

Although the Commonwealth grew out of a colonial empire, this latest development is the complete reversal of colonialism. And it is a change which has not come too soon.

In these post-war years, one of the increasingly obvious aims of world Communism is to stir up strife between Asia and the West and to divert movements for political independence in some Asian countries to the service of Communist world strategy. This is, indeed, one of the most sinister and dangerous aspects of Communist policy at the present time. Wherever throughout the East there are unsatisfactory standards of living or what is deemed to be economic exploitation either from within or from without, combined with stifled longings for material development or fuller political freedom, there the Communists are at work to twist these human needs and aspirations to their own ends.

The Communists everywhere represent every struggle for the benefit of Asian peoples as a struggle for freedom from Western colonialism and exploitation. To this Communist picture, the very existence of the Commonwealth today is in direct contradiction, and the Commonwealth ideal of helpful co-operation between Western and Asian nations is its complete antithesis.

The main struggle, as we see it, in the world today is very different in character. It is a struggle between the new Communist imperialism, directed from Moscow, and the forces of freedom and of civilization both in the East and the West. It is not a struggle between East and West, but between liberty and tyranny. It is as much a part of Communist aims to weaken and divide the independent nations of Asia as it is to weaken and divide the Western nations. That is why all members of the Commonwealth, Western and Asian, share a common peril, and in meeting it rely upon ideals which are common to us all.

In the achievement of freedom and independence for the nations of Asia, the Commonwealth has shown the way. We in the Commonwealth are demonstrating by our actions as well as by our words that we genuinely recognize the equality of all nations, whether Eastern or Western; given an interval of peace, I am convinced we could build a more fruitful relationship between the East and the West than anyone dreamed of under the old dispensation.

I believe, too, there is much we can do through technical assistance, capital development and increased trade and commerce to help the nations of Asia to overcome the handicaps of widespread individual poverty. But in showing our willingness to do so, it will have to be clear that what is intended is genuine and friendly help, not a new form of economic imperialism to replace the old political imperialism. Such assistance, if it is to be fruitful, must be extended in such a way as to increase economic self-reliance and thereby increase co-operation and collaboration between the East and the West.

The United Kingdom Minister for Commonwealth Relations, Mr. Patrick Gordon-Walker has said that the Commonwealth contains within itself "the only real bridge between Asia and the West".

As we look out on the world today this statement is almost literally true. I believe it is of the utmost importance, not only for the Commonwealth but for the world, that this bridge should be preserved and it seems to me that all of us in the Commonwealth, and particularly the Asian nations, can do much to