

ASSEMBLY OF CAPTIVE EUROPEAN NATIONS

29 WEST 57th STREET
New York 19, New York
PLaza 1-3850

March 4, 1960
Press Release #348
For: Immediate Release



ACEN ASKS RELEASE OF EXILES ARRESTED IN FRANCE PRIOR TO KHRUSHCHEV'S VISIT

Albania
Bulgaria
Czechoslovakia
Estonia
Hungary
Latvia
Lithuania
Poland
Romania

In a cable to President Charles de Gaulle Chairman Dr. Petr Zenkl expressed the shock of the Assembly of Captive European Nations at the arrest on Thursday morning of its representatives in France, including the Chairman of the ACEN Delegation, Professor Virgil Veniamin, as well as hundreds of other exiles from Eastern Europe. The arrests have been described by the press as precautionary measures in connection with the forthcoming visit of Nikita Khrushchev to France. The ACEN Chairman expressed the conviction that the measure was the work of subordinate officials and requested President de Gaulle to order immediately the release of all nationals of the countries represented in the Assembly "thus acting in the great tradition of France which has always been the haven of exiles and the persecuted."

This morning a delegation of ACEN consisting of Chairman Petr Zenkl, former Vice-Premier of Czechoslovakia, Vice-Chairman Vaclovas Sidzikauskas, of Lithuania, former Chairman Vilis Masens of Latvia, and Secretary General Brutus Coste, Romania, officially called on French Consul General Raymond Laporte to express the shock and dismay of the Assembly at the arrest of its representatives in France and their purported deportation to Corsica. The ACEN representatives stressed that in preventing the responsible exiled leaders to organize dignified demonstrations against the cruel subjugation of their countries by a foreign power before the arrival of Nikita Khrushchev, as was done with good avail on the occasion of his previous visits to England and the United States, the field was left open for irresponsible gestures. They also underscored the adverse impact the measures taken by the French authorities will have on the enslaved peoples of Eastern Central Europe.

The French Consul General promised to convey to his government the feelings of the Assembly and the request for the rescinding of the precautionary measure taken by the French police authorities.

ACEN is informed that French Senator Le Canuet has addressed an interpellation to the Minister of the Interior calling the measure against the exiles as incompatible with the sacred principle of the right of asylum and expressing regret that it hits personalities friendly to France. Figaro of today carried an editorial strongly criticizing the measure. The Union of French Writers for Truth has issued a protest under the signature of David Rousset, Martin Chauffier, Clara Malraux, Andre Breton and others.