

THE COMMONWEALTH: FORCE FOR GOOD

Addressing Members of the Senate and of the House of Commons June 13, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of the United Kingdom spoke of "the immense force for good which the Commonwealth is and can be in the world today".

Of the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom Prime Minister said, in part:

"What is it that binds us together? The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa -- we are, of course, held together by common origins and tradition. We feel a deep and personal loyalty to the Crown, perhaps never more than today. We are fortunate indeed to have in our Queen so noble a representative of the royal function. But there are many countries of the Commonwealth which do not share common origins or common allegiance. We are not, all of us, bound together by ties of race, colour or religion. In these countries of Asia and Africa even the Crown itself, so dear to you and to us, is respected more as a symbol of Commonwealth unity than as a real and personal object of loyalty.

"What, then, is this spirit that breathes upon this unique community of nations? It is, I think, closely connected with what I was trying to say just now about our parliamentary system and how we work it. It is the idea of free government, freedom of the law, of law and government separated, the judiciary uncontrolled by legislature or executive. It is the belief in government by consent, by debate, by committee, by local authority, by parliament. Above all, perhaps, it is the conviction that the state was made for man and not man for the state. People who believe in these ideals will never surrender to materialism or to tyranny.

"Of course the new nations of Asia and Africa have many problems and difficulties, but I have been deeply impressed with the deep impact which our people and our institutions have had upon these peoples of the East. I am quite sure of this; we do not gain in their estimation by denigrating the very real contributions which we have made. I am not thinking only of the great viceroys, the famous governors, the conquering generals; I am thinking about the work done throughout the subcontinent of India and throughout many parts of Asia and Africa by quite simple people -- the district officer, the doctor, the missionary, the schoolmaster. These men come from humble homes; the small squire, the professional class and above all from vicarage and manse. The work done is not forgotten. It is still fruitful, more fruitful perhaps than they ever could have dreamed. All these ideas and examples have revived the old societies of the East, and if now the new vigour and bursting energy of these lands seems sometimes wrongly directed, let us remember this simple

fact. In the great struggle for the future of mankind which has continued throughout all history and is now perhaps more intense than ever, the ideals of the Commonwealth, steadily pursued, have put the Commonwealth nations firmly on the side of freedom.

"Military alliances, economic pacts, formal guarantees; all these are good and necessary and have served us well. We in Britain are proud to be the only nation to belong to all three defensive groupings in the world--NATO, SEATO and the Bagdad pact. Nevertheless these do not of themselves bring us new friends or win over the hesitant and doubtful, for this is a struggle partly of power and partly of ideas. In this struggle it is, in my view, the ideas and the ideals which will count in the long run, and in all these the Commonwealth of today has a vital role to play.

"It would be wrong to think that in this world struggle we can take only a defensive posture. The steady growth of the Commonwealth is, indeed, the best evidence that our way of life is positive and vital. That is what we have to show to all the other peoples of the world who are hesitating to commit themselves, as well as to those who are at present under the yoke of Soviet domination.

"You may ask how will it all end. I do not believe that we need fear the future if we hold firm to our faith and our ideals. In time even the monolithic dictatorships crumble and change, for although the free world by its very diversity often seems weak, in its variety and above all in its freedom it is fundamentally strong. I do not believe that a purely materialistic concept of life will forever satisfy men and women; nor do I fear a continuing struggle of ideas. This I think should be our chosen battleground."

Mr. Macmillan said he hoped the forthcoming Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference would "march to great advance in Commonwealth co-operation in trade and commerce". Speaking of trade between Canada and the United Kingdom, Mr. Macmillan said:

"I was particularly pleased at the job done by the visiting Canadian Delegation a few months ago. The contacts that were built up and the close association that we have now with Canadian industry is going to produce some remarkable results as the months go by. We have with your Government the closest understanding. We have between your industries and ours novel and quite remarkable developments in practical co-operation. Your industrialists have been to see our country and how good the stuff is that we have to sell. We hope that our recent mission to Canada under Sir William Rootes will have helped us to add still further to our understanding. We are looking forward, therefore, to increased mutual trade and closer working in all industrial and economic fields."