

## CHAPTER 22

### 22-1

#### The Colonial Secretary argues for Uhuru.

*Iain MacLeod (1913–1970) was a maverick within the British Conservative Party, and one of the most skilled parliamentary debaters of his day. Appointed Colonial Secretary by Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, MacLeod was accused by certain party colleagues of being too generous in moving towards the granting of independence (“Uhuru”) to British colonies in Africa, and of being overzealous in dismantling the British Empire on that continent. He replied in this speech, delivered at Brighton, England on October 11, 1961.*

Source: Brian McArthur, *Penguin Book of Twentieth Century Speeches* (London: Penguin Viking, 1992), pp. 314–316.

At the end of the last war, something like 630 million people lived in the dependent territories of the Crown. Now, that figure is about 40 million. Indeed, when this week started, the figure was 30 million. Think, then, of that change from 630 million and reflect that at the same time, over the same period, Russian imperialism has shackled 100 million men and women who once were free. And when you compare those two records, I hope you will share my indignation that in international forums, in the United Nations itself, most of all in the countries where tyranny itself reigns, our British colonial record should be attacked...

It has fallen to me to be Colonial Secretary during two of the most tremendous years of advance that the world has ever seen. You must be in no doubt that you are watching one of the great dramas of history, as so many countries thrust forwards through nationalism towards their independence.

The tightrope of timing which the Colonial Secretary has to walk in every territory every week, sometimes almost every day, is the most difficult of all his tasks—how you try to reconcile the emerging nationalism of these countries with the need for the surest possible protection for the minority. As you walk this tightrope, you must realize that if you fall from it it will bring disaster and perhaps bloodshed to so many people to whom you stand in a position of trustee.

How, then, do you go forward? On what moral principles should you base your policy, for be very sure that in this field, as in every other field, if your policies are not based on principle they will fail? I can only give you my own personal belief. First, I believe in the rights and duties of men, and that means of all men. But do not ever fall into the error of assuming that, because you give a man better housing, because you give a man better education, because you improve the health services, somehow that will satisfy his craving for basic political rights. It cannot do. Indeed, it is bound to sharpen it.

Remember also that however great your services may have been to a country, however noble the contribution we have made in the five continents of the world to the developing countries has been—and it has been noble—that will never always be accepted as a reason why automatically you should govern. We would never have accepted—we did not accept—this from the Romans. The Irish never accepted it from us. Be quite sure that the inheritors of the British Empire equally would not accept it from our people. But yet there is a way. Let me remind you of something that I said at last year’s Conference when I quoted the Prime Minister of Nigeria. He was referring to the British Colonial record in Nigeria. He said that we had been, first, masters, then leaders, and finally partners, but always friends. This is the answer—in partnership and in friendship. This can be done.

Secondly, I believe in what our grandfathers would have called the British Imperial mission. It is not yet completed. Since the world began, empires have grown and flourished and decayed, some into a sort of genteel obscurity, some leaving little heritage and culture behind them, some even no more than stones covered by the sand. They are one with Nineveh and Tyre, but we are the only empire leaving behind us a coherent political scheme of development. We are the only people who, with all the hesitations and failures that there have been, are genuinely resolved on turning, to use Harold Macmillan’s phrase, an empire into a commonwealth and a commonwealth into a family. This is what we are doing.

...The third principle is that I believe quite simply in the brotherhood of man—men of all races, of all colours, of all creeds. I think it is this that must be in the centre of our thinking.

And now what lies ahead in this event? It is perhaps strange to an English and to a Welsh audience to quote the greatest of our Scottish native poets, but nobody has put this in simpler or finer words than Burns:

It is coming yet for a' that,  
That man to man the whole world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that.

And this is coming. There are foolish men who will deny it, but they will be swept away; but if we are wise

then indeed the task of bringing these countries towards their destiny of free and equal partners and friends with us in the Commonwealth of Nations can be a task as exciting, as inspiring and as noble as the creation of empire itself.

### Questions

- (1) In what way does MacLeod consider the British Empire to be unique?
- (2) How does MacLeod compare Britain's role as an Imperial power to that of others (mainly Russia)?
- (3) What does MacLeod see as the ultimate goals for and aspirations of Africans regarding paternalistic Colonialism?

## 22-2

### Amilcar Cabral: the force of the intellect.

*The struggle for independence in Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau), which raged unrelentingly for twelve years (1963-1975), was little publicized in either Europe or America but, as an uprising in the oldest continuously-existing European colony in the oldest continuously-existing European colonial empire, it was bound to be of singularly symbolic importance, even if it had not produced as its leader one of the most brilliantly intricate of African nationalist thinkers, Amilcar Cabral (1921-1973). Cabral saw the movement which he led as going beyond independence and encompassing identity, culture, and self-affirmation to counteract centuries of repression.*

Source: Amilcar Cabral, "Identity and Dignity in the Context of the National Liberation Struggle (1972)" in Fred Lee Hord and Jonathan Scott Lee, eds., *I Am Because We Are* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), pp. 73-78.

### INTRODUCTION

The people's struggle for national liberation and independence from imperialist rule has become a driving force of progress for humanity and undoubtedly constitutes one of the essential characteristics of contemporary history.

An objective analysis of imperialism insofar as it is a fact or a "natural" historical phenomenon, indeed "necessary" in the context of the type of economic political evolution of an important part of humanity, reveals that imperialist rule, with all its train of wretchedness, of pillage, of crime and of destruction of human and cultural values, was not just a negative reality. The vast accumulation of capital in half-a-dozen countries of the northern hemisphere, which was the result of piracy, of the confiscation of the property of other peoples and of the ruthless exploitation of the work of these peoples, will not only lead to the monopolization of colonies, but to the division of the world and more imperialist rule.

In the rich countries, imperialist capital, constantly seeking to enlarge itself, increased the creative capacity of man and brought about a total transformation of the means of production, thanks to the rapid progress of science, of techniques, and of technology. This accentuated the pooling of labor and brought about the ascension of huge areas of population. In the

colonized countries, where colonization on the whole blocked the historical process of the development of the subjected peoples or else eliminated them radically or progressively, imperialist capital imposed new types of relationships on indigenous society, the structure of which became more complex, and it stirred up, fomented, poisoned, or resolved contradictions and social conflicts; it introduced, together with money and the development of internal and external markets, new elements in the economy; it brought about the birth of new nations from human groups or from peoples who were at different stages of historical development.

It is not to defend imperialist domination to recognize that it gave new nations to the world, the dimensions of which it reduced, and that it revealed new stages of development in human societies; and in spite of or because of the prejudices, the discrimination, and the crimes which it occasioned, it contributed to a deeper knowledge of humanity as a moving whole, as a unity in the complex diversity of the characteristics of its development.

Imperialist rule on many continents favored a multilateral and progressive (sometimes abrupt) confirmation not only between different men but also between different societies. The practice of imperialist rule—its affirmation or its negation—demanded (and still demands) a more or less accurate knowledge of the society it rules and of the historical reality (economic,