official obligation to them, it is only because of a desire to discuss events as they have recently happened. However, this is not a situation only of our giving. We are likely to receive much, if not more, than we give. For we can acquire the youth, the vigor, imagination, talent, and skill of a group of men and women to enrich our society with priceless gifts. We must not lull ourselves into the false belief that we are

completely self-sufficient in all aspects of our civilization. Talent, sturdy character, and other great virtues are not the sole and exclusive properties of any one people in one nation.

This land of immigrants owes much of its vitality and power to the unity that springs from diversity. Immigration affords a means of adding enrichment to our culture, as well as bringing needed skills to our economy.

In spite of the diversities of separate cultures in our nation, we are one people. We are united on the essential principle that each person should have the right to advocate his own faith, the right to worship his God in such manner as he chooses. And what we have done in miniature, the world must some day do on a grand scale.

The manifest destiny of America is to help the peoples of the world to realize their dreams of equality. To do so we must be bold and imaginative in our thinking as the Y.M.C.A. has been in its activities at home and abroad. At home, we must practice the tolerance that the Bill of Rights champions. In our international relations, we must remain steadfast in our opposition to terrorism of mind and body when practiced by rulers of evil purpose. And to the people of every land to whom freedom is denied, we must ever hold out the friendly, helpful hand of hope, inspiration, and shelter in the noblest of all objectives--that someday all shall be free.