

The leader of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations was upset ... very upset. It was the 12th of October, 1960, and his anger had been brewing for nearly two weeks.

On the 29th of September, as depicted in this video clip from Universal Newsreels, he had expressed strong opinions about Western colonialism. Here, in pertinent part, is the English translation:

*Gentlemen, Mr. Chairman, we live on Earth not by God's grace neither by yours, but by strength and wisdom of our great people of the Soviet Union and all the people who fight ... for their independence.*

*The independent voice of the people, the voice of truth that sounds and will continue to sound. And the end - the grave - to colonial slavery! Off with it, and bury it - the deeper the better!*

On the 12th of October, Khrushchev once again wished to speak, but it seemed that he was being ignored by Frederick Henry Boland, president of the UN session. As related in the Appendix of the Soviet leader's book—*Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Statesman, 1953-1964*—the following events took place:

*[Khrushchev] resolved to ask the president of the session to give him leave to speak on a point of order - a right provided for under the official procedure. Nikita Sergeyevich raised his hand, but Boland either did not see it or pretended not to see it.*

*Khrushchev stood up and again raised his hand. Now it was simply impossible not to notice Nikita Sergeyevich standing there with his hand raised. But the speaker continued to hold forth, while the head of the Soviet delegation continued to stand with his hand raised. It seemed that the chair was simply ignoring him.*

*Then Khrushchev took off one of the light boots he was wearing and began to bang it on the table. That was the moment that entered world history as Khrushchev's famous shoe. The conference hall of the United Nations had never seen its like before. (*Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Statesman, 1953-1964*, by N.S. Khrushchev, et al., page 892.)*

What led to the ruckus at the UN?

Senator Lorenzo Sumulong, head of the Philippine delegation, had expressed astonishment that Khrushchev was concerned about Western imperialism when the Soviet Union had so forcefully exerted its own influence over the whole of Eastern Europe.

Nikita Sergeyevich was furious at Sumulong. When he finally had a chance to speak, he called the Filipino a few choice names. Translated from the Russian, the language which he spoke during the incident, he referred to Sumulong as “a jerk, a stooge and a lackey of imperialism.”

Then ... he underscored his words by banging his shoe on the UN desk.

It was a sensational moment, still talked-about decades later.

Credits:

Clip from Universal Newsreels, online courtesy YouTube.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Nikita-Khrushchev-and-the-UN-Shoe-Banging-Incident>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Nikita-Khrushchev-and-the-UN-Shoe-Banging-Incident>