

Those anti-Kosygin incidents: 'Cries from the heart'

SIR, — In connection with the article by Peter Desbarats entitled "Anti-Kosygin Protests: How Do You Judge Them?", may I quote from a public statement made by Canadian Jewish Congress prior to Mr. Kosygin's arrival in Canada.

"The Canadian Jewish Congress, which is generally recognized as the representative spokesman of our community, does not oppose Mr. Kosygin's visit to Canada and does not associate itself with any committee or groups which are against this visit.

"On the contrary, we welcome his visit as it provides us with the opportunity to bring to his personal attention the feeling of many Canadians relative to the treatment of Jews and other minorities in the Soviet Union."

Mayor Jean Drapeau, reminded Mr. Kosygin that "he has been in Canada long enough to hear certain messages, which in their own way are 'cries from the heart reaching for other hearts'."

Our demonstrations, peaceful and orderly, were meant to convey just that to Mr. Kosygin. We wanted him to see for himself how deeply Jews and non-Jews feel about the discriminatory policy of the U.S.S.R. against its Jewish citizens, who are neither permitted to live as Jews nor to freely emigrate to Israel.

It is said that such a seasoned observer of the Canadian scene as Mr. Desbarats should ask if demonstrations "risked thwarting a Canadian achievement which is in their own interests in the long run." We will not rest, Mr. Desbarats, nor will we permit the U.S.S.R. any rest until it ceases to oppress Jews and permits those who wish to leave to emigrate. We do not believe for one moment that Canadian-Soviet relations will be inhibited by our protest.

MONROE ABBEY
President Canadian Jewish Congress

Soviet Jews are helped

SIR,—If Mr. Desbarats had carefully researched his article, he would have found that not once were there any speeches or signs insulting the Soviet Premier. A matter of fact, we even welcomed Mr. Kosygin to Canada and we welcome increased trade and co-operation between Canada and the Soviet Union.

We simply wanted to inform Mr. Kosygin that there is a Jewish problem in his country (he doesn't seem to be aware that there is one).

These demonstrations do help Soviet Jews, for the only times the U.S.S.R. has let out Jews was when they were afraid to face criticism from Western Communist parties, such as the Italian Communist Party. The aim of these demonstrations was to awaken Canadian and world opinion.

PHILIP UNGER

Setting it straight

SIR, — As one of the "publicity seeking opportunists" I should like to set Mr. Derik A. Gregory straight. As long as there are courageous people who are willing to go out and demonstrate against government decisions which they think are wrong, Canada will not become a police state.

As far as this refugee is concerned, I came to Canada unassisted. Being a Canadian citizen, my rights are equal to Mr. Gregory's. My children were born in Canada, do not smoke marijuana, do not destroy property.

I have been in Canada since 1952 and challenge Mr. Gregory to compare our mutual contributions to the im-

provement of our country. Should Canada be in danger, my son and I are ready. Is Mr. Gregory?

BOHDAN B. BILAN

'Ignorance' is revealed

SIR, — Mr. Desbarats' analysis of the anti-Kosygin demonstrations held across Canada during the latter's visit, betrays an ignorance of facts and a lack of clear thinking which is surprising when one considers Mr. Desbarats' high calibre as a journalist.

He accuses "young Canadians of Ukrainian origin" as having "no first hand knowledge of modern conditions in the land of their parents and grand parents." Such an outrageous statement begs the asking of Mr. Desbarats of his own knowledge of the true conditions existing in the Ukraine today.

For if he had had even a bare insight into what is happening in the Ukraine, then he, himself a journalist and proud of his freedoms, would have joined the demonstrations in the hopes of making Canadian people aware of the suppression and imprisonment in labor camps of his fellow journalists, artists and intellectuals, who are being persecuted only because they wish to think for themselves.

WALTER KUPLOWSKY

Minorities' treatment

SIR, — A number of persons, from a Mr. Gregory, who recently wrote to the Gazette, to Charles Lynch, a regular columnist of this paper, to the Prime Minister of Canada, have expressed dismay that the representative of the government of the Soviet Union did not get as enthusiastic a welcome here as Trudeau got in the Soviet Union.

As if the Soviet Union's record of treatment of minority groups could be compared to that of Canada! Perhaps, if any of these gentlemen, who find it so difficult to sympathize with those who, directly or through friends and relatives, have known oppression, themselves spent a few years at the mercy of Soviet justice, in say, a labor camp or perhaps in an insane asylum, for expressing opinions currently in disfavor with the government, they would have less trouble understanding the hostility shown to Kosygin.

CHRISTINA DIAKUNCHAK

'A feeling of despair'

SIR: The article by Mr. Peter Desbarats "Anti-Kosygin Protests: How do you

judge them?" leaves me with a feeling of despair.

It is more important to worry about trade and deals than about human beings and their rights? Does it always have to be "Jewish" rights or "ethnics rights". Mr. Desbarats was very careful this time to call us "Canadians". Of course many Canadians would resent demonstrations, especially when told half-truths as done in this article.

We are, or so I supposed, a free people. The fact that our government was dealing with Mr. Kosygin above a trade pact, etc. did not and does not absolve us from telling Mr. Kosygin that his government has taken away some of the human rights enacted by the United Nations, of which the Soviet Union is a member.

SARA POLICOFF

'Very little influence'

SIR, — The sentiments and personal feelings of members of ethnic groups in our country have, I am afraid, very little influence on international diplomacy.

The simple fact of life in a communist country is that as long as you do not criticize the government, no harm comes to you physically or otherwise. Don't these people know that this is the communist way of life? Don't these ethnic groups know that if the sovereign government of the Soviet Union declares

that no Soviet citizen is allowed to leave the country, in any way, shape or form, this is the law and any interference by other nations and groups of peoples in other nations is a direct intervention in the internal policies of a sovereign country.

Mr. Kosygin came to Canada on the invitation of the Canadian government and our Prime Minister, who represents the people of this country, including all ethnic groups.

I am in favor of protesting. I don't agree with any kind of totalitarianism, communist or fascist, but one must be objective.

This was no invasion by the Red Army, it was a simple state visit of the Premier of the U.S.S.R into Canada.

GABOR WEISZ

Compassion an 'interest'

DEAR SIR: It is rather interesting to note that anti-Kosygin protest attitude expressed in a recent article by your correspondent, Peter Desbarats. He says "The desire of Canada to function as a mature nation on the world scene was almost com-

pletely overshadowed during the visit by demonstrations which had nothing to do with Canadian interests". I would hate to think that compassion for ones fellow man has nothing to do with Canadian interests. Does Mr. Desbarats believe that business at any price is justifiable?

The fact is that most minority groups welcomed the visit of Premier Alexei Kosygin, so that they might demonstrate their feelings about the oppression of their kin in the U.S.S.R.

I personally thank all the "riff raff" who speak for mankind.

RUTH J. GOLDMAN