

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.
R.G. MENZIES, AT THE SECOND FREEDOM RALLY
MELBOURNE, ON SATURDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER, 1960.

Sir,

I didn't quite like that last little bit because it made me sound so dreadfully old. (Laughter) At a meeting of this kind I assure you I feel quite boyish.

Like you I greatly enjoyed the very powerful and eloquent speech made by Senator McManus, who has consistently stood, for as long as I've known him, where he has stood tonight in his speech. (Applause)

One other preliminary observation perhaps you will allow me to make, and it is this. Many of you, all of you, directly or indirectly, have come from countries now in a state of bondage, but once the homes of some of the greatest leaders of freedom in history.

This is one of the most terrible facts of modern times - that great nations, familiar with freedom, by having struggled to win it, by having produced great men and women who have been its expositors, and its protectors, should now find themselves what we call, politely, the "satellites" of the Soviet Union; what, in fact, we ought to call the slaves of the Soviet Union. (Applause)

Now, to me there is always a great thrill about speaking to people who find themselves in your case. Because having come out of the 'house of bondage' you now have the indescribable joy to yourselves of living in a free country.

And something of that emotion was in your minds, I believe, certainly in mine, when, at the very beginning of this meeting, the choir sang the National Anthem. Never in my life have I heard it so well sung. (Applause)

I don't propose to make an unduly long speech to you. Some of the things that are in your minds, and in mine, some of the things that have been touched on this afternoon by the Senator, engaged the attention of the representatives of 98 nations quite recently in New York. And on the occasion of that meeting, speaking on behalf of Australia; speaking, I think, on behalf of every non-Communist inhabitant of Australia (Applause) I took the opportunity of speaking direct to an audience which included the Soviet Union, and included the satellite leaders.

But, I just first of all give you one little view of those proceedings which shows what utter humbug is involved in the claim of the Soviet Union that these captive nations are, in reality, willing, and free and join with the Soviet Union of their own choice.

The leader of the Soviet Union is a rather remarkable man. (Laughter) He has a technique all of his own. One of the techniques is to applaud very violently when a good Communist sentiment is uttered by somebody. And in order that his satellites, in order that these humble, obedient servants, who have been foisted on to your old and historic nations, should know when to come in at the right time, he always used to start clapping with his hands up. And they all looked, took the cue, and then you could pick them all out, applauding violently.

If, on the other hand, he wanted to denounce

something that was being said by a person who expressed free sentiments, he would beat on the desk, sometimes with both fists and sometimes with a shoe. (Laughter) And the moment that began they would all be looking around, they would see, they would get the cue - then they would all begin to beat on the desk. (Laughter)

None of them used a shoe except him, because, naturally, in a slave community it is only the master who can afford decent shoes. (Applause)

Now, Sir, it has always been prominently in my own mind that there is a good deal of nonsense, a good deal of confusion of thought, if one may put it quite kindly, about the position of the captive nations.

Khrushchev's great exercise, so he said at New York, was to forward the cause of disarmament. Because, according to him, if his ideas on disarmament were accepted, then peace would come to the world. A very beguiling sentiment, that. But so untrue!

Disarmament is one thing, and we should all wish, some day, to see it guaranteed and honoured. But it is a great mistake to believe that the existence of arms is the cause of tension in the world. It is the result of tension in the world, not the cause. As the Senator has pointed out so accurately, you might arrive at agreements on matters of that kind, but if, at the end of it all, the Soviet Union is left with its booty, is left with its enslaved communities, then peace will have come about on a basis of perpetuated injustice. And a peace of that kind is not peace at all. (Applause)

If the Soviet Union wants peace, if it wants to remove the causes of tension, then its first task is at home. It's first task is to set free the people whom it has enslaved. (Applause)

Somebody, of course, may say, with a good deal of cynical truth perhaps, that fine words won't set these people free. You may say: "How are we to go about helping them to recover their freedom?"

And on that I want to say that the most powerful weapon will be the opinion of honest decent men and women all over the world. Don't let us fall into the error of thinking that by waving a wand, a Communist dictator can strike out of the hearts and minds of people their passion for freedom. They may control them with their beliefs; they may control them with threats and commands. But freedom is not such a fragile plant. Freedom dies hard. And there are millions of people in Europe today whose passion for freedom is not destroyed by the presence of a Communist Commissar. (Applause)

On the contrary, their passion for freedom will grow the more they see the symbols of enslavery.

I am an immense believer in the spirit of man. The spirit of man is the greatest and most powerful thing in creation. And you don't put it down in a year or two. You don't put it down in a generation or two. You don't put it down by laws or commands or by force.

Does anybody suppose, anybody who is of my own race suppose, that we would knuckle down in perpetuity to some foreign master? Of course not!

This spirit is the most powerful thing in the world and I think it is a wonderful idea that every year you should have a Rally of this kind. Keep on having Rallies of this kind. (Applause) Because the very fact that in one city in Australia thousands of people can come together to offer encouragement, mutual encouragement and encouragement to those who are far distant from us, will have its effect.

These things get past the Iron Curtain; these things filter around the world; these things will help to keep the flame of the spirit burning bright in our friends in these captive countries.

A reference has been made already, and I propose to make one myself to the hypocrisy of the current Communist attack on "Imperialism" and "Colonialism".

I wonder if I might - just to show that I didn't think of this just this afternoon - impose on you one or two very short passages from a speech I made at the United Nations, a speech which the great Khrushchev himself described to me afterwards in conversation as "very sharp". (Laughter) (Applause) I said, among other things, this:

"There are some who have so far misunderstood the spirit of the United Nations as to resort to open or veiled threats, blatant and, in some instances, lying propaganda, a clearly expressed desire to divide and conquer. They should learn that 'threatened men live long' and that free nations, however small, are not susceptible to bullying". (Applause)

I then said:

"I'll permit myself the luxury of developing this theme. In his opening speech, Mr. Khrushchev made his usual great play about "colonialism". As Mr. Macmillan reminded us, the answer to much of his story is to be found in the presence in this Assembly of many new nations, once colonies and now independent".

(None of them, mark you, colonies of a Communist power).

"Mr. Khrushchev said among other things" - and I quote these words, they are an exercise in humbug - "nations who oppress other nations cannot themselves be free. (Laughter) Every free (and I'm still quoting him) nation should help the peoples still oppressed to win freedom and independence!" (Applause)

This was the only point on which this old chap seems to be on our side. (Laughter) 'Every free nation should help the peoples still oppressed to win freedom and independence'. And I said myself,

"This was, in one sense a most encouraging observation. It made me wonder whether we were perhaps about to see the beginning of the era in which the nations of Europe, which were once independent, and are now under Soviet Communist control, were going to receive the blessings themselves of independence. (Applause)

"What a glorious vista of freedom would be opened up by such a policy. How much it would do to relieve the causes of tension, and promote peace. I venture to say that it is an act of complete hypocrisy for a Communist leader to denounce colonialism, as if it were an evil characteristic

of the Western powers, when the facts are that the greatest colonial power now existing in the world is the Soviet Union itself". (Applause)

Sir, it's a very ill business to quote yourself, but having quoted that, you will see that we have here almost the beginnings of a new and terrifying political alliance between Senator McManus and myself. (Laughter, Applause)

Now, Sir, I thought, and I still think, that the two objects of Communist strategy as disclosed at the United Nations itself are these.

First of all they want to keep under their control the nations they already have stolen. And they want to keep them without saying anything about it. They don't want other people to discuss it. They want this taken as something that has been done and that can't be undone; something that has got respectable as the years go by. They just want everybody to assume that "Well, there it is; it's there. And it can't be changed".

The statesmen of the Western world will do very badly for the future of the world if they ever allow the Communist powers to forget that they are the slave masters - if they ever allow the world to forget that there can be no true peace in the world until these people have been set free. But that is the first object of the strategy.

And the second object of the strategy is to deal with the new nations. This is something of the highest possible order of impertinence. There are new nations - there were a dozen of them this year at New York, a large number of them from Africa. And as these new nations come along, having once been colonies, having been granted independence, having under the enlightened policies which have been practised in the Western world, come to be their own masters, to chose their own form of Government, the Soviet tactic is to say to them, day after day, speech after speech, with terrifying reiteration, "You must be bitter; you must preserve your bitterness; you must go on hating colonialism" which to them is a mere matter of past history.

This attempt to embitter them, is of course, clearly an attempt to put them into that frame of mind in which they will be ready to receive the Communist doctrine, in which they will begin to blame everybody else for all their troubles and therefore be very very willing to say to the Soviet Union, "Thank you so much; you've been very sympathetic; you've made us feel very bitter. Now you, no doubt, will be the people to help us". And then they step in with their "loaded" assistance.

That is one way of doing it.

Another way - and this was practised very considerably there - was to adopt threatening attitudes. It was almost strange, weird, to me, to be sitting there, listening to some of these terrible tub-thumping performances, and laughing at them, as we have the habit of doing in Australia. We are not very responsive to tub-thumpers. And we would be sitting there laughing at these ridiculous antics.

But I could see other delegates from new nations who looked interested, who looked occasionally impressed, and sometimes who looked a little apprehensive as to whether they could afford to disagree with people of such strength and violence. But that's the Soviet technique at the present time.

I am happy to tell you that I don't think that, by and large, those tactics succeeded at all. I don't think that Khrushchev understands the Western mind. I don't think that, for all practical purposes, he is a European in his outlook. He doesn't understand the Western mind, meaning by that the mind of all the people, or most of the people in the nations from which you come, and in our own nation, and in all the great powers of the West.

The best proof of that to me was that here and here and here, as one went around, one got the immediate reaction of a lot of these representatives, 'After all they have come to freedom; they have come to independence; they have a proper pride in it.' They feel the dignity of freedom; they feel the dignity of being in a country, the master of your own system of Government. And they are not so impressed by undignified rabble-raising shouting and thumping as Khrushchev appears to imagine. I venture to say that psychologically, on the whole, he lost ground with the new nations by his antics at New York last month. And I hope that is true. I believe it is true.

Now I said something a little while ago about "woolly-minded" people. There are two groups of nations, small nations, in the world in whom we are bound to have a brotherly and continuing interest. One I've already referred to - you represent them here today - the captive nations.

But the other group is those nations on the fringes of Communism - of Communist power - who are at risk at this very moment, who are liable at any time to find Communist infiltration, Communist aggression, probing by them, stirring up Communist disorders inside the country, undermining the Government, undermining respect for the law.

And these countries are in a state of danger and we must never forget them.

In South-East Asia, look at them, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, South Korea, Formosa. And yet I've heard people who would profess to be quite thoughtful and respectable people, blithely say that if you should establish some terms of peace with Communist China by handing over Formosa to them, that would be a price worth paying for peace.

Did you ever hear such utter muddle-headed nonsense? If you can hand over one country because it is small, well you can hand over another one because it is small. We could go on retreating and retreating and retreating before this Communist advance until there is no free country left between Australia and the..(Applause)

Now, Sir, we have been speaking this afternoon about Communism, because Communism is the enemy. People seem to think, or some people do, that you can meet Communism by a sort of reasoned logical argument.

This is not a matter for logical argument. You just consider how the captive nations in Europe became captive nations. Why, when the second world war began it was, in the view of the Communists in Australia who are the mere faithful echos of the Communists of Moscow, an Imperialist war, when they did their best in Australia to sabotage it.

And at that time, with a friendly Germany the Soviet Union picked up two or three powers. It consensed itself in the Baltic States. It gathered in a few slave countries under the guise of the friend of Hitler's Germany.

But when Hitler moved into Russia to attack them, then of course the war became a respectable one; they were our great allies. And when the war was over, as our friends, they picked up a few more European countries. (Applause)

Now, that, ladies and gentlemen, is what we call pure opportunism. They are not working on a theory. They are looking for practical results. And they will go wherever they can get a practical result and use any method, or any association that is calculated to produce it.

And therefore one of our perennial tasks is to watch Communism, to check Communism, to put it down, so far as we can, wherever we find it. (Applause)

It is a very trite saying that Communism is the enemy of individual freedom. Let me repeat to you - freedom is not something that you get by Act of Parliament. Freedom is not something that you get as a group of people. Freedom is individual. I am a free man; or I am not. You are a free man, or a free woman; or you are not. And Communism has no patience with individual freedom.

Of course they are able to show the world how clever they are, how technologically advanced they are, as indeed they are, by putting Sputniks into orbit, doing all these strange things. Of course they can do it. Because they have complete control of every man and woman in their boundaries. And if they want to direct their scientists to get on with these warlike, or threatening, activities, they will.

While we, who enjoy the blessings of freedom, and have done so for so long in Australia, in the United States of America, in Great Britain, have developed science for the benefit of mankind, in medicine, in health, in communications, in a thousand different ways on a scale that the Soviet Union has never dreamt of. (Applause)

Communism is therefore the enemy of individual freedom. It is the enemy of the law. There is nothing that so turns my stomach as to read, either a Communist or a fellow traveller of whom there are many, talking about the law, claiming something about the law, invoking the law. I wonder how much a man can invoke the law in the Soviet Union. I wonder what the rights of the ordinary individual may be in Communist China.

I've said something to you about science - controlled science, slave science if you like, and the science of free men. But above all these things, and I think we find a great common ground, above all these things Communism is the clear enemy of religion, of religious faith.

Now what sort of world would it be if Communism, through some fault of ours, through some laxity on our part, through some folly or idleness on our part, achieved its ambition of conquering the world?

A world without religion; a world in which the faith of our fathers is proscribed and struck down by people who are the most blatant materialists.

That is not something that we can contemplate. But there again my great comfort is this. That just as freedom is not easily beaten out of the heart of man, so is faith not easily beaten out of him. You cannot take thousands, millions, hundreds of millions of people who have a faith of their own, and destroy it, merely by order or command.

I come back all the time to the fact that under some circumstances these people, if they carry their aggression to the point of arms, would have to be met by arms, whatever the disaster might be.

But in the meantime, one of the great guarantees that we have against their aggression is that we preserve in our hearts and minds an enthusiastic faith, an enthusiastic belief, a missionary feeling of freedom. That is what you are here today to renew. (Applause)

Sir, it is a very great privilege for me to be here. I said to the Lord Mayor just before I got up that five o'clock on Saturday afternoon seemed a rather odd time for a meeting. Do you know what he said to me? He said, "It's your fault! Because they wanted to have you, and that was the only time that suited you". (Applause)

And so, Sir, before I sit down, I apologise to you. But I also propose before I sit down to thank you for a most memorable experience. Nothing but good can come of the refreshment of spirit, the mutual encouragement, that a magnificent meeting like this produces for all of us. (Applause)
