



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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COLONIALISM, WEST AND EAST

Partial notes for an address by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker, to the Ethnic Groups, Toronto, November 22, 1961.

The United Nations has before it resolutions placed there by the newly-emerging states of Africa and Asia advocating freedom, self-determination and independence of colonial peoples.

The U.S.S.R., with its awful record for denying national freedom, self-determination and independence of so many peoples behind the Iron Curtain, has put forward a resolution.

For Communist Russia to pose as the champion of human liberty and the liberator of captive peoples is a complete travesty of truth.

The tirades of abuse by the U.S.S.R. on colonialism are designed to promote disturbance and furtherance of Communist domination abroad and to hide the subjugation of captive peoples.

Canada's concern over the problem of these persons is based on the demand that fundamental human rights and freedoms should be fully respected, including the national right of self-determination on grounds of race, colour and creed.

Canada's Concern

Although Canada has no direct involvement in colonial administration, Canadians have a genuine interest in wishing to promote the evolution from colony to nationhood for all subject peoples everywhere who desire that status and at a rate of development which is governed only by practical considerations of internal stability.

The preoccupation of new states with their problems of economic and social development is fully understandable. It is incumbent on all governments to be concerned with the well-being of their people and to seek for them improved standards of living. It is incumbent on Western nations to be conscious,

moreover, of the responsibility which rests on the highly developed countries to give assistance to the new nations striving for economic and social betterment.

As one of the industrialized countries, Canada has accepted its share of that responsibility. Our action in this regard is motivated quite simply by a desire to help the less-developed states to achieve that degree of independence which can be a political reality only if it rests solidly on economic stability.

What is the record?

Among the Western nations there has been tremendous progress among their colonies towards freedom and independence, while on the Soviet side there has been progressive annexation of helpless states and people. A comparison of the Western and Communist countries reveals two cavalcades of political change since the end of World War I moving in opposite directions, - the one among the Western nations towards the light of freedom, the other into the darkness of subjugation.

What Soviet Charges Ignore

The Soviet Union at the UN contends that 88 territories under the sovereignty of other nations, having a total population of 71,100,000, will still be under colonial rule on January 1, 1962. But it says nothing about the progress that has been made in recent years. The Soviets do not mention the 850 million people in some 37 countries which have achieved political independence since 1945 from non-Communist countries. The Soviets are significantly silent about the 96 million non-Russian people living under Soviet rule who have never been given an opportunity to decide whether they wished to remain part of the Soviet empire.

The Soviets present a lurid picture of bloodshed and violence in non-Communist colonial areas, but they take no account of the peaceful development within the Commonwealth, under the leadership of the United Kingdom, which has made freedom and independence a living reality for 586 million people in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Malaya, Ghana, Nigeria, Cyprus, Sierra Leone and Tanganyika. The Soviet version ignores completely the political freedom, the administrative experience and the material resources which the Commonwealth countries of Asia and Africa have derived from their association in the Commonwealth.

In 1939 more than one-third of all mankind lived in dependent status under the colonial rule of Western European countries. Today fewer than two percent remain in that status. In the United Nations, no less than one-third of the members are states which have attained their independence since 1945. This is an impressive story of achievement and it is continuing.

Soviet Empire

The Soviet Union, while pretending otherwise, is a colonial power and a colossus of empires.

It dominates, subjugates and exploits vast areas of Asia and of the Caucasus, initially colonized in the nineteenth century and earlier by Imperial Russia, using them as a source of cheap raw materials, cheap labour and as a captive market,

Furthermore, the Soviet Union, by force of arms, has deprived highly-developed countries of their independence, deported tens of thousands of their citizens to misery and death, exploited their riches and ruthlessly suppressed every attempt on the part of their people to maintain any semblance of national identity.

The facts are well-known: after seeking and obtaining Hitler's agreement, the Soviet Army in 1940 marched into Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, into Eastern Poland and into Bessarabia, and by military and police power transformed these countries and parts of countries into colonial provinces of the Soviet Union.

A Familiar Story

This was the course followed in 1919 when the Red Army trampled on newly-attained independence of the Ukraine. This occurred while the new Bolshevik Government of Russia was piously declaring that, under its new nationality policy, every part of the former Russian Empire was free to go its own way. The same story could be told of Trans-Caucasia and Central Asia.

Soviet representatives will tell us that the peoples of these subject countries invited the Soviet Army to invade them because what they wanted most was to become part of the Soviet Union.

Is there any sovereign state in the world - independent, democratic, economically vigorous and having a high standard of living - which would willingly invite military occupation and political subjugation by a large neighbour? Would such subjugation be welcomed when that neighbour had a lower living standard, had no democratic institutions and was under the rule of dictatorship?

No free country would invite such invasion and subjugation. The peoples of the Ukraine, the Baltic countries, or other Eastern European countries, of Trans-Caucasia and Central Asia did not invite it. They had it thrust upon them. They were never given an opportunity to choose freedom. They are still being denied the right by the U.S.S.R. which the U.S.S.R. contends should be the right of all peoples.

Is the Soviet Union to be the only colonial power remaining in the world? Why should the Soviet empire be more sacrosanct than any other? Different rules do not and should not apply to Soviet imperialists. There must be no double standards in the United Nations.

The United Nations Declaration makes no distinction as to the colour or race of people subjected to alien domination and exploitation; it does not qualify the right of peoples to self-determination. It uses the all-embracing word "all" in the preamble that "all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory."

It does not exclude the Soviet Union from the injunction against "all armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples."

Monstrous Hypocrisy

The Soviet Union has issued an explanatory memorandum in connection with the debate on granting independence to colonial countries. I draw your attention to one passage in the Soviet memorandum which I consider not only inaccurate but so monstrous in its hypocrisy. I quote from the document:

"The United Nations organization must demand that the population of each colony immediately be given .. universal suffrage, freedom of speech, press, assembly, and the freedom to create their national political parties, trade unions, and other public organizations."

In the countries under Soviet rule and domination, there is no freedom of speech, no press except that controlled by the government, no political party but the ruling one, no trade unions with the power to make and enforce demands against management. These rights and institutions, so much a part of the democratic way of life, are not only systematically denied in the Soviet empire; it is part of Soviet doctrine that they must be subverted in other lands, if the Communist revolution is to achieve its world-wide aims. Yet the Soviet Union uses the language of freedom to promote the aims of Communist slavery.

"He who accuses another man of shameful conduct should take care to keep himself blameless." (Plautus)

History will judge each nation by the efforts it makes to eradicate what remains of injustice and discrimination in its internal and external dealings.

Within the last several days there have been discussions in the United Nations on resolutions regarding colonialism. These discussions are related to countries other than the U.S.S.R., and the U.S.S.R. is giving its support to the Asian and African nations which sponsor these resolutions.

I believe that there should be brought before the Assembly the whole problem of Soviet colonialism which I dealt with at the United Nations in September 1960.

For too long the U.S.S.R. and its satellites have been permitted to take the offensive against colonialism elsewhere while concealing their own.

Consideration has been given by me to the proposing of a resolution in the United Nations in condemnation of Soviet Communist enslavement of many nations and peoples.

I have concluded that such a resolution would not have been opportune or effective this year as the other resolutions in this field before the present session of the Assembly have focussed the attention of member states on progress towards independence of the remaining dependent territories in Africa and Asia. However, I hope that the Canadian Government can through consultation secure sufficient international support to bring about United Nations consideration of Soviet colonialism at the next session of the Assembly.

In thanking you for this reception this evening, I will conclude by saying that many of you know Communism at first hand and you have a contribution to make to Canada in making other Canadians who have not had your experience more fully aware of the tyranny and infamy with which Communism destroys the soul of freedom wherever it takes over.

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