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The Egyptian Government will suffer in world opinion for their "vindictive judgment" in hanging two of the ten Jews tried in the so-called "Zionist espionage trials," Roger Baldwin, chairman of the International League for the Rights of Man, declared today (Feb. 3, 1955) in a statement received by cable from Paris.

Terming the sentences meted out by an Egyptian Military Tribunal as "savage", Mr. Baldwin charged that "the explanation for such severity is to be found not in the trial record, but in politics."

Mr. Baldwin's full statement follows:

"I went to Egypt early in January to inquire into trials before the military courts established by the Revolutionary Council to handle security and 'subversion' cases, especially that of ten Jews charged with espionage on behalf of Israel.

I arrived just after the end of the trial while the court and the government were examining the 1400 page record to fix sentences. I had conferences with government officials and defense counsel and with foreign observers and journalists who had attended the month-long trial. I attended...
one session of a military court trying Moslem Brotherhood members, and found the procedures as fair as under military courts generally. The sentences of the courts, while severe, invoked the death penalty only where actual violence was proved, or conspiracy to commit it. Claims of moderation and humanity marked all the talks I had with officials, proud that the revolution had been so bloodless.

"It was shocking in the light of these facts that two of the defendants in the Zionist case were sentenced to death and savage sentences imposed on others. The conspiracy did not involve any serious acts of espionage or sabotage. It was, as the defense said, a childish and irrational affair of young people acting on instructions of two agents who escaped and were not condemned.

"The explanation for such severity is to be found not in the trial record, but politics. Egypt regards herself, as the prosecution contended, as still legally in a state of war with Israel. The tension between Israel and the Arab states is unabated. Further, severity to Israeli 'agents' tends to appease critics of severity to the Moslem Brotherhood.

"The tragic outcome of a trial with such wide international implications is bound to increase Arab-Israel tensions, to refute Egypt's claims to a humanitarian policy to opponents and to compromise its role as a champion of human rights in the United Nations.
"The trial illustrates what is too often the case even in democratic countries, that not even procedural rights and a strong defense, such as these defendants had, can prevail against political passion and interest. Where military courts are the arm of the executive under the martial law which exists in Egypt, law becomes policy.

"The Egyptian revolution, which claims so many measures for the human rights of its people, will suffer in world opinion for this vindictive judgment, unique in condemning to death two men guilty of no act of violence nor of the transmission abroad of secret information."

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