

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_156190

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No. 341.1 / W95C

Accession No. 36376

author Wright, Richard

title Colour curtain. 1956.

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

THE COLOUR CURTAIN
A REPORT ON THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE

THE COLOUR CURTAIN

A Report on the Bandung Conference

By

RICHARD WRIGHT

Foreword by Gunnar Myrdal

LONDON

DENNIS DOBSON

**FIRST PUBLISHED IN GREAT BRITAIN IN MCMLVI
BY DOBSON BOOKS LTD., LONDON
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BRISTOL TYPESETTING CO., STOKES CROFT, BRISTOL**

CONTENTS

Foreword	7
I Bandung : Beyond Left and Right	19
II Race and Religion at Bandung	109
III Communism at Bandung	134
IV Racial Shame at Bandung	149
V The Western World at Bandung	168
Illustrations	between pages 70 and 71

Foreword

THIS book does not pretend to be a heavily documented analysis of the Bandung Conference and of the forces of world history in the making which converged there. It is, rather, Richard Wright telling us what he, a visiting stranger and a good reporter, heard and saw there, and what he himself thought and felt.

His interest was focused on the two powerful urges far beyond Left and Right which he found at work there: Religion and Race. These urges unite the peoples—keep them apart from, and against, the West—and at the same time divide them internally and in their mutual relations; they call to concerted action but tend also to frustrate such efforts. Religion is their cultural heritage from many thousands of years of living and dying, longing and fearing, and it has moulded their institutions and loaded their valuations. Race is the explosive pressure of their reaction to West European prejudice and discrimination, stored and accumulated under centuries of colonial domination. Asia and Africa thus carry the irrationalism of both East and West.

In Richard Wright's own individual development, from a childhood amongst the remnants of slavery to his present life as a free and lonely intellectual, lie the foundations for

his absorbing interest in these matters and his deep and spontaneous understanding. The specific objectivity of his observations and inferences is determined by the clear definition of the very personal point from which he views things. As a writer—and this is his approach to greatness, giving distinction also to the collection of snapshots in the present volume—he is the scrupulously honest artist who gives himself fully, without any opportunistic reserves.

GUNNAR MYRDAL

Geneva, 18 September, 1955

I

Bandung: Beyond Left and Right

IN order to spend Christmas with my family, I'd returned to Paris from a long, tiring trip in Spain where I'd been gathering material for a book. The holidays had passed, but, in one corner of the living room, sheltering a pile of children's presents, the glittering pine tree was still up. It was evening; I was alone; and my mind drifted toward Andalusia where I had work to finish . . .

Idly, I picked up the evening's newspaper that lay folded near me upon a table and began thumbing through it. Then I was staring at a news item that baffled me. I bent forward and read the item a second time. *Twenty-nine free and independent nations of Asia and Africa are meeting in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss 'racialism and colonialism'* . . . What is this? I scanned the list of nations involved: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Burma, Egypt, Turkey, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, etc. My God! I began a rapid calculation of the populations of the nations listed and, when my total topped the 1,000,000,000 mark, I stopped, pulled off my glasses, and tried to think. A stream of realizations claimed my mind: these people were ex-colonial subjects, people whom the white West called 'coloured' peoples . . . Almost all of the nations mentioned had been, in some form or other, under the domination of Western

Europe; some had been subjected for a few decades and others had been ruled for three hundred and fifty years . . . And most of the leaders of these nations had been political prisoners, men who had lived lonely lives in exile, men to whom secret political activity had been a routine matter, men to whom sacrifice and suffering had been daily companions . . . And the populations of almost all the nations listed were deeply religious. This was a meeting of almost all of the human race living in the main geopolitical centre of gravity of the earth.

I tried to recall what I knew of their leaders and my memory dredged up: Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia: exile, prison, war . . . Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India: long years in prison . . . Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of the Gold Coast: ex-political prisoner and gifted organizer of tribal masses . . . Chou En-lai, Premier of China: a disciplined Communist of the classical, Bolshevik mould, a product of war and conspiracy and revolution . . . Ho Chi Minh, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam: soldier, staunch Bolshevik, sagacious and pitiless leader of guerrilla armies. . . . The despised, the insulted, the hurt, the dispossessed—in short, the underdogs of the human race were meeting. Here were class and racial and religious consciousness on a global scale. Who had thought of organizing such a meeting? And what had these nations in common? Nothing, it seemed to me, but what their past relationship to the Western world had made them feel. This meeting of the rejected was in itself a kind of judgment upon that Western world!

I rose, walked the floor for a moment, then sat again and read the aims of the twenty-nine nation conference:

- a. to promote good will and co-operation among the nations of Asia and Africa, to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests and to establish and further friendliness and neighbourly relations;
- b. to consider social, economic, and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented;
- c. to consider problems of special interest to Asian and African peoples, for example, problems affecting national sovereignty and of racialism and colonialism;
- d. to view the position of Asia and Africa and their people in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.

It was simple; there were no hidden jokers . . . The nations sponsoring the conference—Burma, India, Indonesia, Ceylon, and Pakistan—were all religious . . . This smacked of something new, something beyond Left and Right. Looked at in terms of history, these nations represented *races* and *religions*, vague but potent forces.

It was the kind of meeting that no anthropologist, no sociologist, no political scientist would ever have dreamed of staging; it was too simple, too elementary, cutting through the outer layers of disparate social and political and cultural facts down to the bare brute residues of human existence: races and religions and continents. Only brown, black, and yellow men who had long been made agonizingly self-conscious, under the rigours of colonial rule, of their race and their religion could have felt the need for such a meeting. There was something extra-political, extra-social, almost extra-human about it; it smacked of tidal

waves, of natural forces . . . *And the call for the meeting had not been sounded in terms of ideology.* The agenda and subject matter had been written for centuries in the blood and bones of the participants. The conditions under which these men had lived had become their tradition, their culture, their *raison d'être*. And they could not be classed as proletarians; they comprised princes and paupers, Communists and Christians, Leftists and Rightists, Buddhists and Democrats, in short just anybody and everybody who lived in Asia and Africa.

I felt that I had to go to that meeting; I felt that I could understand it. I represented no government, but I wanted to go anyhow . . .

I called my wife and when she came into the living-room I said to her :

'Look here, twenty-nine nations of Asia and Africa are meeting in a place called Bandung.'

'Why are they meeting?'

'Read this', I said, giving her the newspaper.

When she had finished, she exclaimed :

'Why, that's the human race!'

'Exactly. And that is why I want to go.'

'But you are going to Spain.'

'Sure. But when I'm through in Spain, I could go to Bandung.'

'What would you do there?'

'I'd try to report this meeting, what it means—'

'For whom?'

'I don't know. For somebody . . . I know that people are tired of hearing of these hot, muddy faraway places filled with people yelling for freedom. But this is the human race speaking . . .'

'But how would you report twenty-nine nations meeting together?'

'I don't know. But I feel that my life has given me some keys to what they would say or do. I'm an American Negro; as such, I've had a burden of race consciousness. So have these people. I worked in my youth as a common labourer, and I've a class consciousness. So have these people. I grew up in the Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist churches and I saw and observed religion in my childhood; and these people are religious. I was a member of the Communist Party for twelve years and I know something of the politics and psychology of rebellion. These people have had as their daily existence such politics. These emotions are my instruments. They are emotions, but I'm conscious of them as emotions. I want to use these emotions to try to find out what these people think and feel and why.'

There was silence. Then my wife said :

'If you feel that way, you have to go.'

I applied forthwith for a visa at the Consulate of Indonesia. The Press and Cultural Attaché told me with a smile :

'You can go. And I'm not going to try to influence you one way or the other. Go and see for yourself. All that I ask is that you be honest and tell the truth.'

'That's fair enough,' I said. 'Tell me this : how has the press reacted to the Africans being invited to this conference?'

'They don't understand it,' he told me, laughing, celebrating the bewilderment of the world's press.

But the Frenchmen and Americans I met on the streets or in the cafés of Paris were more decided, suspicious, sceptical.

'But is not this Asian-African Conference merely racism in reverse?' a young white American asked me; he was obviously worried.

'I think that the Asians and the Africans are trying to gang up on the Western world,' a young woman, a journalist, told me.

'Isn't this a racism inspired by the Communists?' an American professor asked me.

'It's those Indonesians!' a young, conservative but fiery Dutch girl said. 'The Communists have agitated them so much that they are "Dutch crazy".'

(It was the first time that I'd heard the phrase 'Dutch crazy', and, when I investigated its origin, I found that it was the Dutch description of all those Indonesian nationalists who had refused to compromise with the Dutch and had insisted upon national freedom. For three hundred and fifty years the Dutch had so rigged the governing of the colony that there was but a handful of people out of a population of eighty million who could read and write; and, naturally, when that handful demanded taking over the country, they were regarded as 'crazy' . . .)

My interest in the Asian-African Conference was not shared by personal friends of mine.

'What on earth have African Negroes and Burmese Buddhists in common?' a young, ardent Frenchwoman asked me, with her eyes wide with images of global racial revenge.

A day or so later I met a young Dutch girl whom I'd known for some time; she was liberal, anti-racist. Ah, I must tell her that I'm going to Indonesia.

'Oh. D.!' I called to her; she was walking ahead of me.

She stopped, turned, smiled, and held out her hand.

'How are you?' she asked me.

'I'm happy,' I said.

'Good! What's happened?'

'I'm going to one of your ex-colonies, Indonesia. They are holding a conference there, a meeting of Asian and African nations—'

'Oh, my God!' she exclaimed.

Her brown eyes were wide in surprise, her lips parted. She reached forward and impulsively seized the fingers of my hands.

'You're actually going to Indonesia?' she asked me breathlessly.

'Yes.'

'Oh, God! Then maybe you can bring me some spices?'

I hid my shock, remembering that spices were what Christopher Columbus had been looking for in 1492 when he had sailed forth . . . Even before leaving Paris, I was discovering how the reality of Eastern nations was reflected in many European minds: the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific, and the millions of people who lived on them, still meant spices . . .

I was ready to fly to Bandung, to fly from the old world of Spain to the new world of Asia . . . My work in Spain was over and I was sitting in a café with a Spanish friend; he was liberal, anti-Franco, a bitter man who longed passionately for freedom.

'When are you leaving us?' my Spanish friend asked me.

'Tomorrow,' I said.

'You are returning to Paris?'

'No. I'm going to the Orient.'

'Really? Where?'

'Indonesia.'

'Why are you going there?'

'On the eighteenth of April there is a great conference taking place.'

'What conference?'

I stared at my Spanish friend in disbelief.

'There are twenty-nine Asian and African nations, all free and independent, meeting in Bandung, Indonesia.'

'Why are these nations meeting?'

'They are going to explore problems of colonialism and racialism.'

'Good God!' he exclaimed. 'I hadn't heard of that!'

'It's in the newspapers,' I said.

'Not in the Spanish newspapers,' he said, bringing down the corners of his mouth and shaking his head. He cupped his palms to his eyes and moaned: 'Once we Spanish were great; now we are nothing . . . If Franco decides not to let us know what is happening in the outside world, how can we know?' He stared at me a moment, then his eyes fell upon my brown hands that lay upon the tile-topped table. 'You know, we Spanish have a bad reputation. You've heard of it? The Black Legend . . .?'

'Yes,' I said, understanding now why he had stared so intently at my hands. He had suddenly grown colour-conscious.

'We did bad things in South America,' he drawled, with a sad smile. He shrugged his shoulders. 'But what can these nations do about racialism and colonialism?'

'Well, they are free, you know.'

'And just a bare ten years ago they were not free—'

'That's it.'

He laughed uneasily, then looked at me with a twinkle in his eyes.

'We Spanish were different from the British, the Dutch, the French, and the Belgians . . . We married the coloured peoples. Look at the mixed-bloods in Mexico and Peru . . .' He sighed wistfully.

'You sure did,' I said.

So it went; worlds were being born and worlds were dying . . . In Asia and Africa the leaders of the newly freed nations were meeting to find ways and means of modernizing their countries, to banish fear and superstition, while only yesterday in Sevilla I'd seen thousands of Spanish men, women, and children marching in pagan splendour behind jewelled images of Dying Gods and Suffering Virgins . . .

I bade my Spanish friend goodbye and took the night express to Madrid. Once I had settled in my compartment, my mind turned towards the vastness of Asia and its unknown life. Since I had resolved to go to Bandung, the problem of getting to know the Asian personality had been with me day and night. Knowing that I had no factual background to grapple with the swirling currents of the Asian maelstrom, I had weeks before devised a stratagem to enable me to grasp at least the basic Asian attitudes. I had compiled a list of what I felt to be relevant questions to elicit responses bearing on broad, general issues. Enconced in the *wagon-lit*, I unpacked my notes and re-read my questionnaire and the answers that my Asian informants had given me. My questionnaire had included the following queries :

How far did you go in school? Were you educated in your youth by missionaries? Have you attended European schools?

What religion did or do your parents profess? What religion do you profess? Do you feel that the state should sponsor religion? How important was the introduction of Christianity in your country?

How did you become interested in politics? Did you participate in the liberation movement of your country? Were you ever arrested for political activity? How much time have you served as a political prisoner? Have you ever served in the armed forces of any Western power? Do you think that your country has an enemy? If so, how would you describe him?

How many international conferences have you attended? What does the Bandung Conference mean to you?

Do you feel that there is a naturally allotted, irrevocable, geographical space for each race on earth? Do you believe that Asia is for Asians, Europe for Europeans, America for Americans, Africa for Africans? How frequently do you read European newspapers? What have your experiences revealed to be the attitudes of Europeans and/or Americans towards your people? How do you think that such attitudes originated? How do you feel that your contacts with the Western world have affected you personally? Have Westerners ever made you feel self-conscious because of your race, religion, colour, or culture? Do national inferiority feelings find expression in your country? If so, in what forms? Do you recall in what connection you first heard the phrase 'White Man's Burden', 'Yellow Peril', 'lynch', 'nigger'? What, in your opinion, is the best way to eliminate racism?

Do you want to see your country industrialized? What do you value most in your culture and how do you propose to save it? How do living standards in your country compare with those of the Western nations?

Is the racial purity of your family blood important to you? Did you ever desire to marry a European woman (or man)? If so, why didn't you? Should intermarriage between races be regulated by law? Will you send your children to 'national' or European schools?

Do you feel that Asian and African nations should act as a political bloc?

How much contact have you with your people? Do you still speak your 'native' language fluently? Is or was your city divided into 'native' and European quarters? In which quarter have you lived? When the European occupation of your country was over, did your people re-name any of your towns, cities, rivers, etc?

What is the literacy rate in your country?

What are the relations today among the new countries of Asia and Africa? If there are tensions, how did they come about? How, in your opinion, can such tensions be kept from developing?

What, in your opinion, is the most urgent problem on the international scene? What do you think of the United Nations? Do you feel that the white nations of the Western world constitute a racial and/or political bloc? Why?

Stalin is reputed to have once used the phrase, 'We Asiatics . . .': In your opinion, does that mean that the Russians regard themselves as belonging to Asia? What, in your opinion, do Europeans mean by the designation 'coloured countries'? Do you regard your country as being 'coloured'?

What does Left mean to you? What does Right mean to you?

Do you feel that a nation is ever justified in using the atom or hydrogen bomb as a military weapon?

What kind of aid does your country need from Western industrial nations? In what form do you think that such aid should be obtained?

What, in your opinion, is the meaning of the phrase 'democratic opinion'? What, in your opinion, is a 'democratic institution'? What, in your opinion, justifies the exercise of state power?

Do you believe in the possibility of world government? Should the state create trade unions for workers? What, in your opinion, is the best form of government for your country? In your opinion, does social or political change stem from economic or psychological causes?

Are there any secret societies in your country? If so, are they political or religious?

Do you think that there is a conflict between the younger and the older generations in your country? If such a conflict exists, what are the causes?

Do you think that a classless society, in an economic sense, is possible?

What was the single most important event of the twentieth century?

If your country were fully developed, what European country would you like your country to resemble? What, in your opinion, was the West's greatest effect upon your country?

What, in your opinion, should be the aim of education?

What is your idea of a great man? What men now living do you call great?

Do you believe in capital punishment?

Why, in your opinion, did not the European working class revolt and make revolutions when the Russian Revolution occurred? What do you think of Lenin's appeal to the people of Asia and Africa for help to defend the Soviet Union?

Do you feel that the removal of oppressive conditions makes men happy? Do you feel that man needs a universal humanism that can bind men together in a common unity? If so, what culture in the world today seems the most promising candidate to champion such a humanism?

I had sought reactions to this list from two typical Westerners living in Paris, and I had been surprised to learn that they felt that no or but few Asians would know what the questions were all about. I had seriously doubted that. I had reasoned that if I, an American Negro, had thought of them, then an Asian, meeting the West from the 'outside', so to speak, must surely have thought of them even more. How naïve I had been! Little had I suspected that I would have to do no questioning at all, that all I had to do was to show up and the Asians would gush, erupt, and spill out more than they knew. I had used the questionnaire five times, then I had thrown it away . . . If I, an American Negro, conscious of my racial and social and political position in the Western world, could misjudge the Asians' willingness to bare their feelings so completely, how much more, then, must white Westerners misjudge them?

In my questioning of Asians I had had one tangible factor in my favour, a factor that no white Westerner could claim. I was 'coloured' and every Asian I had spoken to had known what being 'coloured' meant.

Hence, I had been able to hear Asians express themselves without reserve; they had felt no need to save face before me. . . . (As a frank and sometimes bitter critic of the Western world, I've been frequently dubbed 'extreme'. . . . Well, what I heard from the lips of many Asians startled me, reduced my strictures to the status of a 'family quarrel' . . . I found that many Asians hated the West with an absoluteness that no American Negro could ever muster. The American Negro's reactions were limited, partial, centred, as they were, upon specific complaints; he rarely ever criticized or condemned the conditions of life about him as a whole . . . Once his particular grievances were redressed, the Negro reverted to a normal Western outlook. The Asian, however, had been taken from his own culture before he had embraced or had pretended to embrace Western culture; he had, therefore, a feeling of distance, of perspective, of objectivity towards the West which tempered his most intimate experiences of the West. . . .)

As the express train bumped along over the Spanish mountains towards Madrid, I recalled having asked myself how would I be able to tell how important the Asian responses evoked by my questionnaire would be. For a while that problem stumped me. Then I had hit upon a general solution, a rule-of-thumb guide: I had decided to try to interview an Asian-born European who had once lived in Asia. I had felt that in that way I would get European attitudes to the same realities that constituted Asian life.

I had been lucky enough to find a young Indonesian-born Dutch journalist who had readily consented to be my guinea-pig. He had been more European in attitude

than most Europeans; having been born in Indonesia but educated in Holland, he had felt a high degree of consciousness about his European values and possessed a detachment that made for straight answers.

I summarize his answers to my list of questions in order to make a coherent statement :

He is twenty-four years of age, married, his wife and children in Holland. He is a university graduate, a Protestant; his ancestors were French Huguenots. He professes no religion and is of the opinion that religion is 'an instrument of war, of fighting'. He feels that the introduction of Christianity into Indonesia influenced the people to lead a moral life, yet he says that religion has made the people militant. (When questioned as to whether Indonesians had any idea of 'the good' before the Europeans brought in their idea of 'the good', he was quite confused. He assumed a natural European superiority in all phases of life.)

His interest in politics derives from his concern about what happens to people. He did not participate in the liberation movement of Indonesia; nor did he serve with Dutch troops when those troops tried to put down that movement; he was a student in Holland when those events took place. He has never experienced any penalties, legal or moral, for his political opinions. He has travelled widely in Europe, has dabbled in European philosophical theories, but he has not served in the armed forces of any European nation.

He does not think that Indonesia has an enemy. The Asian-African Conference concerns him only from a journalistic point of view: it is a project he has to cover.

Though Indonesian born, he believes in Asia for

Asians, Europe for Europeans, America for Americans, and Africa for Africans and feels that such an order of things is 'natural'. But, as a European, he prefers to live in Asia! He has many Dutch and Indonesian friends and feels that the Dutch were mainly interested in trade in Indonesia and that was what conditioned Dutch attitudes towards Indonesians. Contact with the West made the Indonesians feel something that they 'had never felt before, made them feel different, that they were not as important as they had thought they were; but the net result of the Indonesians' contact with the West has been to broaden their outlook on the world and life in general'. He admits that Western contacts have made the Indonesian very self-conscious, but he does not think that there is any evidence of inferiority feelings on the part of the Indonesian, that Indonesian culture does not reflect any such expressions . . .

The word 'lynch' is English but has been adopted into Dutch and is used to signify that someone must be got rid of by some means, legal or otherwise. He first heard of the phrase 'White Man's Burden' in connection with Dutch colonial policy; the word 'nigger' came to him from reading done in an American context; he had never heard of 'Yellow Peril'. The best way, in his opinion, to eliminate racism is to find out what causes it and fight it.

He wants to see Indonesia thoroughly industrialized, but he wishes that the wood-carving, music, and dancing skills of the people could be saved. 'But I'm afraid that that won't be possible.'

He feels that the 'difference in climate makes impossible any comparison between Indonesian and European standards of living'.

The purity of his family blood is not important to him; he once wanted to marry an Indonesian girl, but he never found the one he really loved. He does not feel that marriage between the races ought to be regulated by law. He'd never send his children to Indonesian schools. 'That's why they are in Holland now.'

If necessary, especially if it means peace in the world, Africans and Asians should act as a political bloc. He does not know what the literacy rate is in Indonesia. He says that the Indonesians renamed many of their towns, cities, streets, etc., when the Dutch were driven out. (He attached no importance to this.)

He knows nothing of the relations between the new Asian countries; he feels that the most urgent problem on the international scene is peace. War is the deepest fear of his life; Communism comes next. The United Nations is a means for keeping peace, but he does not think that it can do so. He feels that Asian and African nations have had their fair share of say-so, authority, and influence in the deliberations of the United Nations. White Western nations should act as a political or racial bloc in order to defeat Communism. Flatly, Russians are Asiatics. European workers felt far too superior to Russian workers to have helped them in their revolution. Lenin's turning to Asia for help was a 'smart move'.

Countries inhabited by non-whites are 'coloured' countries; Indonesia thus is a 'coloured' country. He is sure that Indonesians feel this.

Communist ideology is Left; those who do not like Communism are on the Right.

There can never be any justification, he feels, for using the atom or hydrogen bomb as a military weapon.

Indonesia, in his opinion, needs technical aid, loans, machines, exchange of students, etc., from the West. Trade is the means by which these things should be obtained.

'Democratic opinion' is government by the people; a 'democratic institution' exists with the consent of the people; the state derives its power from the people. The state should have nothing to do with creating trade unions for workers. Indonesia needs a dictatorship; it is not ready for democracy. Political change stems from both economic and psychological causes.

There are many secret societies in Indonesia; some are political and others are just gangs. In his opinion, there is no conflict between the younger and older generations in Indonesia. A classless society, in an economic sense, is impossible.

The single most important event of the twentieth century was the social revolution; this revolution has not yet reached Indonesia, or anywhere in Asia for that matter. He knows of no country that he would like Indonesia to resemble if it were fully industrialized. The impact of trade is the greatest influence of the West upon Indonesia.

There are no men living now whom he would call great. Simple men are great men; therefore, there are many great men in the world. 'Greatness is how you live your personal, individual life.' The aim of education is to enlarge one's understanding of life.

He does not believe in capital punishment. The removal of oppressive conditions can make men happy. Man needs a universal humanism, but there is no culture in the world today that can serve as a model.

I lifted my eyes from my notes and, to the rocking of the train, I reflected: This young white journalist was cer-

tainly not as excited about Bandung as I was. His casual attitude towards that pending conference made him an ideal model which I could place at the head of my *continuum* of Asiatic subjects. Against his nonchalant, normal personality I could measure, compare, and judge the pure Asian personalities I would encounter. In fact, I could safely eliminate him from my immediate consideration, that is, I would not include him except negatively in my search for the emotional landscapes of Asia . . .

Yet, his being in but not of Asia, his sheer detachment yielded some information. The most that he seemed to be aware of was that Asians were slightly embarrassed in the presence of their Western superiors, and, to him, that was as it should have been. To me, his conviction that Indonesia needed a dictator, that the people were not ready for democracy, seemed to be the product either of a sense of pity for the plight of the Indonesians or of an attitude of scorn. It was like saying that a delinquent child needed a stern father. I was convinced that his attitude represented more disgust with the disorganization of Indonesian life than any insight into the needs of that life. By prescribing dictatorial methods for Indonesian needs, he was endorsing a drastic measure that he never would have sanctioned for any Western nation . . .

The one surprising element in the Indonesian-born European's outlook was his characterizing the Christian religion as an instrument of war, and I suspected that he had absorbed that idea from talking to his Indonesian friends. Being Indonesian-born and having kept his Western attitude intact, he was wrestling with an experience that but few Westerners knew: he was white, but he saw and felt, to some degree, how the West looked from the

outside . . . There was no doubt but that he was concerned about the meaning of the Christian religion as the historical reality of that religion had impinged upon non-Christians, and, had he known or felt the central psychological reality of that religion and what made it function so militantly, I am sure that he would have been honest enough to have mentioned it. He felt its warlikeness, but he didn't know why it was so.

Otherwise, the racial state of things seemed quite natural to him: if black people lived in Africa, then Africa was naturally a black man's land, ordained by nature to be so. And so on with China, America, Europe, etc.

There seemed to be in him no need for a sharp racial consciousness, though he was dimly aware of the existence of that phenomenon and felt that it was a regrettable defect derived from lack of education. Difference in the standards of living between East and West was natural, due to climate. He was vaguely liberal and humanist, willing to marry an Indonesian girl; indeed, he was naïve enough to feel the possibility of an ideological solidarity with yellow, brown, and black men and could conceive of their uniting with him to fight Communism! To designate a country as being 'coloured' carried no stigma.

To him the problems of the Eastern nations were simple: give them technical aid, loans, permit the exchange of students, and all would be well. There was nothing urgent; business as usual could contain any tensions arising . . .

He rejected capital punishment—a rejection that implied, since he was not religious, that circumstances accounted for men's actions. This same slightly romantic streak manifested itself in his belief that the removal of oppressive conditions could make men happy. He possessed

no messianic sense; he wanted no atom or hydrogen bombs used as military weapons, and the concept of 'greatness' had, for him, no golden halo around it. Education was his key to the future and man was bound to improve with time . . .

The express pounded on into the night as I poured over my notes . . . My luck had held and, earlier that spring, I had met in Madrid someone who fell naturally in line after my Indonesian-born European: a subject who had reflected, with enthralling interest, the psychological landscape of a mixture of Asian and European values, that is, the Eurasian mind.

Informant was a girl, highly intelligent, nervous, articulate, with a kind of repressed charm. Tall, about twenty-six years of age, she came of mixed parentage, her mother being Irish Catholic and her father an Indian of Moslem faith. Her skin had just a touch of copper; she had been in Spain for six months and I wondered if she'd not come to Spain because she resembled Spaniards? Attempting a new identification? Most Spaniards, she said, took her for one of them until they heard her speak. She described herself as being 'a rather bad Roman Catholic'.

Single, Singapore-born, a journalist by profession, she has completed the equivalent of an American high school training. She was entirely educated by missionaries, having lived her youth in a convent. Afterwards she spent ten years in school in Australia. She is thoroughly Westernized in manner and speech. (I questioned this girl in the presence of a white American and she, to my observation, never betrayed the slightest hesitancy or embarrassment in replying. Other subjects were questioned in private, with no whites, American or European, present. Experience taught

me that the presence of whites constrained Asians to a startling degree!) Her father was a lawyer and helped to frame the constitution of Malaya. He is, she says, an easy-going man who takes his religion lightly.

She feels that no state ought to sponsor religion. Christianity has had no deep effect in her country. (Throughout my questioning of this girl, I had to make sure just what country she was alluding to, for it was not always clear whether it was Britain or Malaya she was referring to . . .) The role of religion in history is to her an open question; she takes her religion for granted.

She identifies herself with her father, and her intense interest in current politics flows from her father's activities on behalf of his country's freedom. Having never participated in politics, she has never been molested because of her political views. She has travelled extensively in Europe.

She feels that Malay has an enemy: Red China. Since she has never attended an international conference, she holds no opinion about the Asian-African Conference. Because of her lack of racial and national identity, she does pay more than ordinary attention, she says, to political events reported in the press.

There is a natural, allotted, irrevocable geographical space for each race on earth: Africa for Africans, America for Americans, Europe for Europeans, and Asia for Asians. She says: 'It is just and right like that.'

She has many white friends and associates with them without any emotional disturbances; she confesses, however, that she has had racial feelings. Working as a newspaper-woman in Singapore, she frequently was in the company of white friends who asked her to visit their clubs, and

she had to tell them that she was not 'acceptable', much to their astonishment. Some offered to make her an exception and get her a membership, but she refused such offers, feeling that she would be playing false with herself.

Colour lines are sharp in Malaya, she says, and sister has been known to deny sister in public on the basis of colour. She fled Malaya because she did not fit in, because she was neither Indian nor European. She does not like Eurasians or 'the Eurasian atmosphere. They are full of complexes; they are sick people, *sick*, I tell you, *all* of them. I feel pain when I see the neurotic attitude of the Eurasians'. She maintains that colour, race, and religion have not given birth to any expressions of cultural inferiority feelings in Malaya. 'Malayans are dull, easy-going; now and then they are reminded by someone that the country is really theirs, and they blink and say, "Yes"; but that is all.'

She has felt the life of the Malayan from both sides. 'Europeans regard us as exotic when they meet us in Europe, but in the East they stick together against us. They have fixed ideas about us, and such ideas enable them to exploit the natives.' (In one sentence she switched from 'us' to 'natives'.)

She is visibly Eurasian and her mother sometimes openly expressed doubts about the way she was rearing her and her sister and her brother. Her mother felt that perhaps it would have been better if the children had remained in India. But the children had not wanted that; though dark, they felt European.

Ten years' residence in Australia conditioned her against respecting Asians; but, working as a newspaperwoman in Singapore, she had comrades who were Malayan and,

slowly, she began to feel their humanity. Her father's fighting for the freedom of his country helped her to overcome many of her doubts, to believe that Asians could do what Europeans did.

Her father and his friends are dark and, when she is in their presence, she feels 'outside', feels that they 'feel' her white blood, and she is hurt. By exchanging her British passport for an Indian one, she could work for UNESCO; but qualms hold her back. Because she has never done anything for India, she does not want to pretend to be Indian in order to obtain a well-paying job. Her father agrees with her decision. It is her love for her father that keeps her from 'passing' into the white race; she does not want to 'pass' if her father cannot do so . . .

She first heard 'nigger', 'Yellow Peril', 'White Man's Burden', and 'lynch', while in school in Australia, read them in novels like *Gone with the Wind*, in nursery rhymes like *Ten Little Niggers*, etc. During the war of Japan against China, she heard of 'Yellow Peril' and it made her feel strange, for her complexion is yellowish. Comic strips made her conscious of her background, for Asians were always depicted as villains. She has no idea how racism can be eliminated; she simply longs 'for people to live together in peace'.

She does not want her country (Malaya) to become any more industrialized than it is right now. In Malayan culture she values dancing, and she thinks that the state ought to take steps to see that it is preserved.

There is an upper class in Malaya that lives from profits got out of tin, rubber, fisheries, and shipping; these people possess as high a standard of living as Westerners.

The purity of her family blood is not important to her.

She once desired to marry an Englishman, but she felt that they were incompatible. People told her that the Englishman was a 'rotter'. 'I was too immature at the time to make up my mind.' She is definitely against the regulation of interracial marriage by law. She feels that her personal conflicts will eventually be resolved either in marriage or religion; though she is a writer, she has little hope of resolving her conflicts through art . . . Most definitely she will send her children to European schools.

She fears Asians, yet she knows how much they suffer. Hence, she does not want to see Asian and African nations act as a racial or political bloc. 'I feel for both sides. I love Asia and I love Europe and I don't want to see a clash . . .'

She does not speak Malay. In her childhood she lived with her mother and father in a 'mixed' district, though there existed both 'native' and European districts in her city. She does not know the literacy rate in Malaya.

She has a deep curiosity about Japan and longs to go there; they are a powerful, civilized, 'yellow' people. 'Maybe I could fit in there.' She reacted strongly to the Japanese occupation of Malaya; her feelings were ambivalent: she respected the Japanese and feared them. The Japanese worked up much racial feeling in Malay, but they did not originate that racialism. She says: 'The racial feeling was already there; the British brought it in and the Japanese simply exploited it and organized it.'

She knows nothing of the relations among the new Asian and African countries and she had no notion as to how those nations can avoid the development of tensions . . . Towards China she holds a deep fear. 'They are helping the Malayan Communists in the jungles right now!' she wails. 'When I was in my house in Singapore, I

could hear the Reds shooting. Each night a guard was placed before our door. Any stranger was instantly arrested. Those Chinese come to a country and, before you know it, they have opened a business. My mother called them "counter-jumpers", because they made money so quickly and took up other professions. They make slums wherever they go. They're awful.' (Bourgeois and Communist Chinese are all the same to her!)

She feels that peace is the most urgent problem now; the United Nations is a terrible disappointment to her, but the idea is good. 'Maybe if we all had faith in it, it might avert war,' she says. The Asian and African countries really have no voice in the United Nations, she says.

Fear makes the white Western nations act as a racial and political bloc against the Asians and Africans. When Stalin called the Russians Asiatics, he was trying to win the sympathy of Asians . . . 'Coloured' countries, she feels, are countries like the West Indies, African countries, etc. 'Coloured' *races* include Asians, she feels. Expressly, she does not regard Malay as being a 'coloured' country. She was uncertain about Indonesia.

'Left' means anyone inclined towards Russian Communism; but being Left in England means being pro-Labour Party. She would not express herself about the meaning of the word 'Right'. She strongly feels that no nation should ever use the hydrogen or atom bomb as a military weapon.

Her country (Malaya) needs machinery and it should be obtained in the course of normal trade.

'Democratic opinion' to her means the free expression of ideas, 'democratic institutions' are forums for such ideas. The exercise of state power is justified by the

amount of power entrusted to a government by the masses of people.

In regard to world government she says :

'I hope never to live to see it. I hate the idea of a super-government dictating to people. No state should create trade unions for workers. I'd like a democratic form of government in Malaya. I believe that social and political change stems from both economic and psychological causes.'

The Chinese have secret societies in Malaya, but she knows nothing of them.

There is a conflict in Malaya between the younger and the older generations; the origins of this conflict come from the family structure. Traditional forms of living conflict with the desires of the younger people who are stimulated by American movies, big cars, and the general influence of the West . . .

A classless society in an economic sense is impossible. The First World War, in her opinion, was the single most important event of the twentieth century; it gave birth to Communism. If Malaya were fully developed, she'd like to see it resemble Britain. She has no ideas about how the West has affected Malaya.

Her idea of a great man is someone who is true to himself. The aim of education is to make people think for themselves. She believes most strongly in the need for capital punishment. 'During the Japanese occupation there was much looting in Malaya, much rioting. The Japanese penalty for such was to chop off heads and impale them on poles to warn others. It worked. I tell you, Asians need such as that. As a last resort, capital punishment is good. At this moment in Malaya we welcome the idea of the

British remaining. Of course, we want self-government, but we are not ready for it.'

The European working class felt itself far superior to Russians and would not support the Russian Revolution. Lenin's turning to the poor masses of Asia was clever, she says. She is convinced that the removal of oppressive conditions makes men happy.

The world needs no universal humanism, surely not in the form of world government or Communism or Fascism. Books, ideas, etc., are the only valid psychological or spiritual food that people need. No control from above is her motto.

It was nine o'clock; in the corridor of the train, the bell sounded for dinner. As I made my way, swaying with the rushing train, down the narrow aisle to the dining car, I reflected :

This Eurasian girl's replies shed more light upon a personal dilemma than upon the causes of that dilemma. At bottom, a simple and firm choice on her part could have eradicated her problem. She could have become either British or Malayan and that would have been the end of it. Whatever her choice, she would have eventually inherited new problems, but they would have been objective ones and she could have dealt with them in terms of action based on reality. Fundamentally, I felt that she was revelling in an emotional enjoyment of clinging to the sweet agony of an infantile situation . . .

Though some superficial observers would have said that her 'nervousness' was caused by her mixed blood, it was evident that it was rather the result of a mixed environment, of divided loyalties, of opposing values warring in her heart. Catholic norms of respect for authority clashed

with nationalistic Malayan norms that prompted rebellion against the British . . . At the expense of shame for herself, British norms won. Her dilemma, however, did reveal the irony of educating colonials in Western schools: her education had conditioned her for a situation other than the one in which she lived. Her impulsiveness of speech might have been the product of the clash of the two worlds of values that swirled in her.

Though she said that she took her religion for granted, there resided deep in her a latent, unconscious ambivalence towards that religion that found expression in her questioning attitude towards Malaya and her father. She was hostile towards authority; she wanted no part of world government; no state should sponsor religion (no father should have created the kind of problem that her father had created for her! There were times, when I was questioning her, that I felt that she wanted to be her own father; there was a strongly repressed masculine drive, though she was ostensibly feminine in manner . . .).

She, like the Indonesian-born European, felt that some vague, metaphysical principle in nature had decreed that Africa was for the blacks, China for the yellows, Europe for the whites, etc. (It was amazing how widespread this feeling was in Asia and Europe, but less in Asia than in Europe. Those who took their racial environment for granted seemed to feel that nature had ordained the present arrangement; and those who had been shaken up, as it were, by a war, racial prejudice, or religious persecution, had become awakened and felt that the world belonged to all of those who lived in it.)

Her insistence that Eurasians were full of complexes was but an oblique recognition of her own perturbed state, and

some of the doubt and distrust that she felt for Malaysians she also felt for herself. Her outlook being divided, she held towards Malayan culture a vacillating attitude, respecting parts of it and disparaging others. As highly colour-conscious as an American Negro, she felt the racial insults thrown from both sides. Her individualism made her family blood unimportant to her, yet, concerning love objects, she leaned first towards the whites and then towards the group with which her father was identified . . . It was significant that the Japanese attracted her mightily because of their 'pride' and 'strength' and 'development', and she would certainly have liked to belong to a 'coloured' nation if that nation resembled, say, the British or the American. Her *bête noir* was the yellow races, be they bourgeois or Communist. And she was careful to exclude Malaya from the category of the 'coloured' countries.

The social aspects of Catholicism made her distinguish between the Leftism of Russia and that of the British Labour Party; her refusal to describe what Right meant to her indicated that that was her position. Though no nation should use the atom or hydrogen bomb as a military weapon, she passionately believed in capital punishment, especially as a protection against Communism and the yellow races. Her belief in democracy was limited by national boundaries; to her mind, world government, though supported by all the people of the earth, was as bad as Communism.

To her most problems were subjective ones, and 'thinking' could solve them; 'greatness' was being true to one's self. Though ostensibly conservative, this girl could almost as easily have been a revolutionary, for the crux of her problem was a question of identification . . . Her agonizing

position was born of accident, and her emotional rootlessness aggravated it. Had Communism been presented to her before she embraced Catholicism, she might well have accepted it . . .

After dinner, back in my compartment, I resumed perusing my notes :

Moving from the Indonesian-born European and the Eurasian, I had encountered an Asian, but, strangely, a Westernized one. Mr X was an extraordinary man, one of the leading educators of his country. He was no marginal man; he was more Western than most Westerners. Self-made, partly self-educated, rich, he stood alone and unique among his kind. Each question posed elicited a psychological reaction (I might say a physiological one!): a quick smile, a tensing of his muscles, a faraway look, then halting words that cut across the distilled wisdom of many cultures.

He is married, fifty years of age, has six children. His rooms are lined with shelves of books from all the Western countries. Widely read, widely travelled, he reacts sharply to my questions and I have the impression that ideas are more real to him than reality. His parents are Moslems, but he shies off committing himself too definitely in religious matters.

He feels that the state should not have anything actively to do with religion, but perhaps the state ought to try to keep alive the sense of the religious, the attitude and feeling of religion without regard to sects or ideology.

He feels that the overrunning of the continents of Asia and Africa by the white Western nations was a mixture of good and bad. Objectively, the impact of the West had a liberating influence. He is inclined to feel that short-range views tend to emphasize the damage done to Asia

and Africa; five hundred years from now the bad effects will be forgotten and the good effects remembered.

He is interested in politics in spite of himself. 'I'm impatient with politicians; they take such short views. My aim is to make people think correctly. At this moment, politics is the negative thing in my country . . .'

He participated in the liberation movement of his country in the field of publishing; he was a member of the first parliament and he would like to sit in parliament again. The Japanese imprisoned him for three months when he opposed their trying to ram the Indonesian mind into a strait-jacket. When the Japanese banned the Dutch tongue, he saw his opportunity and came forward with his own native language, Indonesian, which is now the official language of his country.

He has travelled in Europe and America, but he has not served in the armed forces of any non-Indonesian power.

'The only enemy of Indonesia is Indonesia herself,' he says.

He attends many international conferences but feels that the Asian-African Conference is but a political gesture to bolster the local political régime in Indonesia. He does not feel that there is a naturally allotted, geographical space for each race on earth; the earth is for everybody . . . He has many white friends. His wife is German. He feels that Western contact has had an emancipating effect upon him and his people, smashing the irrational ties of custom and tradition. 'But the West failed to replace these ruptured relations with anything positive,' he says. Dutch colonial oppression kept the Indonesians stupid, did not give the people a chance to develop their personalities. The only

justification of Dutch rule in Indonesia was the superiority of the Dutch . . .

Inferiority feelings in his country have been copiously expressed in novels, plays, poems. As proof of the intense inferiority feelings engendered in his people after three hundred and fifty years of Dutch rule, he cited the passion with which the Indonesians rejected the Dutch language and insisted upon resurrecting their own long-buried native tongue, a tongue which now, under enforced conditions, they seek to modernize and make serviceable. Japanese occupation helped to stimulate the desire on the part of the Indonesians to break with the West.

He first heard the word 'lynch' in connection with what the United States did to American Negroes; he first encountered the phrase 'White Man's Burden' in connection with Dutch rule over Indonesia; he came across the phrase 'Yellow Peril' in connection with Western attitudes towards Japan and China. 'It's racial snobbery,' he says. He believes that racism can be eliminated by education, by informing people of its baleful effects.

He yearns to see Indonesia industrialized. He says: 'We must have a most fundamental change in every department of life. That part of the past that can be synthesized with the future will be saved.' The purity of his family blood is not important to him; he will not send his children to either 'national' or European schools; he will send them to *modern* schools.

Maintaining close contact with his people, he not only speaks his native language fluently, but he helped to create and develop that language. Under Dutch rule he lived in the 'native' quarter of his city; today he lives in the 'European' quarter. The literacy rate is about thirty per cent in

Indonesia. When the Dutch were driven out, his people 'reclaimed' their country by renaming many of the towns, cities, etc. He feels that the relations between the new nations of Asia and Africa are cordial.

He disdains slogans, propaganda. We must, he says, re-think and re-value the whole of history. We must re-contemplate the role of ethics and morality in the light of modern knowledge; the conflict between morals and the advance of science is something that must be thought through and enthroned in our educational system.

He could not answer yes or no to the question as to whether Indonesians were dissatisfied with the United Nations. 'Indonesia is not as yet sufficiently developed to make herself felt. She cannot handle the facilities offered her.'

He does not feel that the West constitutes a racial or political bloc against the Asian and African peoples. 'Sometimes it might look as though a bloc existed,' he says. 'But if one takes a long view, it's not entirely true. One must always remember that one of the deepest traits of the West is its anti-Western attitude. Take our fight for national independence, for example. A part of the West sided against the West in our favour. A characteristic of the West is its restlessness, its changeability. Most Easterners overlook this.'

Regarding Stalin's identifying Russia with Asia, he says :

'Stalin used such a phrase because he felt that it benefited the policies of his country at that moment.' He has no ideas about the impact of the Russian Revolution in either Europe or Asia.

When asked what the words 'Left' and 'Right' meant to him, he answered sharply :

'They are misused words. "Left" is a word that is an instrumentality in political struggles. The same is true of the word "Right". In reality, there is not much difference between Left and Right today. Again I say that we badly need a re-definition of words that will link words with reality. To garner votes from emotionally conditioned and ignorant masses, politicians use terminologies from the last century. The character of the world has changed radically, but we are using an old, outmoded terminology to describe that world. Many of the world's problems are simple, but we use words to describe those problems and the problems become complicated. The phrases on the lips of most people have little or nothing to do with the new times. Words like "Left" and "Right" denote psychological attitudes rather than objective realities . . .'

Is a nation ever justified in using the atom or hydrogen bomb as a military weapon? 'What a question! Such a question has meaning only when there is no war. Once you are in a war, you use what you have got.'

He says that Indonesia needs all kinds of aid. 'We need all those things that will help us to stand shoulder to shoulder with other nations, things that will make us the equal of others. But this is not simple: For one nation to help another is to assist in the development of a competitor. True planning is possible only on a world basis. For that we need a superparliament filled with men of the highest skills. The insistence upon state sovereignty is what blocks world planning, and world planning is the only way to aid nations to develop.'

He baulked when I asked him what the phrases 'democratic opinion' and 'democratic institutions' meant to him.

'These are difficult questions. Maybe my attitude will be misunderstood, will shock people. Like so many other phrases we use so much and do not think about, these phrases ought to be re-examined and re-interpreted . . .'

He paused, stared off. 'The best way to explain my whole attitude to you is to tell you a story. I was interned by the Japanese for opposing what they wanted to do with our educational system. There were some twelve of us in a tiny cell. For a window, we had only a small hole high up in the wall. It was hot . . . We suffered. Spiders and lice crawled on the floor. I hated it; we all hated it; I hated it in particular, for I could never be alone. I refused to take exercise; it was only when the others went out to take exercise that I could be alone and *think* . . . When alone, I sat and thought. What could I do? What was my role here? Would I die? Would I live? At last I came to feel what the true worth of a man was. I survived only because I could *think* . . . I mastered my situation with my mind. That was the main thing. Thinking is what marks off man from the animal kingdom. The Japanese conquered me, but not really . . .

'How can a man's worth be measured when he votes? If Democracy means the opportunity of each man to develop to his highest capacity, then a mere counting of heads is no Democracy. Really, Fascism is the logical outcome of Democracy as it is practised in the world today. I ask you : Do people really know what they are voting for at the polls? The world is not simple, yet simple men vote. Is there any wonder that they vote for things that they never get? Some men are just naturally quick, and some are just naturally dull-witted . . . And the quick rule; the mobile get to the top, get power and riches. That is the law of the

jungle . . . So when we trust the running of government to a counting of heads, the vast majority cannot vote for their rights; they do not know them. I don't know of any system of government that can defeat the general welfare more thoroughly than what we call Democracy. Democracy is a means of protest, not a method of construction.

'I feel that men ought to have the right to vote for only what they can understand. I'd not have the franchise go further than village voting. But there are problems that village folk cannot understand, so why ask them to vote on them? Only a scoundrel bent upon duping ignorant people would urge those people to vote on issues too big and complicated for them to understand.

'In the world today Democracy is the greatest enemy of the true democrat. The so-called democratic process keeps the real democrats from being in a position to help the people. People have been lulled into believing that they are wise, that they know all things, that there is a kind of divine wisdom in their collective decisions; so, when these simple people try to think and vote, the quick and the unscrupulous outwit them and cheat them.

'That is why I insist that all of these questions must be re-examined. I know that people will quail before such probing. The problem of ethics must be brought up again; today we live in a world that is modern and our ideas about that world are obsolete. That is the origin of most of our trouble . . .'

I felt there must have been a factor of Asian scepticism in that man's outlook. Compassion for man was the keynote of his life. Such a mind refused to accept the means for the end. His outlook was grounded in a tough-souled pragmatism. My questionnaire was not designed for such as

he. He stared at me and smiled. 'I'm alone in my country,' he mumbled sadly. I desisted in my questioning.

This subject's replies, especially his disdainful scepticism towards Democracy, came as a complete surprise, and I jokingly dubbed him the H. L. Mencken of Indonesia . . . He had an acute mind, yet he was atypical and he ruefully admitted it. But, as drastic as he sounded, he was by far the most impractical of all the Asians I talked to. He was logical, but his logic was not of the life that surrounded him. Because he could easily spot fraud, he had concluded that that fraud had no valid reality.

He took the view that, in the long run, the impact of the West upon the East would undoubtedly be entered upon the credit side of the historical ledger. I was inclined to agree with him. But that was not what the individual Asian colonial victim felt about that Western impact while he was undergoing his torturous 'liberation' from his irrational customs and traditions, his superstitions and folklore. It may be perfectly true that there was absolutely no synchronization between the aims and actions of the Western merchants, soldiers, and missionaries when they swarmed out of Europe and overran Asia and Africa; but, from where the victim stood, the impact of the West had as its main effect a result that could come about only if those Western forces had been synchronized in their aims and actions: that is, his culture had been smashed by what he felt to be hostile forces and he had been cast into a void . . .

On the other hand, compassion was this Asian's hallmark. If the future of the masses of Asia were to be in the hands of aristocratic spirits such as this Indonesian educator, then one could say that the bridge between lives

anchored in mysticism and lives built on secular and industrial reason could be erected with a minimum of tragedy and human waste. But neither Asia nor Africa nor Europe was ruled or was likely to be ruled by compassionate aristocrats; instead, there were millions of folk-minded masses trapped in the nets of fear, hunger, and impossible dreams—masses at the mercy of irresponsible interpretations of their plight. Such masses, under the leadership of messianic men, would be induced into situations whose final outcome would spell more of glory for the messianic leaders than of welfare for the millions of expendable lives involved.

There was no doubt, in my mind, that my Indonesian educator was correct on the plane of abstract logic, but logic cannot solve problems whose solutions come not by thinking but by living. His approach implied a denial of collective thought-processes, of mass organic experiences embedded in the very lives and social conditions about him. His people, eighty million strong, had fought and died for the right to vote, and now they were going to vote whether they voted right or not and there was nothing that anybody could easily do about it. Regrettably, one could safely assume that his influence upon Asian reality would be nil.

My eyes were heavy; the Madrid express was rocking me to sleep and I could hold out no longer . . . When I awakened the next morning, daylight gleamed through the curtain of my train window. After breakfasting, I went into my notes again . . .

My fourth subject had been a more typical and basic Asian, whose attitude was less conditioned by abstract considerations; from the outset, I had been able to feel in his reactions the pressures of history and environment :

He is full-blooded Indonesian in his twenties. Single, restless, a student of political science, he is supported by his government, and he openly says : 'I belong to the backward nations of the world, the under-developed nations.' And his manner of saying it indicates how deeply a sense of his people's inferiority weighs upon him. He has a quick smile that hides bitter knowledge; already he is an actor : for the outside world that is white, he laughs; for the non-white world he drops his smiling mask and his eyes stare with the unblinking fixity of the fanatic.

He is Moslem and so are his parents. He has broad artistic interests and boasts of the cultural contacts of his people. He is, he says, too busy with his political studies for organizational activity, and he is too young to have participated in the liberation movement of his country.

'The West came to us to get what they could out of us,' he says. The Christian religion, he believes, did not have a great influence upon his country. Proudly, he drew me a rough map and pointed out that the Moslems and the Hindus had influenced the Indonesians 'long before the Christians ever came. It was in the southern islands, where pagans live, that Christianity has had its influence.'

Yes; the state should support religion. 'The Moslem religion, unlike the Christian religion, is coherently social. We have a variety of religions; we even have a ministry of religion.'

The nations of Asia and Africa have a common colonial experience that binds them together and gives them common interests; they should consult together often. The relations obtaining today between the new Asian and African countries have been conditioned by attitudes instilled by the late imperial powers; hence, relations between these

powers are very sensitive. Nations like China, Japan, and the Philippines are inclined to feel that they are the natural leaders of Asia and are prone to say: 'Don't you tell us what to do. You are a new country and without experience.' He says: 'We don't like such attitudes. They reflect the influence of the West.'

That the state should regulate marriage is something that he expects, though he and his family are in revolt against such state measures when pitched on a narrow plane. There exist customary laws in Indonesia that regulate the marriage of one blood clan with another, but this custom does not rest on racial identity in the Western sense of that term: it has religious sanction. His brother has married a Dutch girl; his father married out of the clan. He describes himself as a marginal man. 'It's up to us; we have a free choice in marrying or doing anything we want to do, if we'd only take the choice.' But he is not concerned at present about marrying a European girl. 'It's possible, but it's in the future.'

He has no Dutch friends; he is self-conscious about it. I'd touched a complex. 'I've no time to find Dutch friends, really. I'm busy.'

His contacts with the West have left scars. 'I remember once at military school something happened. We were together there, Dutch and Indonesians. I was invited to a birthday party by one of my Dutch classmates. But the parents of my classmate did not want me to come to the house. There was a big row in my classmate's home about it. At the last moment the boy's parents said that I could come along. I went and pretended that I was having a good time, but I was self-conscious . . .

'My father is a doctor and holds a high position. But

the Dutch who live next door would never call on his services unless they could not get a white doctor. The rich Dutch would never ask for his services, and the poor Dutch would call him only when there was no Dutch or German doctor to be found . . .

‘My political awakening came one day at school when I coloured the face of Queen Wilhelmina with my pencil. I didn’t know what I was doing; I was sitting in class with my book open before me and when I saw her face on the page, I made it dark, dark like mine . . . When the Dutch teacher saw that, he beat me, but he didn’t tell me why . . . It seemed natural to me for my queen to have a dark face. My father had to explain to me the meaning of what I had done . . .

‘I first heard the word “lynch” when I was very young; we were at lunch and my father told of a lynching in the United States. I first heard the phrase “White Man’s Burden” just before the war between the Japanese and the Chinese. The word “nigger” came to me from the English and the Americans. “Yellow Peril”?’ he laughed to hide a nervous reaction. ‘I heard it in connection with the Western attitude towards the Chinese . . . You know, it reminds me of the phrase “Yellow Fever” . . . it makes me think of disease, something that has to be stamped out, cured—something formidable, dreadful . . .’ (He had looked at me slyly, winking his eye, and I had been shocked to realize that he had been referring to the two million Chinese who lived in his country and who were widely hated!)

He would send his children to European schools only after they had taken their B.A. degrees. ‘By that time their characters will have been formed and they can resist the bad influences of the West much better.’

His people re-named many of the towns, cities, and mountains after the Dutch had been driven out. 'After all, the country belonged to us.'

The United Nations cannot stop war as it is now set up. The big powers have too much influence. The United Nations can postpone war but not stop it.

Indonesians, he feels, cannot conceive of Europe. 'Our people think that Europeans live more or less as we do. But, of course, European standards of living are much higher.'

European workers felt superior to the Russians and never wanted to identify themselves with the Russian Revolution. Lenin was smart to appeal to the Asians. 'But one must not think that the idea of Communism is new to us. What impressed us about Communism was its technique of struggle, organization—its methods. We borrow a lot of those ideas, but we use them in our way. With us land has always been communal. For example, China has always had large collectives in terms of large families . . .'

In his country, he says, there is a conflict between the younger and the older generations; the older generation is more dependable than the younger. 'Our youth has never known anything but war and revolution. They've lived in anarchy. The older people have the habit of work and they make the best administrators in our country at the present time. We made a revolution and now our revolutionists are unemployed and they turn bandit. We don't know what to do with them.'

'I want to see my country industrialized, but too much of it is bad. What I would like to save in my country's culture? We don't have a national culture yet; we have many cultures. We are trying to find a culture.'

'There is no country in the West that I'd like to see my country resemble.

'The biggest event of the twentieth century was the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1905. It was the beginning of the liberation of the Asian mind . . . Social and political change comes through economic factors. The greatest impact that the West has made upon Asia was in the form of gunpowder. Trade comes next.

'There are no great men in the world today.

'Education should teach men to live together . . . That's why we got rid of the Dutch. They didn't belong in our country, so we drove them out. We didn't have any ideas or feelings beyond just getting rid of them.'

What I had read in books, what I'd seen in the daily press told me that I had touched the real, contemporary Asia . . . What struck me first of all in this student's attitude was his ready acceptance of reality, the 'given' in his environment; he was quite content to work and struggle with what was at hand. To him reality was what it 'seemed' to be, and he was determined to grasp hold of it and follow its processes and try to mould them in the direction that he desired. He knew that his attitude was carrying the day in Asia, and he felt that he was preparing himself to enter a world whose lines of battle had been mapped out by his revolutionary predecessors. He spoke with that non-chalant confidence that betokened a conviction that, though hostile Westerners might brand his words as mere chatter, he knew that his words were the stuff of reality for hundreds of millions of his fellow Asians . . .

He impressed me as having the feeling that, though his government had taken power, the fight was not over; the objective situation about him might spell freedom, but his

subjective issues were still unresolved. (That was why he said that there were 'several' cultures in his country, and not a national culture.) He had escaped a world that he did not want, but he did not know what kind of a world he did want. There was in him a fund of passion which he had to spend somehow, someway . . . The world was a problem to him, and he was a problem to himself. His reactions were strong but not simple, though, had he been pushed, I suspect that he would have modestly described himself as a simple man . . .

No missionary had tampered with his Moslem beliefs and he was, therefore, outside of the Western world, objective about it in a way that no Jew, Gipsy, or refugee could ever be; he could hate, that is, he could reason passionately towards the aim of destroying a loathsome enemy.

He was totalitarian-minded, but without the buttress of modern Communist or Fascist ideology; he did not need any, for his totalitarian outlook was born of his religious convictions. Allah was his dictator. Hence, preachments against the separation of church and state, for the liberty of the individual, sounded like so much alien, diabolical propaganda to his ears. But he was sophisticated; he met arguments directed against his beliefs with a smile. He knew both East and West, without really believing in either of them. There was another and other world that he and his kind had to create.

Personal relations were not important factors to him; his affective identifications were with nations, movements, religions, cultures, races . . . Personal insults meant nothing; only when those aims in which he fondly believed were maligned or threatened did he react with passion.

Racially, the Dutch had put him through the mill, and

an element of iron was already deep in his heart. Confronting whites, he would have bent a million times, but he would never have broken. He was willing and ready to die for what he felt to be the value of himself, that is, his sense of dignity . . . His people's inferiority rankled in him, and he passionately longed to see his country industrialized. But such a longing was not related to the benefits of industrialization *per se*. To him industrialization was a means, the only one he knew, to hoist the West off of his back. Of Western values he wanted none.

Great men? There were no such things. How could there be, when he and his kind were suffering . . .? The aim of education? Ah, he was true here . . . 'That's why we got rid of the Dutch,' he told me. His eyes had shone as he had shot that bolt home. *He meant that the West had been stupid and had taught him enough to make him know that the West was his enemy!*

In the morning's light I stared at the tilting olive groves on the Spanish mountainsides; the train jolted towards Madrid . . . I frowned, trying to judge just what co-efficient I could have given him as a representative of Asian reactions . . .

The next and last Asian subject had been a young journalist from Pakistan. He had been eloquent, bitter, with a fund of fire smouldering in his heart. Like all uprooted Asians, talking had seemed with him a compulsion; it had been as though he had felt that talking would have helped him to find answers to questions that were plaguing him . . . He had spoken in quick, clipped, tense tones . . .

Born in a small town, he'd been educated by missionaries, had also attended European schools. With a wry smile, he called himself a Christian. He had grown up in a home

that had a mixture of Christian and Hindu influences. 'Religiously, I'm really nothing,' he confessed. 'But among my people at home I can't own to that.'

'Should the state sponsor religion? No!' he snapped. 'Let religion be a private affair. The Christian religion helped the British to gain power. Christianity divided my country, sundered an already greatly sundered people. The Christian religion, as it operated among us, was a political instrument, an instrument used by the West to rule my country. I was born in the Christian faith, but I feel that that faith was used against me and my country.'

His father was educated in the United States and returned to Pakistan with a heightened political consciousness; so, as a young baby, he breathed an atmosphere of political discussions that raged in his home. He learned early that he was a member of a subject nation and race. While still in his teens, he participated in the liberation movement of his country, but he has not served any time as a political prisoner. He refused to serve in the British Army.

Now that Pakistan is free, he does not feel that his country has an enemy. He has attended international conferences. 'But I won't tell you how many and I won't identify them. I don't want any country to refuse me a visa. One must be careful these days, you know.'

'The Asian-African Conference will be a great thing. In the past, the West always took the lead; now it is time for Asia and Africa to lead mankind. We have been objects; now we can be subjects.'

He has travelled and read widely; he does not feel that there are any hard and fast racial lines in the world and he is not in favour of any geographical limitations upon where people should dwell, despite the fact that he has

felt racial hostility from whites. He has many white friends but he feels that they hold towards him patronizing attitudes which imply: 'We are white and we showed you the way.' He feels that such attitudes are traditional with whites. 'The impact of the West was to awaken me, to make me feel the ways and values and manners of both worlds, the East and the West. We Easterners are more conscious of these things than the Westerners,' he says. The West has made the Easterner feel a sense of shame, and this shame is very widespread and is really an inferiority feeling that finds expression in such books as *Mother India*. Such cultural expressions seem to him an attempt on the part of his people to defend themselves against the shame-engendering impact of the West.

He encountered the word 'lynch' in reading British and American periodicals; he met 'Yellow Peril', 'nigger', and 'White Man's Burden' in a like manner. When he was a child in India the British called him nigger. (He is as dark as a Negro.) 'The only way to eliminate racism is to eliminate imperialism. The structure of imperialism means racism; the two are one thing. Racism is an instrument of the West, an instrument used to control Asia and Africa.'

He feels that the only way for his country to become free of the West is to industrialize, but he is afraid of too much industrialization. 'The one item I value most in my culture is religion for the masses; we can keep religion for the people if we don't industrialize too much.'

There is no comparison, in his mind, between the living standards of his country and the Western countries. 'We are far, *far* behind,' he said sadly, shaking his head.

In the past the racial purity of his family blood was very important to him, but he has changed his mind about all that now. 'I've seen too many alien lands and alien people. And the West has used that idea about blood to divide us. Definitely, I'd not support any legislation to regulate marriage between the races. I look at any idea that seeks, for whatever reason, to divide us with distrust.'

Would he ever marry a European woman? 'No!' he exploded bitterly. 'Why should I do that, after the way they regard me?'

He was ambivalent about the value of a Western education; he felt that it was necessary for him and his generation to learn Western values and methods to aid them in liberating their country, but now that his country was free, he'd want the next generation to learn more about their own values. He would want his children to learn about the West, but from an entirely different point of view than the one that was taught him.

He feels strongly that the new Asian and African nations should act, for the time being, as a racial and political bloc. 'This should happen until a balance has been achieved,' he says.

Because he feels that the West has striven to erect an *élite* as an instrument of rule in subject countries, he has deliberately kept close contact with the common people of his land. He speaks his native tongue fluently. During British rule, there was a 'native' and European quarter in the city in which he lived; his father was a civil servant and it enabled him to move and live in both worlds.

He is sensitive about the West's description of the high

rate of illiteracy in his country; he feels that these European standards are unfair to the quick intelligence of his people. 'We are judged entirely in terms of British standards,' he complains.

His people quickly renamed many towns, mountains, etc., when the British left.

He feels that the relations between the new countries of Asia and Africa are very good, except for those countries dominated by Western capital. He cites Siam as an example of such a country. He admits that religious tensions exist between the new countries, but he has no idea about how these tensions could be lessened. 'All intelligent Asians now know that the Western white man is praying for us to fight among ourselves, and that we'll never do,' he declares. 'Fighting among ourselves is the white man's only chance of getting back. We're closing ranks. The white man will be disappointed.'

To him the colonial problem is the most urgent and important thing on the international scene. 'I agree with Nehru,' he says. 'Colonialism and not Communism is the main danger. Get rid of colonies and you'll not have a trend towards Communism. Russia was in effect a colony when she went Communist. The American thesis is short-sighted and unhistorical. The next explosion of Communism will come out of some colony . . . I distrust anybody's policy that is based on Communism as the main danger; it is a dishonest policy; if it is not, then it's worse, because it's stupid.'

To him the United Nations is an instrument of United States foreign policy; it won't succeed, he thinks, in preventing war. The Asian and African nations have not enough authority and influence in that body. He is con-

vinced that the white nations of the West act as a racial and political bloc even in and through the United Nations. . . .

Russia pretends to belong to Asia in order to win the sympathy of the Asian people. Lenin's call to Asia was realistic. 'But we would have risen without the Communists.'

The West calls some nations 'coloured' in order to impose a separation between the dominator and the dominated. A Leftist is someone with Russian Communist sympathies; a Rightist is a propagator of imperialism.

He does not feel that any nation is ever justified in using the atom or hydrogen bomb as a military weapon.

His country urgently needs factory and farm equipment from the West. 'But we won't take these needed items in exchange for granting political concessions. We are alert that the West tries to gain influence by such means. We must get what we need from the West in the course of normal trade. We'd rather suffer than let the West steal back in that way.'

In general all state power should be derived from the people. 'But I suspect all phrases like "democratic opinion" and "democratic institutions"; too many people have been hoodwinked and enslaved by those slogans. I say, Live and Let Live. That's simple and honest.'

The state should organize trade unions for workers; he wants a democratic government in his country; he feels that social and political change comes through economic forces . . . There are no outright secret societies in his country; there are political groups which wear a religious guise. A classless society in an economic sense is definitely possible.

The older men lead in his country and the younger men follow. If his country were fully industrialized, he would want it to resemble Sweden or Switzerland. To him the greatest effect of the West upon his country was the bare fact of occupation.

A great man is a man concerned about mankind. Gandhi was such a man . . . The aim of education should be to create a greater understanding between peoples. The word 'civilization' means to him big cities, comfort, fine cars, movies . . .

Europe, in his opinion, has 'had' it. The European working class was selfish and felt itself too superior to heed the meaning of the Russian Revolution, felt no sense of identity with it. The liberation of Asian nations is more important than revolution. 'The Africans should take help from anywhere, if that help will enable them to build free nations.'

To him the removal of oppressive conditions does not necessarily make men happy.

He feels that some culture should lead the masses of the world in establishing a universal humanism and that Buddhist cultures can do this for mankind.

I lifted my eyes; the pastel-coloured apartment buildings of Madrid were flashing past. I sighed.

By far, this Pakistan journalist had disclosed the deepest chasm between East and West that I had yet come across. His bitterness had been edged directly by his contact with missionaries. He felt that he had to rebel twice as passionately against the West to overcome 'alien' influences lingering in him. Indeed, his most curious attitude involved religion: he was willing to allow religion to exist in his country in the future, but not for himself, he wanted the *masses* to

believe. He feared a too-drastic industrialization of his country would result in those masses' lives being stripped of tradition and meaning as his had been. If he were restless, how much more would be the illiterate millions when cast into the void . . . ?

It was clear to me that the East held by the West as a fond image does not exist any more; indeed, the classical conception of the East is dead even for the Easterner . . . He lives in his world, but he does not believe in it any longer; he holds on to its values with too much self-consciousness to live by them. In fact, his pretentious clinging to those old values signifies that he is trying to save face. This Pakistan journalist knew in his heart that the West had been irrevocably triumphant in its destruction of his culture, but he insisted that when he embraced a new way of life he was going to do so on his own terms, with no monitoring or overlordship from Westerners.

I was discovering that this Asian *élite* was, in many ways, more Western than the West, their Westernness consisting in their having been made to break with the past in a manner that but few Westerners could possibly do. The *élite* of the East was now the restless, the changeable, the critical . . . It would be naïve to suppose that this journalist, having broken with the past, would now proceed to try to build a world that would be a duplicate of ours, and he could no more know the kind of world that he wanted to build than we knew when we started building ours.

Unless it was brought pointedly to his attention, the average white Westerner could never suspect how emotionally charged the Asian really was, how chronic his state of perturbation. The centuries-long dominance—

military, political, religious, and economic—of the West over Asia had purged the Asian outlook of its naturalness and innocence. While the European, when he was in Asia as an administrator or businessman, did not regard the Asian as his enemy, the Asian almost inevitably looked upon the European as his prime antagonist.

The journalist's vehement objection to marrying a white woman was not based upon a fear of adulterating his family blood stream; it was a matter of hot pride. The West had kept their women out of reach, and he would prove, by spurning such women, that he did not react to them, did not want them. . . .

Believing that the removal of oppressive conditions does not make men happy, he would not perhaps resort to a violent attempt at overthrowing what he felt to be oppressive conditions . . . Yet his disinherited state makes him expect an overall, universal culture; he dreams of men like Gandhi banishing the conditions that make for diversity and establishing unity . . .

The reactions that I had been able to gather could not possibly describe Asian reality; the questions that I had posed had not been designed to elicit that. But those replies did, to some degree, illuminate that narrow zone where East met West, and that zone was hot and disturbed.

The first general conclusion that could be drawn was that not one Asian had taken pains to defend that most sacred of all Western values: property.

The second conclusion: to justify his dominance, the European had sought to make his superiority seem historically natural; he had cited examples of the cruelties of Asians and Africans to one another to show how his

long control over Asian and African destinies was merely what man had always done to man. What the European generally overlooked in his attempts at self-justification was that the Asian and African had indeed been cruel to one another but that they had practised their barbarities and brutalities within the confines of common cultures and religions which even the victims, in some measure, shared.

The trampling by a powerful West upon the traditional and customary Asian and African cultures, cultures sacred and beyond rational dispute, left vast populations at the mercy of financial and commercial relations which compounded the confusion in Asian and African minds. Attempts on the part of the sundered and atomized 'coloureds' to reconstitute their lives, to regain that poise and balance that reigned before the coming of the white man, were regarded as a warlike threat by the powers originally responsible for the atomization of the customs and traditions. Present Asian and African mass movements were the frantic efforts on the part of more than one and a half thousand million human beings to reorganize their lives . . .

Still another and, to the Western mind, somewhat baffling trait emerged from these Asian responses. There seemed to be in their consciousness a kind of instinct (I can't find a better word!) towards hierarchy, towards social collectivities of an organic nature. In contrast to the Western feeling that education was an instrument to enable the individual to become free, to stand alone, the Asian felt that education was to bind men together. Underlying most Asian tenets was a hunger for a strong leadership, for authority, for a sacred 'head' towards which all eyes could turn for

guidance and final sanction. The Asian seemed to have a 'picture' of life and wanted to find out where and how he fitted into that 'picture'. He sought no separate, unique, or individual destiny. This propensity towards the organically collective might be the residue from his past family, cultural, or religious conditioning, or a reflection of it; it's hard to tell . . . In any case, it certainly propelled him, irrespective of ideology, towards those collectivistic visions emanating from Peking and Moscow . . . And all the fervid adjurations of Washington, London, or Paris, to strive for individual glory and achievement left him cold and suspicious. And past colonial experience made him feel that unity with his own kind, the only strength he could visualize, was being threatened when he was asked to follow the lead of Western individualism.

To the Asian mind industrialization was not a project whose growth came with time, but a dogma in a religion, something to be experienced here and now with emotionally charged words: 'race' was no longer a simple designation, non-scientific, of a people and their physiological differences, but an instrument of subjugation, a badge of shame, a burning and concrete fact that was proved instantly by the colour of one's skin . . . Religion was no longer a delicate relationship of a people to the world in which they lived, a relationship wrought through centuries and embodied in ritual and ceremony, but a proof of one's humanity, something to defend and cling to (even if one did not believe in it!) passionately, for the sake of one's pride, to redress the balance in the scales of self-esteem.

That elementary instinct that had made man conquer his environment, that right to name the items that surround one, was eagerly seized upon again as soon as the

'white invader' had gone; then, like a child, he walked about his domain and touched his old playthings and called them again by the names that his father and his father's father had called them.

Rendered psychologically uncertain as to motive, the uprooted Easterner did everything self-consciously, watching himself as it were. Behaviour was spontaneous only when passionate action lifted him to the plane of self-forgetfulness. Hence, to feel a thing deeply made that thing the worthwhile thing to do, indeed, made it the right thing to do. He felt that history now coincided with his feelings, for he knew that what he did was now making history; he might be right or wrong, but what he did would count historically for good or ill. He could not lose, really. A sort of depersonalization took place in his thinking, and this buttressed his personality towards an attitude of irresponsibility. Worlds of infinite possibility opened up before the eyes of the new, young Asians and Africans and they felt as gods . . .

In Madrid, on Easter Sunday, I boarded a TWA Constellation for Rome where I made connections with a KLM Cairo-bound plane. I was heartened when a batch of French newspapermen hailed me. They were Bandung-bound and had the latest news.

Through the hot night we flew high over Africa, and Cairo was but a far-flung lake of shimmering lights when the plane landed for passengers and refuelling. I heard an explosion of the French language; I turned my head and saw red-fezzed North Africans from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia climbing aboard: revolutionaries and nation-

alists from the turbulent areas of French rule along the life line of Western European imperialism. . . . I told myself: There's gonna be a hot time in old Bandung . . . I studied the newcomers: they were a hotly nervous lot, tense, talkative. As the Constellation roared into the dark towards teeming Asia, I heard excited voices discussing Palestine.

'No matter what they do, they won't be able to keep the Jews off that agenda,' a man said.

'Whether they let us raise the question of Jewish aggression or not, we are going to raise it!' another man shouted. 'Their crimes will not be covered up—'

'The Jews are the greatest racists on earth and I'll prove it!' a dark-faced man with a thin moustache shouted above the roar of the plane's four engines.

He reached above his head and pulled down his brief case; from its fat bulk he withdrew a stack of photos which he began passing round. A batch was shoved into my hands and I glanced at them.

'What are these?' I asked.

'Photos of Arab refugees driven by Jews out of their homes!' he said. 'There are nine hundred thousand of them, homeless, starving . . .'

'Are you a delegate to the Asian-African Conference?' I asked him.

'No. I'm a journalist.'

'Is Palestine coming up for discussion at Bandung?' I asked.

'We are going to try to raise it,' he swore. 'The world must know what has been done! It's our duty to make the world know . . .'

I leafed through the bundle of photos; they were anthen-

tic, grim, showing long lines of men, women, and children marching barefooted and half-naked over desert sands, depicting babies sleeping without shelter, revealing human beings living like animals. I peered up into the face of the journalist; his eyes were unblinking, hot, fanatic. This man was religious. It was strange how, the moment I left the dry, impersonal, abstract world of the West, I encountered at once: *religion* . . . And it was a passionate, unyielding religion, feeding on itself, sufficient unto itself. And the Jews had been spurred by religious dreams to build a state in Palestine. . . . Irrationalism meeting irrationalism . . . Though the conversation about the alleged aggression of the Jews in Palestine raged up and down the aisles of the plane, I could hear but little of it; all I could make out was that the Jews could come under sharp and bitter attack at Bandung, and that they had enemies who had a case and knew how to present that case at the bar of world opinion . . . I recalled that six million Jews had been gassed, hounded, slaughtered, and burned by German Hitlerites, and I knew that that people, hapless and haunted, had yet more suffering and trials to bear in this world.

Later that evening (or rather morning), before the plane landed at Baghdad, I got into conversation with a shy young man who had Oriental features. He turned out to be Indonesian, a student returning from Holland. He had spent four years studying sociology in Leiden.

'You're going to find your newly gained knowledge useful,' I told him.

'Yes,' he said. 'My country is very backward.'

'Do you have a large bourgeois class among the Indonesians?' I asked him.

Until that moment he had not asked who I was; now mental pain flickered over his sharp, brown face.

'You are an American?' he asked me.

'Yes.'

'Negro?'

'Yes.'

He relaxed. I was to get to know that reaction very well. The Asian had many truths to tell. He had one truth for the British, one for the Dutch, one for white Americans, and still another and a special kind of rueful truth for American Negroes, who shared a background of racial experience that made them akin to the Asian.

'No. We have no rich class among our people,' he said. 'We have no bourgeois to knock over.'

'But in a nation of eighty million people, somebody has all the money. The Dutch are gone. Now who has the money?'

He stared at me with a strange, hard smile on his lips.

'For the *time being*, the Chinese have all the money,' he said.

In his words I caught echoes of hate and a determination to have done with the two million Chinese of dual nationality who lived in his country. All you had to do was to touch an Asian, and out spewed hate, bitterness, and a long-nursed desire for revenge.

'How did you enjoy your stay in Holland?' I asked.

'I didn't,' he said, and he would not look at me.

He was anti-Western, all right. And I wondered why Western nations insisted upon bringing these boys to their universities . . . The young man I looked at was neither Eastern or Western; he had been torn from his warm, communal Eastern environment and had been educated

in a tight-laced, puritanical Teutonic environment which he could not love or accept. Where would he fit in now, being a stranger to both worlds . . . ?

High up in the skies of Asia, I lost track of time; day skies alternated with night skies and I cat-napped when I could. We landed briefly at Karachi and Sikhs mounted the plane; they had bushy black beards, Oxford accents, and they sat together in a knot. Black silken cords undercut their jaws and held black silken skull caps tightly to their heads. Wherever I looked in Asia I saw signs or symbols of religion and it made me silent. There is nothing that can be said when one faces men in whom there is a total mobilization of all the irrational forces of the human personality to a point of organized militancy . . . It was rapidly dawning upon me that if the men of the West were political animals, then the men of the East were religious animals . . .

It was night when we landed in Calcutta, and sleepiness made the airport a blur. Hindus entered the plane; they wore Western clothes and seemed urbanized . . . Groggy from lack of sleep, I took Nembutal and did not awaken until the plane jolted me, landing in Bangkok; it was morning and Japanese and American newsmen swarmed aboard, chatting, their eyes puffy from lack of sleep. While the plane was on the ground, I stared at throngs of barefooted men who wore orange-coloured robes; they were Buddhists and were making a pilgrimage. Here religion came before all else . . .

Aloft again, I got into conversation with a young Japanese newspaperman. Despite his bookish English, he made me understand that he was terribly interested in Africa.

'We know nothing about Africa in Japan,' he said. 'Yet Africa is a vast continent.'

'Even we of the West know but little of certain parts of Africa,' I told him. I recommended some titles for him to read.

'What about this Belgian Congo?' he asked.

'I can't tell you a thing,' I said. 'I've never been there and I've never in my life met a man from the Belgian Congo.'

'Why?'

'The Belgians do not allow them out,' I informed him. He stared and fell silent.

'What will be Japan's role at this conference?' I asked him.

'Our position is very delicate,' he murmured.

Yes; the Asian-African Conference was the kind of get-together that the Japanese had undoubtedly once dreamed of holding . . . The most Westernized and industrialized of all the Asian peoples, they must have felt that they were eating humble pie indeed to come and sit down with Burmese and Ceylonese and Indonesians . . .

We were high over the jungles of Malaya, and political discussions raged. Rumours were sorted out, accepted, abandoned. Was it true that the Japanese were going to offer a public apology for their role in World War II? Was Sir John of Ceylon going to carry the ball for the West? Was a Peking-Delhi-Cairo Axis forming? Were the Moroccans and the Tunisians and the Algerians uniting as a bloc against France? Would anyone from South Africa be at the conference to report on the racial tensions there? Would Red China launch an attempt to capture the offshore islands during the conference? What the

hell did Nehru think he was doing flirting with Communist China's Chou En-lai? The delegations from the Philippines, from Iraq, from Syria would sound the call for freedom, would they not? Would Red China take advantage of the conference and use it as a propaganda tribunal? A group of American newspapermen had made a list of all the delegates going to Bandung and had checked them all off according to their political leanings and had come to the conclusion that the West would emerge victorious from its clash with China's evil genius, Chou En-lai . . . I was baffled. Were we going to a football game?

These men, affable and relaxed, representing some of the world's biggest and most powerful news-gathering agencies, knew less, perhaps, than even I about what was going on. To them Bandung was a contest of personalities. I soon realized that American newsmen had at least two grave disabilities in trying to grasp what was happening: one, they had no philosophy of history with which to understand Bandung; two, they were trying to understand actions initiated by someone else and they could not quite grasp the nature of the terms in which those actions were being projected . . .

In fact, the comments of the world's press upon the Asian-African Conference had been simply astonishing. From an English daily had come the following tidbit, written by one Sefton Delmer:

'They are holding a jamboree in the sun-drenched Indonesian hill town of Bandung next month. It is a political jamboree, an anti-Colonial gathering of Asian and African nations. What a pity President Sukarno and the Indonesian Government are being so very exclusive and colour conscious about it!'

This was the beginning of a press tirade against the conference; the sponsoring powers had not invited any white Western powers, and the above writer seemed to have forgotten that for centuries Asian and African nations had watched in helpless silence while white powers had gathered, discussed and disposed of the destinies of Asian and African peoples—gatherings in which no Asian or African had ever had any say. The writer was protesting that the Asians and Africans were acting as the West had acted, had learned their lessons too well!

Two eminent Australians, Dr John W. Burton, former Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, and Prof. Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, holder of the Chair of Far Eastern History at the Australian National University, Canberra, issued a statement that reflected Australia's dilemma in confronting the reverse of the racial policy she had so long and proudly practised in the Pacific. In part the statement declared:

'It is our view that Australia should have been invited to this conference and should have accepted; and should on all future occasions be invited and attend.'

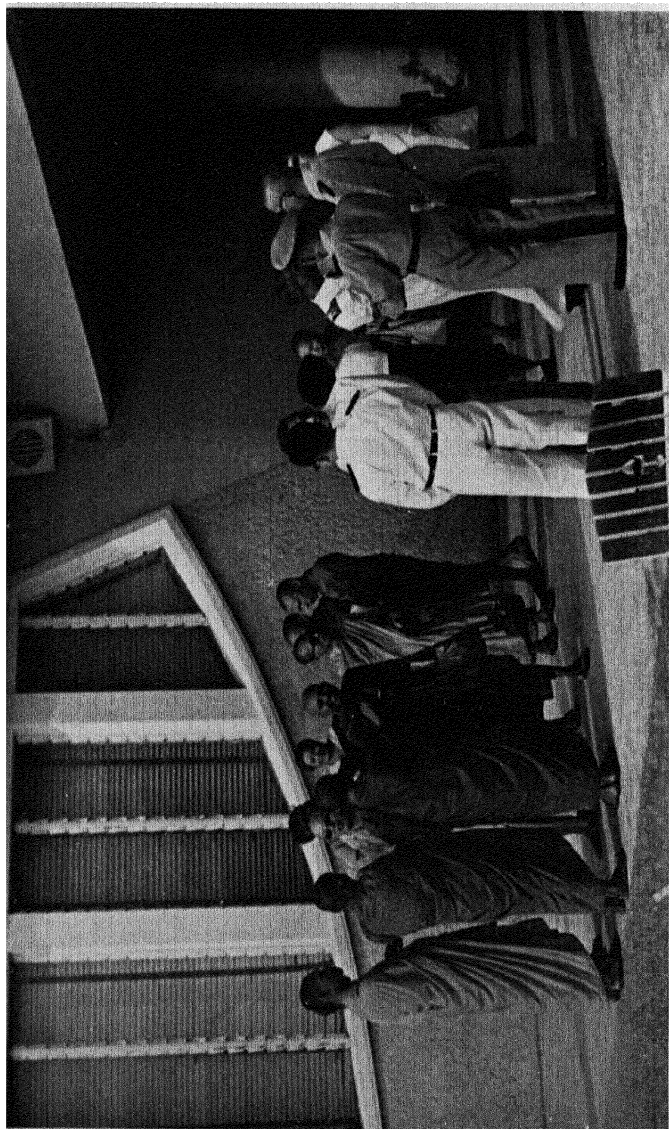
Yet most of the men who would attend the Bandung meeting could not have been admitted to Australian soil solely on the basis of their colour and race; indeed, the mere presence of Australians and South Africans would have had an inhibiting and perhaps intimidating effect upon many of the Asian and African delegates who, above all, wanted to speak their minds freely and frankly among themselves.

The *Launceston Examiner* of Tasmania (Australia), December 30, 1954, gave vent to real fear when it stated:



Indonesia's President Sukarno addressing the opening sessions of the 29-nation Asian-African Conference that convened at Bandung, April 1955. Declared Sukarno: 'This is the first international conference of coloured peoples in the history of mankind.'

Photo: Richard Wright.



Buddhists on a pilgrimage . . . the air terminal at Bangkok. Leaving the western world, one sees religion dominating the landscape of Asia and Africa.
Photo: Richard Wright.

Decisions by the 'Colombo Premiers' are of deep significance to Australia and the Western world. Their invitation to twenty-five nations, including Communist China, but excluding all Western countries, to a conference in April, could be the beginning of an upsurge of racial hatreds against the West. The decision to support Indonesia in its claim for sovereignty over West New Guinea, though not unexpected, should show Australians where the sympathies of most of their neighbours lie.

Speculation about the role of Red China was voiced on December 28, 1954, by the *Delhi Times of India*. It stated :

. . . Much will depend on whether Peking considers itself more Asian than Communist or vice versa. If the Asian-African Conference accomplishes nothing more than reveal to what extent the Communist is willing to co-operate with its Asian neighbours and Arab States, it will be a worthy attempt on behalf of Asian solidarity. Peking will then be given an opportunity to establish its bona fides and if possible to confound those sceptics who feel that, by the fact of being Communist, China is nearer to its fellow Communist States in Europe than to its Asian neighbours with which it has racial and cultural ties.

The *Globe and Mail* of Toronto, January 1, 1955, observed :

What can bind these scattered countries together? What is the common interest of Red China and Ethiopia, of the Philippines and Lebanon, to name four of the invited? The answer is plain. These Asian and African states, with few exceptions, recently were or still are dependencies. With no

exception whatever, they have a lower standard of living, measuring welfare by the distribution of material goods, than is enjoyed in other countries. This, of course, is obvious. What is significant about the call to Bandung is that the common plight of Asians and Africans has been recognized and proclaimed—in Asia.

Said *Newsweek* bluntly, January 1, 1955 :

‘Everybody knows what must come to pass between Asia and the West, the *yellow and the white*. It is imbecile folly for us to close our eyes to the inevitable . . . All the world understands that the gravest crisis in the destiny of the earth’s population is at hand . . .’

Western statesmen last week unhappily recalled these words of Kaiser Wilhelm II, popularizer of the phrase ‘Yellow Peril’. They could reflect that the one-time German emperor was right as rain—and wrong as sin. He was right in foreseeing a crisis that now threatens in a more virulent form than he envisaged—an Afro-Asian combination turned by Communists against the West. The problem, according to those who have to deal with it today and tomorrow, is to prevent its formation . . .

The *Christian Science Monitor* of Boston, January 23, 1955, summed up the meaning of the conference in terse phrases :

. . . The West is excluded. Emphasis is on the coloured nations of the world. And for Asia it means that at last the destiny of Asia is being determined in Asia, and not in Geneva, or Paris, or London, or Washington. Colonialism is out. Hands off is the word. Asia is free. This is perhaps the great historic event of our century.

Reflecting a feeling of long isolation, the *Burma Star* (London), January 29, 1955, declared :

The Afro-Asian conference is decidedly of vital necessity from the standpoint of many countries who have agreed to lend their participation. The least value it can have is a true forum of Afro-Asian opinion which does not always find its proper outlet in the United Nations and other world councils where Western political sway is indisputably in evidence.

On March 3, 1955, came an undisguised sneer from Portugal. Said *Diário Popular* of Lisbon :

... this spectacular conference is actually a kind of a vast whirl of panic, as happens in ant hills on the approach of some collective danger. Let us forget appearances and even the perturbing possibilities for our particular interests and let us face the problem of the West. It consists in calming that immense flock before it delivers itself up to bad shepherds and before it is too late to influence it.

On the same day, ten thousand miles distant, the *Times* of Manila, playing possum, asked in a voice whose studied naïveté did not ring true :

With the best will in the world it is difficult to understand what Premier Jawaharlal Nehru expects of the Afrasian conference at Bandung next April.

Said Walter Lippmann in the *Paris Herald Tribune* for March 1, 1955 :

The list of the states they did not invite makes it very

evident that this is no mere attempt to make a neutral bloc or a third force in between the giant military powers. Red China is no neutral and no third force. What this is, to put it plainly, is the most formidable and ambitious move yet made in this generation to apply the principle of Asia for the Asians.

The words that cut and hurt the Asian-African delegates most came from no less than the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. In a radio-television address in Washington on the 8th of March, 1955, he referred to the conference as follows :

Three of the Asian parties to the Pacific Charter, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand, may shortly be meeting with other Asian countries at a so-called Afro-Asian conference.

(This single phrase, 'so-called Afro-Asian conference', echoed and re-echoed at Bandung as proof of American contempt; and the people who called attention to it were not Communists . . .)

On March 13, 1955, the Central African Federation, which is affiliated with the British Commonwealth, decided not to participate in the mammoth conference. Speculation had it that since a white man, Sir Godfrey Huggins, was the Prime Minister, he could not possibly speak in the interests of his African constituents. His presence at Bandung would have been a curious spectacle, to say the least.

On March 25, 1955, this announcement came from New Delhi; it was published in the *New York Times*:

India will ask the conference of Asian-African nations to put the problem of nuclear weapons on its agenda.

Then, from an unknown quarter came sensational news that set off a frenzy of fear and speculation. On March 26, 1955, the *New York Times* carried the following item:

A significant change in policy and defence planning is under consideration here in the belief that Red China will begin its campaign to capture Matsu and Quemoy about the middle of April.

There is as yet no sign that President Eisenhower has decided to intervene militarily to prevent the capture of the islands.

On such a basis the United States would be committed to the use of precision atomic weapons against purely military targets even in a limited Far Eastern war.

The pending Asian-African conference began to loom more and more as a war council of the nations attending. The *New York Times*, March 27, 1955, quoted Senator Walter F. George, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as saying:

... some credence was being given to the possibility of a Communist attack after the Asian-African conference. He was not prepared to say, Senator George added, whether the United States would become involved.

Burma's Buddhist Premier U Nu sought to allay war fears in a *New York Times* article, March 27, 1955:

... Communist China was afraid that as soon as the United States bases in Asia were 'completed' an attack would be launched against the China mainland.

Premier U Nu said he had not met many leaders of the

United States but those he had talked with had told him of their fears of continued aggression from Peking.

Premier U Nu said he did not think the forthcoming Asian-African Conference was an 'anti-Western' meeting. But he made it clear that he thought some Western powers would take a verbal slamming on the issue of colonialism.

On March 28, 1955, William Humphreys analyzed Nehru's probable relation to Communism in the *Paris Herald Tribune* in the following words :

Mr Nehru spent ten days in Peking as the guest of Communist party leaders Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai, and on his return to India, November 2, he extolled his 'peace and progress' mission as 'an historic event certain to influence all of Asia'. Rumours of the conference then began to circulate.

Thus, when the idea of the Afro-Asian meeting was formally projected a few weeks later, it appeared to be a reasonable conclusion that Mr Nehru had set an international stage on which Red China would be presented as a peace-minded nation militarily intent only upon resisting United States' 'aggression'.

Behind all this frenzied speculation was, of course, something else. An American admiral, Carney by name, Chief of Naval Operations, predicted that the Chinese Communists were likely to attack Quemoy and Matsu in mid-April. On April 7, 1955, the *Manchester Guardian* reported :

In his opening remarks Admiral Carney said that the Chinese Communist leaders Mao and Chou had made a straightforward pitch on what they intend to do.

He went on :

'They have a series of unbroken successes and they are flushed with victory. They should feel safe in continuing to probe and they will probe. The first two things they will go after are the offshore islands. They can take Matsu and Quemoy from the Chinese Nationalists. It could be expensive for them but they will take the islands by expending enough. They probably will initiate the attack on Matsu in mid-April. The significance of the timing is that it would tie in with the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, Indonesia, from April 16 to 24. The all-out attack on Quemoy would be some weeks later than that on Matsu. The build-up around Matsu includes the air near Foochow.

'The attack on Matsu may begin on April 15 or later during the conference. A month later, maybe in May or June, they could launch an attack on Quemoy . . .

'If the decision is made to participate it should not be on a localized tactical basis. We have to carry the thing to a conclusion and find what will wreck the enemy's efforts. That involves enlargements far beyond that tactical area of Quemoy and Matsu. We have to engage China in an all-out war. If we go in with the restricted view we will find ourselves about to lose all of Asia.'

In the *Manchester Guardian*, April 13, 1955, Adlai Stevenson, leader of the Democratic Party in the United States, speaking in subtle, ironic tones, tried to draw attention to the essential horror involved in the whole discussion by asking a series of pointed questions :

Are the offshore islands essential to the security of the United States? Are they, indeed, even essential to the defence of Formosa—which all Americans have been agreed upon since President Truman sent the Seventh Fleet there five

years ago? Or is it, as the Secretary of Defence says, that the loss of Quemoy and Matsu would make no significant military difference?

Can they be defended without resort to nuclear weapons? If not, while I know we now have the means to incinerate, to burn up, much of living China, and quickly, are we prepared to use such weapons to defend islands so tenuously related to American security?

It should be remembered that these quotations fit into a real, concrete, historical context. These molten words, dealing with the incineration of continents, were related to a process that began directly after World War II when Western Europe, prostrate from Hitlerian domination, was anxious to stem the tide of Stalinist revolutions that were sweeping into Europe. America, leader of the West, then launched a campaign, the intensity of which it did not appreciate, to frighten the men of the Kremlin, and month after month that campaign kept up, flooding the world on all levels of communication. And it was successful, too successful; it not only scared and deterred Russian Communists, but it frightened the living daylights out of the human race. It was a campaign so fierce, so deadly, so unrelenting that it created precisely what is sought to defeat, that is, an organization of Asia and Africa around a Communist cell on a global scale: BANDUNG . . . The dialogue of events had reached a pitch that involved the totality of man on earth.

Such was the atmosphere, brooding, bitter, apprehensive, which greeted the projected conference. Everybody read into it his own fears; the conference loomed like a long-buried ghost rising from a muddy grave . . .

On the afternoon of April 12, we landed at Jakarta air-field, which was decorated with the flags of the twenty-nine nations attending the conference. As soon as I became entangled with the bureaucracy of Indonesian customs and immigration, I discovered a great deal of smiling good will but an appalling amount of inefficiency. The brown young men seemed at a loss as they fumbled with papers, searched about for rubber stamps. It was clear to me that these young men had not had much previous experience in administration; under Dutch rule few Indonesians did such work. Ten minutes sufficed to reveal the void left here by the much-vaunted Dutch imperialists.

The heat was like a Turkish bath; the humidity was higher than in the African jungle. I was met by P.E.N. club officials and Mochtar Lubis, editor of the *Indonesia Raya*, an independent Socialist daily. Lubis took me in tow, loaded my luggage into his car, and we nosed into the wide streets of a chaotic, Oriental city. Jakarta, like Accra in the Gold Coast of Africa, presents to Western eyes a commercial aspect, naked and immediate, that seems to swallow up the entire population in petty trade—men, women, and children . . . The spectator who is acquainted with colonial practice knows at once where this feverish activity comes from: one must sell to earn money to buy products shipped from Europe. Family relations have been replaced by factory and financial relations, and the resulting picture of brutal and direct commercial activity is of a nature unknown even in cities like London, New York, or Paris, where tradition, having survived through gradual transitions of one culture overlapping another, forming a

synthesis of stability, is still a force making for regularity and a degree of humanness in daily relations between people.

I passed those famous canals which the Dutch, for some inexplicable reason, had insisted upon digging here in this hot mudhole of a city. (Indeed, the site of Jakarta itself must have been chosen for its sheer utility as a port and with no thought of the health of the people who had to live in it.) I saw a young man squatting upon the bank of a canal, defecating in broad daylight into the canal's muddy, swirling water; I saw another, then another . . . Children used the canal for their water closet; then I saw a young woman washing clothes only a few yards from them . . . A young girl was bathing; she had a cloth around her middle and she was dipping water out of the canal and, holding the cloth out from her body, she poured the water over her covered breasts . . . A tiny boy was washing his teeth, dipping his toothbrush into the canal . . .

Lubis' car snaked forward through throngs of strange contraptions that resembled huge tricycles; they had one big wheel behind upon which was perched a native boy who sweated and pumped the pedals; in front were two smaller wheels and a seat large enough to accommodate two people.

'What is that thing?' I asked Lubis.

'That's our Indonesian taxicab,' Lubis explained. 'There are about forty thousand of them in the city. They are called *betjas*.'

'A sort of Indonesian rickshaw, eh?'

'Yes, and we are ashamed of them,' he confessed. 'Many Indonesians refuse to ride in them; it reminds them of imperialism . . . You understand? Brown or yellow men

hauling white men . . .' He sighed. 'A boy who works on one of those things gets ill after about two years. But we have no money to import taxis.'

'How much does a boy make a day driving one with his feet?'

'About ten rupiahs, or a dollar. He is required to have a licence, but he pays no taxes.'

Lubis' words made me wonder about the overall reality of his country.

'Say, just how many islands are there in this archipelago?'

'About fifteen thousand; but only about three thousand are inhabited.'

'And how large in area is the space covered by these islands?'

'Roughly, it is the size of the United States.'

'What about natural resources?'

'This nation is potentially the third richest on earth.'

'And what language do the people speak?'

'Indonesian,' he told me. 'But we have two hundred languages.' He worked his car through a crowd of Chinese children . . .

'There must be a strong central government to keep order in such far-flung islands and amid so many diverse peoples—'

'The government is weak,' Lubis told me. 'Bandits are everywhere. There are daily clashes between government troops and bandits.'

'That's a kind of civil war,' I said.

'Exactly,' he said.

'The literacy rate?'

'About 30 per cent.'

'Is education compulsory?'

'Well, the government wants to pass a law making education compulsory,' Lubis explained. 'But what would such a law mean? We don't have enough school buildings, enough teachers, enough school books.'

'Is it true that the Dutch used compulsory labour here during two hundred of the three hundred and fifty years that they held these islands; is that true?'

'Compulsory labour actually stopped here about fifteen years ago,' he said.

Lubis' dark facts clashed with the blinding bright sunshine. Jakarta is a vast, sprawling city, disordered, bustling, overcrowded. Wide ornate boulevards alternate with districts called *kampongs*, the equivalent of the African compound. These *kampongs* were formerly villages and the rapidly growing city swallowed them up; now Indonesian peasants still live in them within the modern city, following the ways and the manners of their forefathers, oblivious of the rage of alien ideology that circles about them. The Chinese section was a nightmare, overflowing with shops, stores, warehouses, and restaurants.

'How is the housing situation?' I asked Lubis.

'Desperate,' he said. 'Before the war, this city had four hundred thousand people. We now have about three million people jammed into it. People flock here for jobs, or because they are bored in their villages.'

'What's holding up the building of houses? I see that many houses here are made of bamboo. Why can't people build more houses like that?'

'It takes about fifty dollars worth of Western materials to build a house. And we have no dollars, no hard currency. We don't even have nails; we can't make them.'

'Before the coming of the Dutch, I bet these people had houses, maybe not modern houses, but houses . . .'

'That's true.'

'So the introduction of the Western way of life has not helped in the matter of housing?'

'No,' Lubis said, smiling ruefully.

'I'm not anti-Western,' I assured him. 'But can't a way be found to by-pass this kind of dependence upon the outside world? Can't Indonesia make nails, pipes, etc.?'

'No. Not yet.'

'What do you export?'

'Copra, tin, rubber . . .'

'And that does not give you enough foreign exchange?'

'No. And production is falling day by day. Our foreign exchange is less and less.'

'Why?'

'We are still fighting a revolution, nationalizing; there are strikes and much government control.'

'Why are the people doing that instead of re-building?'

'Sentiment, politics . . . They are trying to sweep out the last of Western influence. They have their own ideas about what they want.'

The car edged on through narrow streets. I noticed that the Indonesians seemed a delicate people, thin, small . . .

'What about health?' I asked Lubis.

'We have much malaria and yaws. Infant mortality is high—'

'And your population is falling?'

'No. Rising . . . We have much rice and the soil is rich.'

'How many doctors have you?'

'We have one doctor for about every seventy thousand people. We have fourteen hundred doctors for eighty million people.'

'And education?'

'It's out of control. The Dutch kept education from us and now the people believe in education like a religion . . . There is a vast thirst for learning. Universities are springing up everywhere, faster than they can be properly manned. The year the war broke out, we had two hundred and forty high school graduates. We had only ten Indonesians teaching in our high schools. Today nobody knows just what the figures are . . . The Dutch left us in the lurch and we had to start from scratch.'

It was a grim picture, yet quite typical. These conditions were the gift of three hundred and fifty years of Dutch rule.

'Just how is the national budget divided?' I asked Lubis.

'Well,' he said, 'we have about two million people on the pay roll. Soldiers, policemen, and hordes of government functionaries. The army and the government personnel take 70 per cent of our national budget. Education takes only 7 per cent.'

'From what you say, government is the biggest business here.'

'That's right,' Lubis said.

'A country in which men make careers and fortunes out of government is a sick country.'

'Right,' Lubis said.

He had been in America twice and now and then an American phrase crept into his speech.

'What about this so-called Communist menace I've

heard so much about? Word has it in Paris that the Communists are about to pull off a Prague coup here any minute, any hour—'

'No!' Lubis said. 'That's not true. We have Communists, and at the moment they hold the balance of power in the government. But they are not even our largest political party. The present government accepts the support of Communists. But don't forget that this country is 90 per cent Moslem and these people are not going Communist.'

'Who puts out the story that the country is almost in the hands of Communists?' I asked him.

'There are people who were once here and they want to come back,' he said tersely.

It was strange, but, in this age of swift communication, one had to travel thousands of miles to get a set of straight, simple facts. One of the greatest ironies of the twentieth century is that when communication has reached its zenith, when the human voice can encircle the globe in a matter of seconds, when man can project the image of his face thousands of miles, it is almost impossible to know with any degree of accuracy the truth of a political situation only a hundred miles distant! Propaganda jams the media of communication.

I was lodged in the home of an Indonesian engineer. Mr P. and his young wife were ardent nationalists, their home modern to the nth degree.

'What kind of an engineer are you, Mr P.?' I asked my host.

'I'm an oil man,' he answered.

'You got your training and experience in Europe?'

'My training I got in Europe,' he told me. 'But I'm

getting my experience now here in my country. You see, before the revolution, they would not hire me to do what I'm now doing—'

'You mean the Dutch?'

'Yes. Now I'm head of my department. It took a revolution to do that. Killing, fighting . . . I'm a major in the Indonesian Army. By nature, I hate war. But what is one to do? The Dutch attitude was that I was not and could never be intelligent enough to do what I'm now doing. So it was with men of my generation; so it was in all of the other sections of Indonesian life. If we had not fought the Dutch, we'd still be in slave-like conditions, not allowed to do anything.'

Mrs P. nodded her head affirmatively as her husband spoke. These people had been put through a hard school. Mr P. had spent sixteen years in Europe; he loved Europe, but—

'Your home is in a beautiful section of the city,' I told him.

'This used to be the European quarter,' he told me with a wry smile. 'The revolution gave me the right to live here.'

'How many engineers have you in Indonesia?' I asked him.

'About a hundred and sixty, forty of whom are in government service. The rest work for themselves, for they make about three times more than the ones who work for the government.'

'How will your country get through this bottleneck? You need articles, skills, technicians—you need many things from the Western industrial world. How will you get them?'

There was a silence. Mr P. looked at me and smiled wryly.

'I'm a technician,' he said slowly. 'So I know what we need. It's America or Russia. There's no middle ground.'

'Which do you choose?'

'I don't know,' he said.

'You can work for either side,' I reminded him. 'You are a technician.'

'I know,' he said.

'What about Russia?'

'I was in Europe during the war. I met many Communists. It's a dictatorship and it's hard.'

'And America?'

Mr P. sat staring at me silently.

'I've been in America, you know,' he said softly, smiling again.

'I didn't know that. For how long?'

'I was there for three months. I wanted to stay. I worked as an engineer. I lived in New York.'

'Did you go to Harlem?'

Mr P. looked at me without answering. His wife nudged him and said:

'Tell him, darling.'

'Mr Wright,' Mr P. began, looking off into the corners of the room, 'I never went to Harlem. Indeed, I never went out—'

'What do you mean? You had some racial experiences?'

'No. That's what I avoided. I was scared,' he said simply.

He was as dark as I was. I understood. He could not take it.

'I came from my job and stayed in my room,' he

explained. 'I never went anywhere. Every night I stayed in my room. Then I left.'

He had 'had' it. Fear had kept him from exposing himself to the experience of American life; the idea of what he would encounter had immobilized him, and he had given up without even trying . . .

After dinner Mr and Mrs P. took me for a tour of the city in their car. I noticed that the sidewalks were thronged with children who carried books under their arms. It was past ten o'clock.

'Where are those children going this time of night?' I asked.

'To school,' Mrs P. told me. 'We don't have enough schools, not enough teachers. So these children are going to the night shift.'

The suburbs of Jakarta are studded with lovely, newly built bungalows erected by the *nouveaux riches* from money gained in black market operations. There is no doubt that a new Indonesian middle class is rising and it is focusing attention, mostly unfavourably, upon itself.

'It's all wrong,' Mr P. said wearily. 'We made a revolution and the common people fought and died to drive out the Dutch. Now the common people are not getting benefits from that revolution. That's why today we are threatened with another revolution . . . Why should one part of our population get rich and the rest get poorer? We drove out the Dutch to build a good society, now we have a class of Indonesians who are acting more or less like the Dutch.'

'When was your Republic proclaimed?'

'In August, 1945.'

'And when did your people actually get control of the country?'

'In December, 1949.'

'And between 1945 and 1949?'

'There was much fighting, bitter fighting between us and the Dutch.'

'Now, just what is the present government?'

'We have a President, a Vice-President, a House of Representatives, and a Supreme Court.'

'But you have had no elections yet?'

'No. Elections are pending for November, 1955.'

'How, then, did the present government get into power?'

I asked him.

'That's a little complicated,' he said. 'On the 18th of August, 1945, after the Republic had been proclaimed, our Independence Preparatory Committee designated Sukarno as President of the Republic and Hatta as Vice-President . . . This committee was composed of outstanding leaders in all fields of Indonesian life. After full sovereignty was gained, the following bodies were welded into a House of Representatives: the Senate of the United States of Indonesia; the members of the Provisional Parliament of the United States of Indonesia; the members of the High Advisory Council of the Republic of Indonesia; and the Working Committee of the Provisional Parliament of the Republic of Indonesia . . . This House of Representatives has confirmed Sukarno as President and Hatta as Vice-President.'

'It's a little baby country,' I suggested to Mr P. with a smile.

He laughed and agreed:

'Yes. We are a baby country with many little childhood diseases.'

The next morning I got hold of a copy of the Provisional

Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and leafed through it. One could tell the past fears and sufferings of the people of Indonesia by what was emphasized in that Constitution.

It provided that all were 'entitled to equal protection against discrimination and against any incitement to such discrimination.' It stated explicitly: 'Slavery, the slave trade and bondage, and any actions in whatever form giving rise thereto are prohibited.' It declared: 'No one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.' One could feel the fear of men who had been seized and shipped off to exile in the following: 'No transgression or crime shall be made punishable by total forfeiture of the property of the offender.' One could feel the anxiety of men who had not been allowed to govern themselves in Article 15 of Section IV: 'No sentence may cause civic death or the loss of all civic rights.' The vast inequalities in the population left by Dutch rule prompted: 'Differences in social and legal needs of the various groups of the population shall be taken into consideration.' Then Section VI spells out in Article 38 a vague kind of socialism derived partly from ideology and partly from the tenets of the Moslem religion: 'The national economy shall be organized on a co-operative basis. Branches of production of importance to the State and which vitally affect the life of the people, shall be controlled by the State. Land and water and natural riches contained therein shall be controlled by the State and used for the maximum prosperity of the people.' Article 38 says: 'The family is entitled to protection by society and the State. The State shall provide for the needs of the poor and waifs.' In Article 40 one finds: 'The authorities shall promote the

spiritual and physical development of the people. The authorities shall in particular aim at the speediest possible abolition of illiteracy. Freedom of religion and speech are guaranteed.' It was a brave document filled with pathos.

I hired a *betja* and, perched upon a rickety seat, spent an afternoon looking the city over. I noticed that each home in the bourgeois section kept huge, vicious dogs; one move on the part of a stranger created a loud snarling and barking. These dogs, I was told, defended the inhabitants against the all-too-frequent visits of bandits who infested near-by mountains and suburbs. Try as I could, I was never able to resolve the mystery of the Indonesian bandit. One person would tell me that the bandits were just lawless gangs; another would swear that they were Communists; yet another would claim that they were Moslems who did not like the Communist participation in the present government; still others said that they were youths who had fought in the revolution and had never learned to work and were living in the only manner known to them. I suspected that the bandits were all of this, plus hordes of young men who were, in the daytime, respectable wage earners and who found it impossible to make ends meet in a nation where the government printing presses were grinding out a whirlwind of all-but-worthless paper money; I suspected that during the night-time a good part of the population, resentful of the *status quo*, took to the by-ways with guns to get what they felt society owed them . . . As in most countries gripped by inflation, one saw vast numbers of bureaucrats searching for contraband and one wondered whether, if those same bureaucrats had been put to work producing commodities, the necessity for searching for contraband would have obtained . . .? In any case, large areas of Java

and Sumatra were overrun with bandits and smugglers, and it was not safe to drive upon the highways after dark.

Next day I called upon one of the best known Indonesian politicians, Sutan Sjahrir, Socialist, patriot, intellectual, and one of the country's ablest students of Western political thought. Unlike many other opportunistic Indonesian politicians, Sjahrir had absolutely refused to collaborate in any form with the Japanese invaders. He is a short man, plump, affable, and about forty-five years of age. Educated in Holland, he is the idol of a considerable section of the younger generation. He was the first Premier of Indonesia, and it was he who conducted most of the delicate negotiations with the Dutch, who were hankering to regain their control over the potentially third richest nation on earth. It was this same modest, smiling Sjahrir who presented Indonesia's case before the United Nations, and he convinced that august body of the Indonesians' right to govern themselves.

'What is being done to organize the energies of the people to rebuild the nation?' I asked him.

He smiled, shot me a quick glance, and then answered in a manner that left no doubt of his courage to be truthful:

'We have not got that far yet.'

'What's being done about housing?' I asked.

He laughed and stared at me. Then he spoke in a quiet, chuckling tone:

'The government's building houses; they call them "workers' houses". But they turn out to be ornate ministries. There's practically no building of houses for poor people.'

'Many people are blaming the present attitude of Indo-

nesians upon the Japanese. What was the attitude of the Indonesians towards the Japanese?"

'The Japanese were not loved here,' he told me quietly. 'We killed more Japanese than we did Dutch. One of the most decisive factors in the Indonesians' winning of independence is something that is not well known abroad, not at all. And that was how the Dutch behaved when the Japanese came in. They caved in; the Dutch were scared; they bowed; they wept; they begged; they all but crawled . . . And we Indonesians said to ourselves: "If the Dutch are that scared of the Japanese, then why ought we be scared of the Dutch?" Dutch fear of the Japanese was a powerful psychological element in our resolve to fight the Dutch for our freedom.'

Sjahir told me that the Dutch 'could dish it out, but that they could not take it.' When released from the notorious Japanese internment camps, the Dutch, completely lacking in imagination, and looking like wretches, went back to the homes in which they had once lived and to the factories that they had once managed and were amazed to find that the Indonesians had taken over . . . They demanded their homes, their factories, and their jobs back and were stunned when no one obeyed them.

'Will you be at the conference at Bandung?' I asked him.

'No. I'm with the opposition, you know,' he said. Then he laughed and added: 'I don't want to embarrass the government.'

'Is there a Communist coup pending here?' I asked him.

'No!' he said flatly.

'Why is such an impression being created abroad?'

He laughed and did not answer.

I next asked Sjahrir if he considered himself a professional politician and he replied :

‘I suppose you could say that I am. I’ve never had any other job than that of fighting for my country in my life. The only steady employment I’ve ever had was when I was Prime Minister. Most of the other years of my life were spent either in exile or in prison.’

‘What about production?’ I asked, already surfeited with gloomy facts.

‘It’s dropping month by month,’ he admitted. ‘Things are not good.’

‘It’s politics,’ I suggested.

‘Yes; politics and too many parties,’ he confessed.

I respected Sjahrir. I felt that his heart was wedded to the cause of his country. We chatted for more than an hour, but he was affably cautious. He was one of the leading opposition men, and he ‘did not want to embarrass the government.’ In Europe it was rumoured that men like Sjahrir lived in daily fear of their lives; if that were true, then Sjahrir gave me no confirmation even when I asked him bluntly if he feared for his life. An hour’s friendly conversation is not enough time in which to get to know a man, and, when that man is an experienced politician, a man surrounded by enemies, an intellectual, one has to be careful in making hasty judgments. Sjahrir was sane, balanced, poised, yet I could not escape the impression that he was basically a *Western* Socialist, honest, fair, good-hearted, and filled with a love of freedom. But was he the man to tame the Indonesian tiger? Could he unite eighty million half-tribalized human beings, 70 per cent of whom were illiterate, most of whom were sunk either in a theistic

Moslem religion that had yet to bear the acid test of modern industrialization or in an animistic grasp of life that riveted the attention more upon the poetic than the practical aspects of existence? Were housing, health measures, finely spun concepts of freedom the implements that could spur a nation that had been for three hundred and fifty years under the iron heel of Dutch rule to an attitude of alert pragmatism? I had the feeling that he wanted to build soundly, solidly, yet the situation in which he found himself reeked of urgency; the people were not waiting for the government to build schools, they were creating them themselves; their loyalties were being bid for by America and China; the future and its shape were uncertain and the people felt that they had to choose *now*; the Constitution had not been implemented and a kind of civil war was going on against both Indonesian bandits and foreign capital . . . What would happen in the next few years would surely set the mould for the future of Indonesian life. Was not Sjahrir a man for a future time, when these basic problems had been solved? I could not imagine Sjahrir instilling in these millions a sense of their historic destiny . . . It would take other and special kind of men for that work.

That evening I inquired of my host, Mr P., what was there that one could do or see in Jakarta at night, and he informed me that there were no night clubs, no bars in the city.

'We are Moslems and we are not a drinking people. We dance, but not in night clubs. There are but few Europeans in the city now. They are going home, or being sent home, at the rate of twenty thousand a year. There'll be but fifty thousand Dutch left at the end of this year. Night

clubs are definitely European establishments; so, when the Europeans go, so do the night clubs.'

As I had discovered in Africa's Gold Coast, so I found in Indonesia that almost every item in the home in which I was staying had been imported from faraway Europe. There is a nervous kind of dependence bred by imperialism: not only are the people taught Western law, ethics, and finance; but they are encouraged to develop a taste, yea, a need, for goods which are only to be had from the European mother country. Then, when the natives rise and make a revolution in the name of the values of the West, they find themselves trapped, for they cannot build even a modern house without Western aid. The psychological agony that Indonesia suffers was created by a situation compounded of a fear of the return of Western technical capacities which they feel they need, which in their hearts they adore; yet, how can they have the co-operation of the West and at the same time fend off what they feel to be the desire of the West to dominate? In some Indonesian hearts the fear of the West is so great that they are willing to forego all advantages of Western technology, but they know that in doing so they are leaving themselves open to re-enslavement . . . It is not an easy attitude to hold when you feel that, when you reach out for something you want, you will be clutching bait embedded upon a sharp and cruel hook . . .

One morning I went into the Ministry of Information for my press card; all the faces behind the desks were dark, as dark as mine . . . At one desk I saw a white American newspaperman leaning forward intently and putting up an argument, and the dark Indonesian official to whom he was so urgently talking was obviously not listening and had

already made up his mind as to the kind of negative answer that he was going to serve up to the white American . . . But the moment that the Indonesian official's dark face turned to me there was another and different attitude. His manner changed at once: I was one of his kind; I'd endured the humiliations that he and his people had endured. So while the White American waited, I got my press card at once. I was a member of the master race! Well, there it was . . . I'm not proud of it. It took no intelligence, no courage; in the situation that obtained, it was the easiest thing to do. It was racism. And I thought of all the times in the American South when I had had to wait until the whites had been served before I could be served . . . All you have to do in a situation like that is relax and to let your base instincts flow. And it's so easy, so natural; you don't have to think; you just push that face that is of an offensive colour out of your mind and forget about it. You are inflicting an emotional wound that might last for years, that might be handed down to other generations; but why worry about that? You are safe; there are thousands around you of your colour and, if the man who's been offended should object, what the hell can he do? I was disturbed. I was not proud of what had happened, but I understood it. It was racism; there was no doubt about it; but it was a defensive, reflective kind of racism. And there are so many people of my colour on earth, *so many millions of coloured people . . . more than there are of white . . .* The racism I saw that morning had had its origin not in the desire (I think) of the coloured man to put the white man in an embarrassing position, to sting and hurt him; it was simply a question of colour, which was an easy way of telling friend from foe. But the Indonesian official had not insti-

tuted this thing; it had been taught to him by faces as white as the American face that he had spurned. That was how the whites had felt about it when they had had all the power; all dark skins were bad and all white skins were good, and now I saw that same process reversed . . .

Will Asians and Africans, being as human as white men, take over this vicious pattern of identification when they become, as they will, masters of this earth? Racism is an evil thing and breeds its own kind. Yet, it would be truly human if the Asians and Africans did, for they have much greater cause for doing so than the white man ever had. They would be acting out of a four-hundred-year tradition of racial conditioning . . . After all, the coloured races never did anything to the white races to call down upon their heads the centuries of brutality and exploitation that the whites have meted out to them. But the most important point is: Can the coloured races, for the most part uneducated and filled with fear, forget so quickly the racist deeds of the white races as they strive to free themselves from the lingering vestiges of racial subjugation? I'm not advocating racism or even trying to justify it; racism is a loathsome thing. I'm just trying to explain how easy it is, and with what justification the coloured races can and will, to some extent—depending upon how ignorant and emotionally wrought up the whites have kept them—practise racism, a racism that they have been taught too bitterly and too well.

It would be a naïve and child-like white Westerner who, seeing the dreadful racist peril now confronting him, would say: 'But I don't feel like that any more, I'm perfectly willing for racism to stop. I'll support any legislation to eradicate racism.' But, unfortunately, life is not that simple.

Contrite words cannot now stop profound processes which white men set in motion on this earth some four hundred years ago; four hundred years is a long time . . . time enough for habits, reactions, to be converted into culture, tradition, into a *raison d'être* for millions . . .

In the future there will be white men who will look into black and yellow and brown faces, and they will say to themselves: 'I wish to God that those faces were educated, that they had lived lives as secure and serene as mine; then I would be able to talk to them to reason with them . . .' But then it will be too late.

In my goings and comings about Jakarta, meeting this person and that one, I was told that an Indonesian servant, when he is hired by, say, white Americans, is embarrassingly obsequious, that, upon entering a room, he will bow low, lifting both hands as though in prayer, and then walk with his right hand and its five fingers pointing towards the floor, crossing the room in the presence of his superiors. While serving food, the domestics will form a long line, then kneel and creep past the table, each holding a dish in his hands and wait with lowered eyes until the master has served himself. And they crawl away on their knees. These practices, I was told, were not originated by the Dutch but constitute a heritage stemming from hoary Javanese feudal traditions. It need not be added that the Dutch did not find such tokens of grovelling unpleasant, and these practices prevail today even in the homes of many upper-class Indonesians.

As humid Indonesian days unfold, I make many tiny discoveries . . . Instead of toilet paper, the Indonesians use water; a small bucket of water is placed in each toilet. Toilet paper is hard to come by, having to be imported

from Europe. Families not well-off enough to afford buckets will place several beer bottles of water discreetly beside the commode . . .

Indonesian bathrooms are strange contraptions indeed; I tried futilely to determine how they originated. There is no bathtub as such. In middle-class Indonesian bathrooms there is a shower which works when there is enough water, which is rare . . . Mostly you will find a walled-off enclosure about four feet high in which water is trapped as it drips from a faucet. Water pressure is lacking, and in this manner a reserve of water is kept on hand. It is necessary, most times, in order to bathe to take a tin pan and wash towel, soap yourself thoroughly, and, afterwards, dip out of the walled enclosure enough water to dash over your head and body to rinse off the soapsuds.

The classic bathroom joke in Jakarta concerns an American businessman who got, by mistake, into one of those walled-off water-traps and actually took his bath, an act which necessitated the forgoing of all bathing for the Indonesian family in whose house he was an honoured guest. The hygienic-minded American had polluted the supply of water for the whole family for the entire day.

Amid all of this disorder and uncertainty, it is odd how daily habits are adhered to; for example, shoes are regularly shined, even though gangs of bandits may be roaming the countryside. Slow-moving, barefooted boys slink into your room and appropriate your shoes and spend precious hours polishing them. Of course, it could be argued that there are not many shoes to be shined in a nation where most of the population goes barefooted, and that shoe-shining takes up but a tiny part of a servant's day. Even so, it indicates the degree to which certain parts

of the population have been conditioned to Western habits. But, against this background, these habits take on a kind of caricatured aspect of the Western world . . .

Since the state is weak and has but little authority, what keeps things going? The answer is: the animal habits which Indonesians share with the rest of mankind. The day is divided not so much into hours as into periods in which one sleeps, eats, works, etc.

'When will Mr So-and-so be in?' I would ask.

'I really don't know, sir. But he'll surely be in about one. He has to eat, you know.'

'Has Mr So-and-so returned yet?' I'd ask.

'No, sir. But it's far past his bedtime and so he'll be in soon.'

There are really no office hours; you must depend upon the biological functioning of the people to determine when you can see them.

My friend Lubis took me to see Dr Mohammed Natsir, former Prime Minister, and one of the leading spokesmen for the idea of the Moslem state. He is young, about forty-seven, and is the head of Indonesia's largest political party, the *Masjumi*. I found him alert, friendly, open, relaxed, with a ready smile. He told me frankly that he was hopeful about the future, that there was absolutely no foundation for the widespread irresponsible talk about a pending Communist coup, and that he was sure that Indonesia would have democracy, 'not the kind of classical democracy known in the West, but still democracy . . .'

'You make a distinction between East and West?' I asked.

'Of course. Our approach, because of our background, must be somewhat different,' he said.

Mr Natsir told me that he felt that the most important event of the twentieth century was the liberation of Asia and parts of Africa, but he did not think that Asia and Africa should form racial or political blocs against the West. He was positive that there did not exist in the general population a mood of hostility towards the white nations.

'We just want them to let us build up our countries,' he said. 'We want to keep our freedom. When we mobilize our people to reconstruct our countries, the white Westerners must not project out upon us their own sense of guilt. The whites cannot see us as we are because of what they have done to us. First, they sent us their missionaries; then they sent their mercenaries; and in the end they sent their military . . . We call them the three M's of imperialism and we are on the lookout for them.'

In talking to Mr Natsir, I felt, as I was to feel when talking to many Indonesians, that concepts like Right and Left, and ideologies in general, did not figure decisively in his thinking. I had the feeling that the Indonesian Moslem had a personality that was intact, poised, healthy, and largely free from neurotic conflicts. These eighty million Indonesians, 90 per cent Moslem, had not been tampered with too much by missionaries as had all too many Africans. There was none of that uneasy shifting backwards and forwards between two worlds of values and two spheres of psychological being. Yet I was confronted with a religious statesman, a man who would perhaps some day rule or exert no small degree of influence upon his country.

'I'd like to try to give to the Western reader some idea of this Moslem state which is the object of your policies,' I told him.

'I've explained all about that in a speech I made in 1952 before the Pakistan Institute of World Affairs in Karachi,' he said. 'I'll give you a copy of that speech. But there is nothing in Islamic teachings that would clash against any ethical or moral precepts of any other religion. We believe in the Koran; it is our guide, our Bible, you might say.'

'But you are classed as a coloured man by the West,' I told him. 'And yet you are religious. Now, many people fear the world of Islam. And that world is coloured.'

'Yes,' he said, smiling. 'If the Moslems hope to co-operate with other peoples of the world in the interest of peace, we shall have to realize that an appreciation of the virtues of Islam is greatly lacking outside of the Islamic world, and that even amongst Moslems there are many misconceptions of the true aims and purposes of the Islamic teachings. Centuries of abject submission to foreign rulers have destroyed the prestige of the Moslems the world over as well as their sense of self-respect. Nevertheless, the Western world having once experienced the power of the sword of Islam has never lost sight of the potentialities contained in the Moslem world. The endeavours of the Moslems in the nineteenth century to achieve their resurrection in a united world of Islam (the Pan-Islamic movement) was met with suspicion and apprehension by the nations of the Western world as a menace endangering their power over colonies, the providers of precious indispensable raw materials for the prospering of economic life in the mother countries . . .'

'Do your intellectuals feel this economic consideration?'

'How could we not feel it, since it was the main motive?' he asked me.

'Has the West changed its attitude and habits in this connection?' I asked him.

'It has had to,' he said, laughing. 'The course of history has brought about a resurrection of the Moslem world, and we are gradually coming into our own again. The Western world, after having belatedly found out that Islam is not the peril the world has to face, is now soliciting our co-operation to preserve peace and ward off the peril of a calamitous third world war . . .'

'The West feels that Communism is the greater danger?'

'Yes. But the change of attitude on the part of the West has a negative foundation. From the point of view of Westerners, it is the choice of the lesser of two evils.'

'In short, you feel that the approach of the West now is prompted more by fear of Communism than by love or understanding of the Moslem religion?'

'Correct; and we know it,' he said emphatically. 'And as long as we are in doubt on this point we shall always have our misgivings about the real aims of the West, of which we have had good reason to be suspicious in our past history. In this case no real success can be expected from a co-operation founded on such weak grounds, with suspicion and distrust on either side ever lurking around the corner. The existing misapprehensions and misconceptions about Islam will have to be rooted out completely if that mutual suspicion and distrust is to be overcome.'

'If that could be removed, if trust could be reinstated, then would you co-operate with the West?' I asked.

'If the West would meet us half way, yes,' he said. 'The part we shall be able to take in the co-operation, our own views and considerations must be fully taken into account. We cannot be expected just to fall in line and act as we

are told. The Islamic precepts and our position as Asiatic countries are decisive factors which cannot be neglected.'

These are strong words, words coloured with passion born of centuries of racial and religious oppression. Mr Natsir was speaking for more than Indonesians; he was speaking for the world's four hundred million Moslems. Day by day I was learning to appreciate that one of greatest realities of Asia was religion . . .

'Just what kind of social structure would a Moslem state have?' I asked Mr. Natsir.

'There will be no need for Communism in Moslem countries,' he said. 'Pan-Islam will represent a world force, socialistic in nature, keeping a middle ground between Communism and Capitalism.'

It was obvious to me that, if you tried to make this man choose between Communism and Capitalism, he'd feel that you were pushing him out of his natural mental orbit. He was more pro-Islam than anti-Communist or pro-Capitalist.

Later, in reading Mr Natsir's political declaration made at Karachi in 1952, I learned that a Moslem state is not a state run by priests or a religious hierarchy. A Moslem state is a state for Moslems, but this does not mean that such a state is a theocracy. Moslems draw sharp distinctions between their kind of religious state and, say, a state in which a king rules by divine right. Every Moslem is a kind of priest; there is no separate church in a Moslem state, hence, there is no question of a separation of church and state. Again I was impressed by the firm rejection by the Asian mind of a division between the secular and the sacred. In the end, the Moslem state was a blur to me. I was told later that my inability to grasp the nature of the

Moslem state was not just a personal shortcoming on my part; many young Indonesians were likewise baffled. Yet Mr Natsir represented a substantial segment of Asian thought and he was not a man to be lured or bludgeoned into changing his stance by offers of machinery, nor would he budge because of fears of Red China . . . The emotions of the Natsirs of Asia have been disciplined in a hard and bitter school; those emotions are wary, bruised, distrustful . . .

II

Race and Religion at Bandung

I was now ready to go to Bandung to the conference. Rumours were rife. Everybody was guessing what each Asian and African nation was expecting to gain from its participation. There was no lack of easy speculation and interpretations: it was being said that Pandit Nehru was hoping to emerge from the conference as some kind of acknowledged leader or spokesman for Asia. Japan was expected to walk a tightrope, bowing and smiling to all sides among people over whom she once so brutally ruled, trying to place herself at the disposal of other Asian and African nations, offering her aid as a technical expert, hoping thereby to stimulate trade and retrieve her position as the real leader of Asia. (One Australian journalist commented bitterly: 'Bandung means that Japan really won the war in the Pacific . . .') Thailand was outdoing every other nation in an attempt to whoop up an immediate war against Red China, *now* . . . Pakistan, tied to the West by treaties, would rather not have been at this conference at all, but came no doubt because she did not want to be accused of breaking Asian solidarity . . . Sir John, representing a coalition government in which Communists and Trotskyites made up a vital element, was coming for much the same reasons, being as much concerned

about his restless population at home as he was about Red China's teeming millions. Burma's U Nu, the popular Buddhist, it was openly said, would seek aid and support for his neutralist attitude. The entire Arab world, headed by Egypt's Nasser, would be seeking to air its direct grievance against Israel and its indirect case against France. The Philippines, a Westernized Asian nation anchored by the accident of geography amidst powerful Asian neighbours, linked to the West by treaties and to Asia by fear of what the future would bring, would be in the awkward position of having to carry water on both shoulders, would have to talk Right to keep faith with Washington and to act Left to prove that she was still free in her heart and understood the language of her disinherited Asian brothers . . . About the Gold Coast, Liberia, and Ethiopia nobody had any real notions; indeed, it was rapidly becoming evident that Negro Africa was the weakest part of the conference. The Belgian Congo was not publicly mentioned, though that geographical prison was on the minds of many people who had never met a native from that sealed-off part of the earth . . . I doubt if many of the delegates even knew that Spanish Africa existed . . . The Portuguese and their slave system were remote from all minds. And the millions of blacks under French rule in Africa? Nobody but the North African delegates thought of the role that France played in trying to assimilate tribal Africans, pretending to be God to black men already conquered by the fear-systems of religion prevailing long before the logical and selfish French ever showed up . . .

The main pre-conference speculation centred about Red China: How close really was Peking to Moscow? Would Chou En-lai grab the opportunity to use the conference

as a whipping-post for United States policy in Asia and the Pacific? Would jealous conflicts develop between Nehru and Chou En-lai? Were Asian and religious loyalties thicker than ideologies?

It was my impression that, with the exception of Nehru, Chou En-lai, and U Nu, no other delegations or heads of delegations came to Bandung but with the narrowest of parochial hopes and schemes. But when they got to Bandung, with their speeches in their pockets, something happened that no Asian or African, no Easterner or Westerner, could have dreamed of . . .

The drive up the mountain slopes to Bandung lasted more than four hours and at no time were we out of sight of those brown, Javanese faces. The island of Java has more than fifty million people, a population density not to be matched anywhere else on earth: more than one thousand people to the square mile. In many respects the Javanese countryside reminded me of Africa; there were those same stolid peasants squatting by the side of the roads and staring off into space; there were those same bare-breasted young women with sombre-coloured cloths—sarongs—rolled and tucked about their waists; there were those barefooted men carrying burdens on poles slung over their shoulders (instead of on their heads as in Africa), making mincing little steps, almost like dancing a jig, so that the jogging of the elastic poles up and down would coincide with their footsteps; there was that same murderous sun that heated metal so hot that it would burn the skin; there was that same bright greenness of vegetation: beautifully terraced rice paddies filled with muddy water and rising in serried tiers towards blue and distant mountains; there were many white

mosques and now and then the delicate Gothic spire of a Catholic Church looking fantastically out of place in this near-jungle scenery; and there was that bustling economic activity filling the visible landscape, that frantic buying and selling of matches and soap and tinned sardines, that fateful hallmark of those who have enjoyed the dubious blessing of having had their old, traditional and customary culture blasted and replaced by commercial and financial relations . . . There was that same red earth, that same attitude of the sleepwalker in the young men who strode along, that same gliding, slow-motion gesturing in the women and children, that fine gracefulness of stance that seems to be the physical trait of people who live in the tropics; only here in Java there was no jungle, no dense wall of dark green vegetation rising fifty or sixty feet into the moist and hot air . . .

My friend Lubis was behind the wheel of the car, and the temperature dropped as we climbed into the mountains where volcanic craters could be seen crowned by haloes of white, fluffy clouds.

'I must take you to see a volcanic crater,' Lubis said.

'I don't think so,' I said.

'Why?' he asked, surprised.

'I'm looking for human craters,' I said.

He laughed.

'Just how many people would you say are intellectuals in Indonesia?' I asked him.

'Well, somewhere between five and ten thousand,' he answered.

'And, of that number, just how many, in your opinion, can really think?'

'Oh, I'd say about two thousand.'

'The Dutch kept the people stupid, didn't they?'

'They did.'

'Oh, those dear damned, dull, dumb Dutchmen!' I sang out.

We laughed.

'Indonesia,' said Lubis, 'is an out-of-the-way place. The Dutch felt that they could do as they liked here and get away with it, and they did just that. They did it for three hundred and fifty years. Then the war came and spoiled their plans. There are Dutchmen who still dream of coming back, but that is impossible. They hate the role that America played in helping us to get our freedom. But, don't forget, there are some good Dutchmen, some who fought with us, some who became Indonesian citizens. I must be fair . . .'

'This society has to be organized,' I said.

'Absolutely,' Lubis agreed.

'But who's going to do it? And how? And under whose ideology?'

'That's what the fight in Indonesia is all about,' Lubis said. 'We must work hard. Now, the Communists can do this job for us; they could put bayonets at our backs and make us work. But we must work no matter who is in control. Since we *must* work, why not work voluntarily? Why must we have a dictatorship?'

'Indonesia has taken power away from the Dutch, but she does not know how to use it,' I commented. 'This need not be a Right or a Left issue. Where is the engineer who can build a project out of eighty million human lives, a project that can nourish them, sustain them, and yet have their voluntary loyalty?'

We rolled into Bandung, a city of half a million people,

and saw a forest of banners proclaiming Asian and African solidarity; bright posters welcomed delegations to the city. Stout, squat, white-helmeted troops lined the clean streets, holding Sten guns in their hands and from their white belts grenades dangled . . . The faces of those troops were like blank masks, and they looked at you with black, cold, unresponsive eyes.

'Horrible, isn't it?' Lubis asked me.

'Not so horrible,' I said. 'You see, I've just come from Spain where you live under the muzzles of machine guns every hour of the day. You get used to it. The machine gun at the street corner is the trade-mark of the twentieth century. Open force is better than swarms of plain-clothes men. You know where you are with a machine gun.'

Our car was stopped and we had to show our credentials, then we were waved on. I saw that the entrance to every hotel was under heavy guard. The city was organized up to the very hilt in the interests of security.

'They are taking no chances,' I said.

'Since that plane carrying the Chinese delegation was downed,' Lubis said, 'they are frantic.' He laughed softly. 'Did you know this: a few days ago they rounded up every loose woman in the city and hustled them out? It was crazy . . . The city is now ringed by crack troops. They don't want any unexpected visits from bandits. Incidentally, no deliveries of packages will be accepted at any hotel in which delegates or newspapermen are staying—'

'Why?'

'Such packages might contain bombs, my friend.'

We drove past the conference building and saw the

flags of the twenty-nine participating nations of Asia and Africa billowing lazily in a weak wind; already the streets were packed with crowds and their black and yellow and brown faces looked eagerly at each passing car, their sleek black hair gleaming in the bright sun, their slanted eyes peering intently, hopefully, to catch sight of some Prime Minister, a U Nu, a Chou En-lai, a Nehru . . . Then the air was pierced by a screaming siren, heralding the approach of some august representative of some coloured Asian or African country. Day in and day out these crowds would stand in this tropic sun, staring, listening, applauding; it was the first time in their downtrodden lives that they'd seen so many men of their colour, race, and nationality arrayed in such aspects of power, their men keeping order, their Asia and their Africa in control of their destinies . . . They were getting a new sense of themselves, getting used to new roles and new identities. Imperialism was dead here; and, as long as they could maintain their unity, organize and conduct international conferences, there would be no return of imperialism . . .

Lubis and I got out at my hotel and swarms of children with Oriental faces rushed forward with notebooks, calling out :

'Please sign ! Autograph, please . . . !'

I didn't relish standing in that homicidal sun and I said quickly :

'Me, I no write.' I pointed to Lubis. 'He important man. Make him sign. Me, I no write.'

I dashed for the shade of the hotel corridor and the children surrounded Lubis, held him captive for half an hour; he sweated and signed his name, cursing me for having got him into such a jam.

These children did not know who the personalities were; all they knew was that they were coloured and important, and so they asked indiscriminately for signatures . . . And during the coming week every one would sign his name, from Nehru, Chou En-lai, down to the humblest reporter from Paris, London, or Boston . . .

Next morning, April 18, I'd no sooner climbed into the press gallery and looked down upon the vast assembly of delegates, many of them clad in their exotic national costumes, than I could sense an important juncture of history in the making. In the early and difficult days of the Russian Revolution, Lenin had dreamed of a gathering like this, a conglomeration of the world's underdogs, coming to the aid of his hard-pressed Soviets, but that dream had been a vain one indeed. And many Western writers, H. G. Wells, Lothrop Stoddard, etc., had long predicted the inevitable rise of these nations, but in their wildest intuitive flights they had never visualized that they would meet together in common cause. From a strictly Stalinist point of view, such a gathering as this was unthinkable, for it was evident that the Communists had no control here; this was no People's Front, no United Front, no Trojan Horse . . . Every religion under the sun, almost every race on earth, every shade of political opinion, and one and a half thousand million people from 12,606,938 square miles of the earth's surface were represented here . . .

The delegates began to file in. In came the Viet-Nameese clad in Western dress. (I spied an Indo-Chinese friend I'd known years before in Paris and he seemed unchanged despite his background of war and suffering and revolution.) Three Gold Coast delegates entered, adding a blaze

of brightness with their colourful togas. The Burmese entered wearing their soft white caps which had knots dangling at the sides of their heads; their skirts made even veteran newsmen lean forward and crane their necks. The Arabs, with their long white and black robes, seemed outlandish, like men from another world.

Nehru came in in his white Asian cap and the audience stirred. U Nu entered. Sir John of Ceylon entered. Then Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia, and the ideological father of the conference itself, entered, mounted the platform, and took the chairman's seat. Then came Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister of Pakistan . . . At last Sukarno, President of the Republic of Indonesia, mounted the rostrum to deliver the opening address . . .

He was a small man, tan of face, and with a pair of dark, deep-set eyes; he moved slowly, deliberately. He spoke in English with a slight accent; he knew words and how to use them, and you realized at once that this man had done nothing all his life but utilize words to capture the attention and loyalties of others. From the very outset, he sounded the notes of race and religion, strong, defiant; before he had uttered more than a hundred syllables, he declared :

'This is the first international conference of coloured peoples in the history of mankind!'

He then placed his finger upon the geographical gateway through which the white men of the West had come into Asia :

'Sisters and Brothers, how terrifically dynamic is our time! I recall that, several years ago, I had occasion to make a public analysis of colonialism, and I drew attention to what I called the "life line of imperialism". This

line runs from the Straits of Gibraltar, through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, and the Sea of Japan. For most of that enormous distance, the territories on both sides of this life line were colonies, the people were unfree, their futures mortgaged to an alien system. Along that life line, that main artery of imperialism, there was pumped the lifeblood of colonialism.'

In the third paragraph of his address, Sukarno evoked in a solemn manner a reality that Western statesmen refer to only in times of war or dire stress; he paid tribute to the many sacrifices which had made the conference possible. Implied in his recognition of sacrifice was an acknowledgment that it had been only through men willingly surrendering their lives in the past that a bridge had been made to this present moment. He said :

'I recognize that we are gathered here today as a result of sacrifices. Sacrifices made by our forefathers and by the people of our own and younger generations . . . Their struggle and sacrifice paved the way for this meeting of the highest representatives of independent and sovereign nations from two of the biggest continents of the globe.'

For Sukarno and national revolutionaries of his stamp, the present meeting was not merely a lucky stroke of politics, but a gathering whose foundations had been laid long before. He put his finger on the date in modern history when the real struggle against colonialism had begun in earnest :

'I recall in this connection the conference of the "League Against Imperialism and Colonialism" which was held in Brussels almost thirty years ago. At that conference many

distinguished delegates who are present here today met each other and found new strength in their fight for independence.'

It is hard for the Western world to realize how tenaciously these outsiders cling to and remember each link, each step in their life's struggles; to most of the delegates to whom Sukarno spoke, this meeting was the logical outcome of past sacrificial efforts. And why had they now come together? Sukarno said :

' . . we are living in a world of fear. The life of man today is corroded and made bitter by fear. Fear of the future, fear of the hydrogen bomb, fear of ideologies. Perhaps this fear is a greater danger than the danger itself, because it is fear which drives men to act foolishly, to act thoughtlessly, to act dangerously . . . And do not think that the oceans and the seas will protect us. The food we eat, the water that we drink, yes, even the very air that we breathe can be contaminated by poisons originating from thousand of miles away. And it could be that, even if we ourselves escaped lightly, the unborn generations of our children would bear on their distorted bodies the marks of our failure to control the forces which have been released on the world.'

What strength had Sukarno and Asian and African leaders like him? He was frank about it. He said :

'For many generations our peoples have been the voiceless ones in the world. We have been the unregarded, the peoples for whom decisions were made by others whose interests were paramount, the peoples who lived in poverty and humiliation . . . What can we do? The peoples of Asia and Africa wield little physical power. Even our economic strength is dispersed and slight. We can-

not indulge in power politics . . . Our statesmen, by and large, are not backed up with serried ranks of jet bombers.'

He then defined the strength of this gathering of the leaders of the poor and backward nations as:

'We, the peoples of Asia and Africa, 1,400,000,000 strong, far more than half of the population of the world, we can mobilize what I have called the *Moral Violence of Nations* in favour of peace . . .'

And where was this moral violence coming from? Sukarno knew to what he was appealing, for he said:

'Religion is of dominating importance particularly in this part of the world. There are perhaps more religions here than in other regions of the globe . . . Our countries were the birthplace of religions.'

And what bound these diverse peoples together? Sukarno said:

'Almost all of us have ties to common experience, the experience of colonialism.'

Sukarno was appealing to race and religion; they were the only realities in the lives of the men before him that he could appeal to. And, as I sat listening, I began to sense a deep and organic relation here in Bandung between race and religion, *two of the most powerful and irrational forces in human nature*. Sukarno was not evoking these twin demons; he was not trying to create them; he was trying to organize them . . . The reality of race and religion was there, swollen, sensitive, turbulent . . .

It was no accident that most of the delegates were deeply religious men representing governments and vast populations steeped in mystical visions of life. Asian and African populations had been subjugated on the assump-

tion that they were in some way biologically inferior and unfit to govern themselves, and the white Western world that had shackled them had either given them a Christian religion or else had made them agonizingly conscious of their old, traditional religions to which they had had to cling under conditions of imperialist rule. Those of them who had been converted to Christianity had been taught to hope for a freedom and social justice which the white Western world had teasingly withheld. Thus, a racial consciousness, evoked by the attitudes and practices of the West, had slowly blended with a defensive religious feeling; here, in Bandung, the two had combined into one: *a racial and religious system of identification manifesting itself in an emotional nationalism which was now leaping state boundaries and melting and merging, one into the other.*

But let us follow the speakers who spell out this new thing that has come upon the world scene. Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia and spiritual architect of the multi-nationed gathering, was elected unopposed as President of the Conference. In his address he continued the theme:

'Among the main causes of the present-day tensions here is colonialism, the old scourge under which Asia and Africa have suffered for ages, which will be a subject of our special interest. It may be true that the larger part of mankind accepts the obvious truth that colonialism has to be considered as a thing of the past, but the fact is there that colonialism is still very much alive. When we look at the map of Asia and Africa we find many spots, and even whole countries, which are still fettered by the chains of colonialism. Moreover, in the flesh of several

of us are still sticking the thorns, small or large, of colonial rule.'

That the Asian-African Conference looked forward to convening again and broadening and deepening its scope was plainly stated :

'I hope that one day, and may it be soon, the opportunity will arise, or be created, to convene the representatives of independence movements in all colonial territories who are still struggling for the liquidation of colonial rule and for their national independence and sovereignty. We, the independent countries of Asia and Africa, have to do our utmost in supporting them in every peaceful effort which may achieve their freedom.'

The degree to which resentment of practices of racialism still lives in the hearts of men who felt it for most of their lives comes through clearly in these words of Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo :

'Next to colonialism we meet racialism as an important source of tension. Racialism in fact is often, if not always, an aspect of colonialism based on feelings of superiority of the dominating group. Discrimination, however, based on differences of colour is contrary to fundamental human rights . . . How often are the timid attempts to have done with colour bars outweighed by measures of ruthless discrimination? Is not Apartheid policy a form of absolute intolerance more befitting the Dark Ages than this modern world?'

Samdach Upayuvareach Norodom Sihanouk, heading the Cambodian delegation, added his concurrence by explaining that the conference put :

' . . in concrete form, for the very first time, the solidarity of Asian and African peoples . . . it shatters the fron-

tiers which separated two worlds: the Communist and the non-Communist . . . I am proud of having had the privilege of leading my people in their struggle for independence and to have, after the Geneva Conference, determinedly steered our national policy towards . . . the community of neutral nations—among them: India and Burma.'

Then Sir John Kotelawala, Prime Minister of Ceylon, expected by many to defend the Western world, continued the same theme of fear, mental pain stemming from conditions of previous servitude and the dread of another war. Said he:

'When the great powers of the West talk peace, their chances of agreement are weakened by the fact that each suspects the other's strength. We by contrast come to the conference table weak and relatively unarmed. We have no thermo-nuclear bombs in our pockets, no weapons of chemical or bacteriological warfare up our sleeves, no plans for armament factories or blueprints for ever more deadly methods of genocide in our brief cases.'

Remembering the cynicism pervading the atmosphere of power politics, Sir John said:

'The old heresy dies hard—that if you want peace you must prepare for war. As a result, nations have armed themselves to the teeth against neighbours and have increased their might to a point where the least dispute can trigger a conflagration sufficient to involve the whole world . . . The pass to which humanity has been brought by the domination and doctrine of forces is the most vivid demonstration of the bankruptcy of force. Of what advantage is it to hold sway over vast territories, to have at one's command innumerable armies, to be able at the touch of a button to unleash the deadliest weapons science

can invent, if, with all this, we are unable to rid ourselves of fear and hysteria and despair?’

And who is to stop this drift towards global destruction? Sir John has an answer. He says :

‘We, the nations of the new Asia and Africa, whatever our language, whatever our faiths, whatever our form of government, whatever the colour of our skins—black, brown or yellow—have one thing in common : we are all poor and under-developed. Centuries of servitude and stagnation have left their mark, a dire heritage of poverty and ignorance, upon the masses of our peoples . . . Where the wisdom of the West has failed, is it possible that the nations of Asia and Africa can hope to succeed? I think it is. Have the nations of this region in fact anything to offer? I think they have. Has the time come to offer it? I think it has. I say, then, in all seriousness and in all humility, that the peoples of this region have it in their power to apply to the problems of the present-day world, and for the first time in history, that traditional respect for the spiritual values of life and for the dignity of the human personality which is the distinguishing feature of all their great religions.’

Egypt added her voice, new and revolutionary, to the assembly of nations that hate war and colonialism and racialism. Said Lieutenant-Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser :

‘All over the world there is a growing sense of insecurity. The fear of war has been aggravated by the development of mass-destructive weapons capable of effecting total annihilation. The stakes are high in terms of the very survival of mankind.’

Nasser too stressed the common feeling of identity born

of a common heritage imposed by Western domination. He said :

‘In this conference, we are meeting as representatives of the Asiatic and African countries. There is a striking similarity between the conditions prevailing in our countries, a similarity that operates as a unifying force; we have emerged from a long period of foreign influence, political as well as economic . . . It is not surprising therefore that we should feel close together . . .’

Nasser then struck at Israel as hard as he could :

‘Under the eyes of the United Nations and with her help and sanction, the people of Palestine were uprooted from their fatherland, to be replaced by a completely imported populace. Never before in history has there been such a brutal and immoral violation of human principles. Is there any guarantee for the small nations that the big powers who took part in this tragedy would not allow themselves to repeat it again, against another innocent and helpless people?’

The Gold Coast, represented by Kōjo Botsio, Minister of State, deepened the note of the new identification. Botsio said :

‘It is, indeed, reassuring to us to be associated with the governments and peoples from whom we have drawn inspiration and guidance in our struggle for independence and whose experience of similar situations is recent and fresh enough to make them “feel the stir of fellowship”. The struggles and sacrifices of these nations have in our day re-established and fortified the right of all people of all races to govern themselves, they are a shining example to all those labouring under racial discrimination, political subjection, and economic exploitation . . . Although in

our present transitional stage towards nationhood we are not yet responsible for our external affairs, nevertheless we were, on receipt of your invitation, most anxious not to miss the unique opportunity of being represented at this epoch-making conference. Many of the questions which will be discussed here are matters in which we have a natural and legitimate interest . . .’

Prince Wan, representing Thailand, came before the assembly in a rather nervous attitude. Threatened with subversion at home and faced with hostile attitudes from its neighbours over the question of refugees and some three million Chinese owning dual nationality, Thailand put forward through Prince Wan a declaration of adherence qualified by reservations. Said Prince Wan :

‘Truly in self-defence . . . and not for any aggressive or even provocative purposes whatsoever, Thailand has had to join with seven other powers in concluding a collective defence treaty . . . known as the Manila Pact.

‘My Asian and African friends and colleagues will, no doubt, ask me how I justify the attitude of my government from the point of view of Righteousness or the Moral Law . . . ?’ Pleading self-defence, Prince Wan quoted Buddha : ‘. . . all warfare in which man tries to slay his brother is lamentable, but he does not teach that those who go to war in a righteous cause, after having exhausted all means to preserve the peace, are blameworthy. He must be blamed who is the cause of war.’

(Prince Wan admitted ‘doubts in my mind’, and those doubts must have been rather grave for, on May 3, 1955, Pibul Songgram, Premier of Thailand, in a *New York Times* story, said that : ‘I try as forcibly as I can to lead my country to secure peace in the world. They will always

be at your side—in any way—to create the peace of the world.’)

As though acting under the eye of the Almighty, Dr Mohammed Fadhil al-Jamali of Iraq continued and deepened the theme of moral disapproval of the West and its ways. Said he :

‘Unfortunately, colonialism is still well entrenched in many parts of the world. The people of North Africa, including those of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, are still under the French yoke, and no amount of local sacrifices and world opinion seems to influence the French to move more rapidly in recognizing the rights of these people to independence and freedom.

‘A typical example of outworn colonial policy is shown in South Africa where colour prejudice and superiority of the white man have led to discrimination against Indians and natives, and to the segregation of the so-called coloured people.

‘It is our sincere hope that this conference will prove in a very modest way to be a great moral force of ideological disarmament and moral rearmament . . . May I conclude with the reading of a verse from the Holy Koran which I hope will be applicable to all of us here and to all those who are not with us but share our earnest desire for peace.

‘*“Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change from within themselves.”*’

The same themes of anxiety sounded from the chairman of the Ethiopian delegation. He declared :

‘This struggle against colonialism, which has characterized the life of each nation represented here, stresses a problem which the agenda before us underlines at several

points . . . Ethiopia's attitude towards theories of racialism is well known. We have opposed attempts to force these inhuman, scientifically discredited theories, to accomplish restrictive social, economic and political ends in defiance of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights.'

Sami Solh, Prime Minister of Lebanon, head of its delegation, spoke bitterly regarding Arab refugees. He said :

'Heading these problems is that of martyred Palestine. Would the universal conscience accept any longer that one million refugees, driven out of their country, their homes, and deprived of their property, should live dispersed on the roads of exile? Would it accept that the decisions relative to this region as taken by that most solemn of assemblies should remain unimplemented? Should we sacrifice one million victims on the altar of political opportunism?'

Only when Mr Tatsunosuke Takasaki, principal Japanese delegate, rose to speak did the tone sink to the level of the rational. But even he had to speak in a confessional tone. He said :

' . . . In World War II, Japan, I regret to say, inflicted damages upon her neighbour nations, but ended by bringing untold miseries upon herself. She has re-established democracy, having learned her lesson at immense cost in lives and property. Chastened and free, she is today a nation completely dedicated to peace. As the only people who have experienced the horrors of the atomic bomb, we have no illusion whatever about the enormity of an attempt to solve international disputes by force.

'In the light of the foregoing statement, the Japanese delegation will submit to the conference certain propo-

sals on economic and cultural co-operation, together with a proposal for the maintenance of international peace.'

Long heralded as the chief spokesman for the ideas of the West, Carlos P. Romulo, member of the Philippine cabinet, and chairman of the Philippine delegation to the conference, made the most race-conscious and stinging speech of all. Indeed, the main burden of his address was an indictment of Western racialism. Here was a man who knew and loved America, who had the American outlook and attitude of pragmatism; but he had suffered under colonialism and he had sympathy for those who were not free. He said :

'In one sense this conference suggests that for the peoples of Asia and Africa the United Nations has inadequately met the need for establishing common ground for peoples seeking peaceful change and development. But I think that we must say also that if the United Nations has been weak and limited in its progress towards these goals, it is because the United Nations is still much more a mirror of the world than an effective instrument for changing it. It has been in existence only nine years and through that time always subject to all the pressures and difficulties of national rivalries and power conflicts, large and small.'

This was straight, honest; then Romulo stated the mood of Asia :

'We do not have to be satisfied with the rate of progress being made.'

Describing the nations who had sent delegates to the conference, Romulo said :

'The majority of the independent nations represented here won their independence only within the last decade. Who would have been bold enough, twenty years ago,

to predict that this would be so? Who will be bold enough now to say how soon or how slowly those peoples in Africa strong enough to win it will acquire the right to face their own problems in their own way on their own responsibility? The handwriting of history is spread on the wall, but not everybody reads there.'

The Westernized Asian who spoke that line then struck at England, France, and Belgium :

'We know the age of European empire is at an end; not all Europeans know that yet.'

Romulo stressed that there was not one way, but many, in which people could cast off the colonial yoke. He said :

'Political freedom has been won by many different means. The British surrendered power in Southern Asia because they knew they could no longer maintain it and were wise enough to base their action on reality. The French and Dutch had to be forced to the same conclusion.'

He is certain that the old system has passed :

'... everything we know and understand about history assures us that whatever travails the future holds, the old structure of Western empire will and must pass from the scene. Will it expire quietly and in dignity? Will it go out crashing violently?'

He waded boldly into the racial issue :

'I have said that besides the issues of colonialism and political freedom, all of us here are concerned with the matter of racial equality. This is a touchstone, I think, for most of us assembled here are the people we represent. The systems and the manners of it have varied, but there has not been and there is not a Western colonial régime which has not imposed, to a greater or lesser degree, on

the people it ruled the doctrine of their own racial inferiority. We have known, and some of us still know, the searing experience of being demeaned in our own lands, of being systematically relegated to subject status not only politically and economically, and militarily—but racially as well. Here was a stigma that could be applied to rich and poor alike, to prince and slave, boss-man and working-man, landlord and peasant, scholar and ignoramus. To bolster his rule, to justify his own power to himself, the Western white man assumed that his superiority lay in his very genes, in the colour of his skin. This made the lowest drunken sot superior, in colonial society, to the highest product of culture and scholarship and industry among subject people.'

How has this affected the millions of the world's coloured peoples?

'For many it has made the goal of regaining a status of simple manhood the be-all and end-all of a lifetime of devoted struggle and sacrifice.'

Yet Romulo knows how easy it is to be a racist; and he sounds a warning to Asians and Africans to beware of becoming the kind of men whom they now condemn. He said pointedly :

'It is one of our heaviest responsibilities, we of Asia and Africa, not to fall ourselves into the racist trap. We will do this if we let ourselves be drawn insensibly—or deliberately—into any kind of counter-racism, if we respond to the white man's prejudice against us as non-whites with prejudice against whites simply because they are whites.'

What, psychologically, did the policies of the whites do to the people of Asia and Africa?

'I think that over the generations the deepest source of our own confidence in ourselves had to come from the deeply rooted knowledge that the white man was *wrong*, that in proclaiming the superiority of his race, *qua* race, he stamped himself with his own weakness and confirmed all the rest of us in our dogged conviction that we could and would reassert ourselves as men . . . Surely we are entitled to our resentment and rejection of white racism wherever it exists.'

Then Romulo squared up to facts :

'Yet this white world which has fostered racism has done many another thing. A rich mythology of religious thinking and feeling, a rich heritage of art and literature came from them, and, above all, political thought and an astounding advancement of scientific knowledge also came from them.

'I ask you to remember,' Romulo told his audience, 'that just as Western political thought has given us all so many of our basic ideas of political freedom, justice, and equity, it is Western science which in this generation has exploded the mythology of race . . .'

Following Romulo, other heads of delegations spoke : Liberia, Libya, Turkey, Pakistan, Syria, etc. But they added nothing new. It was clear that these speeches had not been arranged, or ordered; it was extremely doubtful if Romulo knew what the others had planned to say . . . Hence, a certain amount of repetitiousness drove home the racial theme with crushing force. It was rumoured that Nehru had objected to this battery of speeches and I can well believe it, but I doubt if even Nehru knew in advance what the overall impression of that outpouring of emotion would be.

It is time now that we turn our attention to this Asian master, Nehru, and the man he was responsible for bringing to this massive international conference, Chou En-lai . . .

III

Communism at Bandung

COMMUNISM at Bandung was conspicuous for its shyness, its coyness, its bland smile and glad hand for everyone. Chou En-lai, clad in a pale tunic, moved among the delegates with the utmost friendliness and reserve, listening to all arguments with patience, and turning the other cheek when receiving ideological slaps. In closed committee sessions Russia was attacked time and again and Chou En-lai refused to let himself be baited into answering. Russia had no defenders at Bandung . . . Indeed, rumour had it that Chou En-lai had openly said that he did not agree with or support the Cominform; when pressed for his position, he would refer to the four points on the agenda and state that he was determined to keep within the limits of that agenda.

Yet we can guess at what must have been some of his unspoken reactions. Communism insists that it is a rational science, and Communists boast that their interpretation of history is materialistic. Then what could Chou En-lai have been thinking amidst this ground swell of racial and religious feeling? The speech that he had planned to deliver was passed out in printed form to the press, and he made another speech whose contents indicated that he had had strong reactions. He stated frankly:

'After listening to the speeches delivered by the heads of many delegations, I would like to make some supplementary remarks.'

The world had been led to expect that Chou En-lai would try to mobilize Asian support for his claim to Formosa, but he took a directly opposed line. He said :

'As for the tension created solely by the United States in the area of Taiwan, we could have submitted for deliberation by the Conference an item such as the proposal made by the Soviet Union for seeking a settlement through an international conference. The will of the Chinese people to liberate their own territory Taiwan and the coastal islands is a just one. It is entirely a matter of our internal affairs and the exercise of our sovereignty . . . But we do not do this, because our Conference would be dragged into disputes about all these problems without any solution.'

With that one gesture Chou En-lai surrendered his opportunity to use the conference as a forum for the ideas and policies of Red China. Why? He knew that the time for that was not ripe, that the distance that separated Red China from the religious nations of Asia and Africa was great indeed. Instead Chou En-lai chose another line, an attempt to identify himself with those millions with whom not many Western nations wanted or would accept identification. He said :

'The Chinese delegation has come here to seek common ground, not to create divergence. Is there any basis for seeking common ground among us? Yes, there is. The overwhelming majority of the Asian and African countries and peoples have suffered and still are suffering from the calamities under colonialism. This is acknowledged by

all of us. If we seek common ground in doing away with the sufferings and calamities under colonialism, it will be very easy for us to have mutual understanding and respect, mutual sympathy and support, instead of mutual suspicion and fear, mutual exclusion and antagonism. That is why we agree to the four purposes of the Asian-African Conference declared by the Prime Ministers of the five countries at the Bogor Conference and do not make any other proposal.'

It was that simple. Chou En-lai knew that he was addressing lonely men, men whose mentalities had been branded with a sense of being outcasts. It cost him nothing to make such a gesture, to speak words of compassion. He offered no programmes of industrialization, no long-term loans, no mutual defence pacts. To the nations smarting under a sense of inferiority, he tried to cement ties of kinship. He said :

'We Asian and African countries, China included, are all backward economically and culturally. Inasmuch as our Asian-African Conference does not exclude anybody, why shouldn't we ourselves understand each other and enter into friendly co-operation?'

A shrewd man speaking . . . Yet all was not easy in the mind of Chou En-lai. In Indonesia Moslems had butchered Communists, even though Communists held a balance of power in the present government. The rational Mr Chou En-lai knew that religious feeling could rise threateningly against him, if it chose. It prompted him to say :

' . . . I would like to talk about the question as to whether there is freedom of religious belief. Freedom of religious belief is a principle recognized by all modern

nations. We Communists are atheists, but we respect all those who have religious belief. We hope that those with religious belief will also respect those without.'

But what of subversion? More than ten million Chinese of dual nationality resided in many Asian countries and they constituted a problem. It was here that Chou En-lai made his smartest move and actually surrendered substantial concessions to his neighbour nations; he announced that he was signing a treaty with Indonesia, granting the minority of two million Chinese living in Indonesia the right to choose their nationality . . . Brother Chou was most anxious to join this Asian-African church and was willing to pay for his membership. He stated that other Asian nations could avail themselves of similar treaty arrangements. It was a master stroke, and whatever misgivings existed melted not only into a passive acceptance of Red China, but into a kind of grudging admiration for Chou's good will.

It must not be thought that it was easy. Sir John and many others lashed out at Chou, blasted Russia's foreign policy, but Chou stood rocklike, insisting that he was as poor and hard-pressed as they were. In the end the photographers were able to snap pictures of Chou En-lai arm in arm with Sir John . . . Needless to say, Nehru ran interference for Chou, fending off those who sought to question him too sharply. Yet, these simple moves do not explain it all.

Nehru's motives were clear: he wanted Asian unity. India was an Asian power and what happened in Asia should happen only with the consent of Asians. And such a state of affairs could not be brought about, as Nehru knew, without the co-operation of Red China.

There was an element of 'Asianism' in the whole conference. They had, beforehand, excluded those issues upon which they could not agree, and they had before them an area in which it was obvious that they shared much in common. All Chou had to do was stand his ground and wait with outstretched hands, and they came to him . . .

One must understand just what the two positions were at Bandung. The United States, though not present, had its spokesmen for the policy of a 'containment of Communism'. Communism was viewed in a rather naïve light : eight hundred million people led by militant Communists under the command of Peking and Moscow . . . But the Communists themselves viewed their position quite differently; they had an historical perspective and they knew quite well from what quarter they could expect sympathy, recruits, in what parts of the world they could hope for an extension of their power. International Communism had, many decades before, turned its face away from Europe and had concentrated upon Asia, and now it had at long last begun to set its sights upon Africa, 'the soft, rotten underbelly of imperialistic Europe', where there were no loyal European mass populations. Hence Chou En-lai, by promising to behave, had built a bridgehead that had found foundations not only in Asia but extended even into tribal black Africa . . .

Hitherto international Communists had not been successful at all in Africa, where a tribal mass, wrapped in poetic dreams, had defied their efforts at ideological indoctrination. Only in the Union of South Africa, where a black industrial proletariat existed, had they made the slightest headway. Now, could the Chinese Communists do what Stalin had not done? Stalin had made many tragic

mistakes with the Chinese Communists by his insisting upon the literal application of Marxist dogma. But Mao Tse-tung had organized what was at hand, that is, millions of starving peasants, plus Moslems, Buddhists, Protestants, and Catholics. Nothing succeeds like success and Stalin had had to accept what the Chinese had done, though at Yalta he told Roosevelt that the Chinese Communists were really not Communists. But Communist or non-Communist, the Chinese were in the Red camp, the allies of Russia. And the question was: Could they do in the rest of Asia and Africa what they had done in China?

If there was no effective opposition to Chou En-lai at Bandung, among the Asian and African *élite*, how much more would there be among the illiterate millions sprawled over Asia and Africa? It would be safe to assume that, on the propaganda level, the opposition would be much, much less. For there does not exist any positive programme from the Western powers in these areas. Western academic personnel is still discussing whether the Africans have the capacity for self-government, a psychological prejudice which no Communist worthy of his salt would ever carry as a handicap. And the delegates at Bandung felt that profound difference in approach.

Nkrumahism had already swept the Gold Coast where there was practically no industrialization; a strong, emotional, unorthodox nationalism had held the British at bay and had forced them either to fight a jungle war that would have been akin to the Kenya tragedy or to accept an illiterate and disciplined tribal nationalism . . . The British, hungry for (cocoa) dollar exchange, had accepted black nationalism. Will the Chinese revolutionaries, with their non-racist, pragmatic background of universalism,

accept this new and unheard-of-grafting of twentieth century political concepts upon truncated tribal societies? I believe that they will.

There must have been a lot of scratching of heads in Peking when the five Colombo Powers announced their determination to organize the Asian-African Conference. The Chinese must have known that, if they participated, they would be in the company of men who had perverted Marxism even more than they had. But what of that? Here was a chance for China to surround herself with men and nations who had suffered at the hands of the colony-owning Western states, and, since the United States had not disavowed its support of such states, China then could walk as a fellow guest into an anti-Western house built by a reaction to colonialism and racialism . . . It was a gift from the skies . . .

Surrounded thus by possible allies in case of war, posing as a champion of the oppressed, proudly identifying himself and his nation with the lowly of the earth, Chou En-lai publicly declared at Bandung :

‘ . . . threats of war can frighten into submission no one who is determined to resist. They can only place the threat-makers in a more isolated and confused position.’

With those words, an Asian politician had done what was believed impossible. Chou En-lai did not say that he knew the way of eternal salvation; he did not say that he had come to lift up ‘falling humanity’; he skirted any reference to virtue and morality; he simply said that he was willing to share the conditions of life of his black and brown and yellow brothers. But was he honest? If Chou En-lai were a trained and disciplined Bolshevik, then he was lying. And Chou En-lai is a trained and disciplined

Bolshevik. Yet he had not said that he believed in what his Asian and African neighbours believed in; he had not pretended to accept their God . . . All he had said was that he and his fellow Chinese were suffering, were backward, were afraid of war . . . No one could recall having heard a Russian Communist speak like that; no one could recall if the Russian Communists had ever accepted a programme drafted by others. One delegate, I was told, had come to Bandung violently pro-West, but had emerged from the closed sessions and had said: 'I'm as violently opposed to Communism as ever. But I trust this man.'

Chou En-lai was invited to Bandung by the authority of the five, Colombo Powers. And whose voice is strong in that council? It is the voice of Nehru . . . Now, at Bandung, Nehru was in the background, quiet, studied. There was widespread talk of rivalry between him and Chou En-lai, but I did not give much weight to that. These men were intelligent; they had talked over this conference long ago, had mapped out the boundary lines in advance; and that was why there were no serious conflicts at Bandung . . .

Why did Nehru make such a strange pact? There are those who say that Nehru is a hypocrite, that he blows both hot and cold, that he says one thing today and another tomorrow. I talked with him and found no evidence of such aberrations. He was logical, quick, observant, and knowing. He is a great man. Of what does this greatness consist? It consists of his being what his country is: part East, part West. If one day Nehru says that the perplexities facing Asia are moral, then he is acting in a Western manner; if the next day he says that the world is gripped by a power struggle, he is looking upon life as an Asian. From his point of view, he is not merely playing with

ideas; he is a reflection of what his India is, a halfway house between East and West.

Nehru's problem was: How can I find time to build up India? He knew that no Asian or African nation, though independent, was really free as long as it was backward and economically dependent. Then there was the fear that another war would result in the subordination of Asians and Africans again to Western rule . . . Nehru sought to solve this question by forging a situation that would be a blend partly of power and partly of morality: the unity of Asia and Africa. What this vast combination lacked in terms of technical and military strength would be made up for in terms of numbers, that is, the body of mankind.

But such unity involved making indirect alliances with Red China, for there could be no unity in Asia without China. An alliance of Asians and Africans *without* China would be a hollow one; an alliance *with* Red China would be risky. But a multi-nationed agreement with China would, perhaps, give the other non-Communist nations a chance of standing together against China if she were caught cheating . . . But would the other Asian and African nations join such a coalition?

It was at this juncture that Nehru, Sir John, Ali, U Nu, and Sastroamidjojo knew that they had trumps to play, cards that the West could not match: the fear of a new war, fear of racial prejudice, fear of poverty . . . Get these hurt, frightened, lonely, suffering nations together and put the question to them. Nehru knew that these nations did not fear him or his people, did not fear Indonesia, Pakistan, etc.; the question was: Would they fear Red China? Trying for an alliance along the broadest possible lines, the

Colombo Powers asked Chou En-lai to come in and behave. And Chou, being no fool, said yes.

But is there not something missing here? Weren't all these men deeply religious? Christians? Moslems? Buddhists? Hindus? They were. Would they accept working with Red China? Yes, they would. Why? Were they dupes? No, they were desperate. They felt that they were acting in common defence of themselves. Then is Christianity, as it was introduced into Asia and Africa, no deterrent to Communism?

A quick examination of some of the delegations at Bandung revealed the solid presence of Christian influence. The five Liberian delegates were all members of the Y.M.C.A. Two members of the Indonesian delegation were Christians. The Philippine delegation was probably all Roman Catholic. The Ethiopian delegation was mostly Christian. The delegation from Lebanon was mostly Christian . . . The rest of the delegations was composed mostly of Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists, etc. Obviously, religion, and particularly the Christian religion, was no bulwark against Communism in Asia. Indeed, a high official in the Indonesian government told me :

'In many instances Christianity provides Communism with its justification. Communism is paying the unpaid bills of the Christian church.'

The more I examined the relationship between Communism and Christianity at Bandung, the more complicated I found that relationship to be. In the West one is inclined to feel that the two doctrines of life, Christianity and Communism, are opposed, but, at bottom, they are not as opposed as one would think. There are deep underground, emotional connections. Seen through Asian eyes,

the two philosophies share much of the same assumptions of hope. As one writer has put it, Jesus Christ himself was one of the poorest men to claim divinity that the Asians ever heard of. So when a Communist comes into a colonial community, or a community still reacting in terms of the colonial situation (such as exists in Asia today), he can say : 'I'll show you how to implement the Christian vision; I'll show you how to make Christianity come true, how to make the Kingdom of God real right here on earth . . .' And the Asian Christian, longing for freedom from his white Christian masters, makes up his mind to follow the Communists.

Says Winburn T. Thomas, a missionary with twenty-two years of Asian experience, writing in the *Presbyterian Tribune*, February, 1954 :

Strange as it may seem to Western observers, many Asians are both Christians and Communists. At one time, six of the seven leaders of the Travancore, India, Communist Party representatives were baptized Christians. There are two Communist Party representatives in the Indonesian parliament who also hold membership in the Batak Church.

The sharp ideological lines and distinctions frequently drawn by Westerners are blurred in Asia. It is not uncommon for a Japanese to say that he is at once a Buddhist, a Confucianist, and a Christian . . .

The current phenomenon in China, with Christians giving thanks to the Communist Party and to the Peking government for its leadership of the church, goes beyond the traditional blurring of lines. Many Chinese do see basic conflicts between Christianity and Communism, yet are willing to co-operate with Mao Tse-tung in his new policies for the country . . .

Summarizing, Thomas cites some of the following reasons to account for the situation :

Communist rule in China is Chinese. In this respect it differs from Japanese occupation.

During the period of colonial expansion, China was not taken over by any one Western nation. This was not due to innate strength on the part of the Chinese. The Western nations were unable to agree on how they would carve up the 'sleeping giant' which was too large for any of them to take over alone. Yet unequal treaties were forced upon China beginning with the middle of the nineteenth century. Her cities became foreign concessions. White men were in charge of her customs.

The state of being a Christian does not, necessarily, condition an individual's feelings of nationalism and patriotism . . .

The Chinese Christian thinks he reads in his Bible that all governments are the gift of God, and that political control has been vested in Mao's hands . . .

The Communist government has had to raise to high position such men as Y. T. Wu, a YMCA secretary, who is now head of the Protestant movement. He is national chairman of the Oppose-America, Aid Korea Three-fold Self-Reform Movement of the Church of Christ in China. He is editor of the *T'ien Feng* (Heavenly Wind), official publication of this body.

The Asian ground upon which the seeds of the Christian doctrine fell was far richer than the devout sowers dreamed . . . The Asian mind is tenacious, pragmatic; when you speak of social justice and freedom to an Asian, he takes your words at face value; he does not suspect double talk . . .

But religion alone, at Bandung, would not and could not have tipped the scales towards Chou En-lai. Fear was at Bandung. And among all the fears riding the delegates, there were some cardinal fears: fear of the vast and restless populations in their native lands; fear of the future; fear of their neighbours . . . The delegates had to act and speak in a manner that assured them that they would be safe no matter what happened. Each address was directed to the voters at home, to the State Department in Washington, to Whitehall in London, to Peking, to Moscow, to their own Asian and African neighbours. An interview with a member of Romulo's delegation elicited the following attitude:

'We are worried. America is protecting us, but America does not really need us. She has atomic and hydrogen bombs. She can defend herself. Suppose America says that she has to retrench? Where would that leave us? We are a sentimentality for America. One day we will have to face these other Asian nations alone . . . And that's what frightens me . . .' He paused, scratched his head, and looked off. 'Why are we at Bandung? Brother, in the past we have been objects to be moved here and there. We were handled as only those on the outside wanted us handled. We had no say in the matter . . . Now, we want to show those people that we can manage our own lives. And this conference is a demonstration of that. We'll have our difficulties, but at least we want to try. And we are trying and we are not doing too badly . . .'

Mrs Gandhi, daughter of Nehru, told me a strange story that buttresses the above observation in a telling manner. She related how the Communist Parties of China and Russia had invited thousands of Indian students to visit

Peking and Moscow to see the impressive strides that had been made in industrial development. These trips into Russia and China had been official excursions and the Indian students had been squired around. They had completed their tours by being definitely pro-Communist in sentiment. Upon their return to India, they had begun berating Nehru for not having done things as the Chinese and Russians had done them.

'These young people don't know that we are doing the *same* thing. Now we are making sure that our young people know what we are doing in our country. Many of them are surprised when they do see what we are doing . . .'

She paused, then went on relentlessly :

'The Americans do not understand. The American press attacks us, day in and day out. Look, in India my father is respected. Look at me : I've served time in prisons. So has my father. We have suffered. We have lived in exile. These sufferings that we have endured have woven halos about our heads for our masses . . . They look to us. They respect us. They love us. And the love and the respect they have for us we use to keep unity while we build up our country. Yet the Americans attack us. Do they know what they are doing? Don't they know that if they destroy my father, they will be opening the gates to anarchy, to Communism even? Don't they know what they are doing, these Americans . . .?'

And back of Sir John of Ceylon was also a nest of unrest. One day's visit in Colombo was enough to disclose dissatisfaction with the coalition government supporting him—a coalition composed of Communists, Trotskyites, and sundry other elements . . . And what of Indonesia? There was hardly any government there at all, save for

Sukarno's winged words of idealism, troops, and machine guns . . .

The Gold Coast was harassed by widespread tribal revolts. And so it went . . . I'm no expert regarding these politically turbulent areas of the world, but I'd suspect that the other Asian and African countries too had their millions of restless and demanding people.

Could these new statesmen look towards the West for the kind of help they wanted, help that would pull their debased populations quickly out of the mire of ignorance and poverty? A strange and new religion is in the hearts of these new Asian and African nationals. They feel that if they do not become quickly modern, if they do not measure up to the West almost overnight, they will be swallowed up again in what they feel to be slavery. And Chou En-lai stood there, bland, smiling, more liberal than any liberal ever seen on land or sea, preaching tolerance, assuring one and all that they need feel no shame, no sense of anxiety in the presence of his Communist-led six hundred million poor and backward Chinese . . . From both Moscow and Peking the word had gone out : Be nice; no more clenched fists; give them all a glad welcome . . . And all over Bandung the Communists were affable, shaking hands with their former enemies, waving aside all references to past hatreds and slanders, doing all in their power to heal old wounds . . .

And under this vague drift towards collectivism was a substratum of racial emotion . . .

IV

Racial Shame at Bandung

RACIAL feeling manifested itself at Bandung in a thousand subtle forms. The Sten gun and the hand grenades of the Indonesian troops evoked deep fear in many white observers. Said one Englishwoman :

‘I’d suggest that we evacuate Australia right now and settle the population in Canada.’

As I watched the dark-faced delegates work at the conference, I saw a strange thing happen. Before Bandung, most of these men had been strangers, and on the first day they were constrained with one another, bristling with charge and countercharge against America and/or Russia. But, as the days passed, they slowly cooled off, and another and different mood set in. What was happening? As they came to know one another better, their fear and distrust evaporated. Living for centuries under Western rule, they had become filled with a deep sense of how greatly they differed from one another. But now, face to face, their ideological defences dropped. Negative unity, bred by a feeling that they had to stand together against a rapacious West, turned into something that hinted of the positive. They began to sense their combined strength; they began to taste blood . . . They could now feel that their white enemy was far, far away . . . Day after day dun-coloured Trotsky-

ites consorted with dark Moslems, yellow Indo-Chinese hobnobbed with brown Indonesians, black Africans mingled with swarthy Arabs, tan Burmese associated with dark brown Hindus, dusky Nationalists palled around with yellow Communists, and Socialists talked to Buddhists. But they all had the same background of colonial experience, of subjection, of colour consciousness, and they found that ideology was not needed to define their relations . . . I got the notion that ideologies were the instruments that these men had grown used to wielding in their struggles with Western white men and that now, being together and among themselves, they no longer felt the need for them. As the importance of ideology declined, I began to feel that maybe ideology was a weapon that suited only certain hostile conditions of life. Racial realities have a strange logic of their own.

Over and beyond the waiting throngs that crowded the streets of Bandung, the conference had a most profound influence upon the colour-conscious millions in all the countries of the earth. I cite the case of an American Negro who heard the 'call of race' and came to Bandung. In his personality one can catch a glimpse of the befuddled hope that racial issues set in motion.

Mr Jones was a light brown, short, husky man who, according to American nomenclature, was 'coloured.' He was a mechanic in Los Angeles. He had never in his life written a line for publication, yet, when he heard that there was going to be a 'big conference of all the coloured nations on earth', this obscure man became deeply affected. By hook or crook he persuaded a newspaper to give him credentials, and he took all of his life's savings and those of his wife and set out for Bandung . . . Mr Jones was

'coloured', and being 'coloured' still means today in America that you can feel that you are in a lower category of the human race, that your hopes for freedom, for a redemption of your marked-off status, must be deferred. True, legislation against segregation was coming to Mr Jones's aid, but he had become conditioned to feeling defensive about his complexion. In short, Mr Jones felt that he belonged to a coloured nation, that he was out of place in America . . . So this brown man came thousands of miles to feel a fleeting sense of identity, of solidarity, a religious oneness with the others who shared his outcast state . . . And brown Mr Jones, watching the wily moves of tan Nehru and yellow Chou En-lai, understood absolutely nothing of what was going on about him . . .

Do I cite an unusual case? Then I shall submit one from the very top levels of American Negro life.

Adam Clayton Powell is a Negro Congressman from New York; he is the pastor of one of the largest Protestant churches in the United States. Though classed by American standards as a Negro, Congressman Powell is actually a white man, much whiter in terms of skin colour than many whites I've known. Hence, at Bandung, the Congressman had to explain that he was 'coloured', that his grandfather had been a branded slave.

Now, what Indonesia's President Sukarno had called 'the first international conference of coloured peoples in the history of mankind' deeply affected Congressman Powell, called to something buried not too far beneath his hard, practical mind; it awakened or re-awakened his sense of racial and neonational romanticism . . . So Congressman Powell flew to Bandung, coming as far as the Philippines in a United States bombing plane; there he teamed up

with the Philippine delegation and, while *en route* to Bandung, began holding press conferences to 'defend the position of the United States in relation to the Negro problem'.

The Congressman gave America a cleaner bill of racial health than we deserve, yet, at the same time, he stressed the coloured population of the United States, putting the figure at 23,000,000, which included Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Japanese, and maybe a few other races. It is to be recalled that, with the exception of Congressman Powell, no delegate or observer at Bandung mentioned the Negro problem in the United States—a problem which is child's play compared to the naked racial tensions gripping Asia and Africa . . .

I'm not critical of Congressman Powell's efforts, though his activities were not my style, smacking much too much of high-pressure salesmanship and public relations—two hardy, frisky arctic animals utterly unknown in the tropical latitudes of Bandung . . . The astounding aspect of Congressman Powell's appearance at Bandung was that he *felt the call, felt its meaning* . . . At the very moment when the United States was trying to iron out the brutal kinks of its race problem, there came along a world event which re-awakened in the hearts of its '23,000,000 coloured citizens' the feeling of *race*, a feeling which the racial mores of American whites had induced deep in their hearts. If a man as sophisticated as Congressman Powell felt this, then one can safely assume that in less schooled and more naïve hearts it went profoundly deep.

Just how conscious were the Asian statesmen at Bandung of the racial content of what they were organizing? I discussed this problem with none less than Nehru. That

Asian statesman asked me what I thought of the reactions of the West to the conference and I said :

‘Mr Prime Minister, the West has exploited these people for centuries and such gatherings as this evoke fear deep in their hearts. There are people who ask if this is not racism in reverse—’

‘Yes,’ Nehru said. ‘The West feels what you say. But what the West feels can come about. Race feeling is in these people, and if the West keeps pressuring them, they will create racism in them.’

By sheer chance I stumbled upon a little book that gave me great insight into how the Dutch created racial conditioning in Indonesia, just what the nature of Dutch and Indonesian relations were. This booklet was designed to teach the Indonesian language to Dutch officials, housewives, or just wandering tourists, European or otherwise. The first thing that one notices is that there are no Indonesian words in this booklet for polite talk, for civil intercourse; there is not a single sentence that would enable one to inquire of the feelings of another. Whether the author knew it or not, he was writing a book to instruct an army of invaders how to demean, intimidate, and break the spirit of an enemy people in a conquered, occupied country . . . All sentences are rendered in terms of flat orders, commands; an exclamation point usually follows each sentence, implying that one actually shouted one’s orders.

This booklet, entitled *Bahasa Indonesia*, a book of elementary Malay, was compiled by S. van der Molen (adapted for the use of English-speaking students by Harry F. Cemach). It was published by W. van Hoeve, The Hague, in 1949. For example, page 22, lesson 7, gave the following use of the Indonesian language. I cite the English

equivalents of the Indonesian words which are printed in the left-hand column of each page :

Gardener, sweep the garden !
That broom is broken !
Make a new broom !
Sweep up in front first !
Washerwoman, here are the dirty clothes !
Don't ruin them, will you ?
Babu, wash the clothes !

Then, on page 34, one gets in lesson 13, entitled 'Hold the Thief !' a good look into the psychology of the Dutch as it related to the humanity of the Indonesian. I quote a part of it, thus :

Didn't you close the window last night ?
All the silver is gone.
The drawers of the sideboard are empty.
During the night there has been a thief.
What did the thief steal ?
Where is the gardener ?
He went to the pawnshop.
He took two spoons and received five guilders.
All the other goods were still in his pack.
He was arrested by the police.
All my stolen property has been returned.

The masterpiece is in lesson 24, page 56; it is entitled 'The Master Is Cross'. Here it is, word for word :

Who is it ?
Where do you come from ?
Where are you going ?
Why are you running about here ?
What are you looking for ?

Don't pass along here!
You must stay over there!
You are not clever enough.
You are stupid.
You'll get into trouble in a minute.
Be careful, don't do it like that!
Think first. Look for ways and means.
Are you ashamed?
I want information.
I don't understand.
I think you are lying.
I don't believe it!
Don't talk nonsense!
Speak straight out!
Don't be difficult!
Don't be afraid, answer!
Just why are you silent?
Why don't you dare?
I don't want to hear such nonsense! Be quiet!
Now that's enough!
That matter is already clear.

And today there are Dutchmen who complain that the Indonesians are 'Dutch crazy', that is, when an Indonesian sees a Dutch face, he gets angry . . . The mystery is how did it last for three hundred and fifty years? The sentences I have quoted above were designed to maintain 'law, order, peace, and tranquility . . .' A reliable UNESCO official informed me that today the Belgians in the Congo use such methods of communication with their Congo natives and they characterize their attitude as '*dur mais juste* . . .' And there are swarms of social scientists in Asia and Africa culling for facts to find out why the natives rise suddenly and rush for the throats of Europeans . . .

One afternoon in Bandung a knock came at my hotel door; I rose and opened the door and saw a tall white woman. She smiled shyly and said:

'Forgive me for bothering you. You are Richard Wright?'

'Yes. What is it?'

The woman looked off nervously, then smiled again, and asked:

'May I speak to you for a few moments?'

'Of course. Suppose we sit here on the veranda. Is that all right?'

'Oh, thank you,' she said. 'I know I'm intruding—'

'Not at all. Sit down. Now, what's on your mind?'

Seated, she smiled. Her hands were nervous and she knotted and unknotted her fingers.

'You are a journalist?' I asked her.

'Yes,' she answered. 'I want to ask you about something, but I don't know how to begin. You see, I've read your books and felt that you, of all people, could tell me something . . .'

'I'll try,' I said.

'You see, my room-mate is a Negro girl from Boston—'

'Hunh huh.'

'She's nice, really. She's a journalist too. But—I don't know how to say it'—she broke off in confusion.

I studied her closely, but I could get no clue as to why she was so wrought up.

'You find this girl offensive,' I suggested.

'Oh, no! It's not that. But—she's *strange*.'

'In what way?'

'Believe me, it's not racial prejudice on my part—'

'You are American?'

'Yes. But I'm not prejudiced. I swear I'm not. I'm liberal—'

'I believe you,' I told her.

'It has nothing to do with race,' she said.

'Just relax and tell me what's the matter. What happened?'

She edged to the end of her bamboo chair and smiled again. Then suddenly she was serious, dead serious.

'It's at night. I don't understand it. She comes in late . . . Oh, she's polite, all right. She pulls off her shoes and walks around in her bare feet; that's not to awaken me. She is black, real *black*, you see? Her skin is very shiny. I don't mind that. When I first met her I thought she was very pretty; I do still. But when she thinks I'm sleeping, she does some strange things . . . On her bare feet she creeps around like a cat . . . Then one night I awakened and tried to see what she was doing; the room was dark . . . I smelt something strange, like something burning . . . She was in a dark corner of the room and was bent over a tiny blue light, a very low and a very blue flame . . . It seemed like she was combing her hair, but I wasn't sure. Her right arm was moving and now and then she would look over her shoulder towards my bed . . . I was scared . . . Now, look, could she have been practising, voodoo or something?'

'WHAT?'

'Voodoo,' she repeated humbly.

'What makes you ask that?'

'Oh, maybe you think I'm crazy! But I want to understand. Why is she so secretive? Why does she creep around at night on her bare feet?'

I was baffled. *A blue light? A strange smell?* Was the woman telling me the truth?

'What else has this woman done?'

'Nothing. But she gives me the creeps, that moving around all night and that blue light and that odour . . .'

'Did you try to get a look into her things?'

She hesitated, then looked off and said :

'I tried to find out what it was she was doing at all hours of the night. But I could find nothing but an empty tin can; it was marked *Sterno* . . .'

I gaped as comprehension swept into my mind. Then I laughed out loud.

'Well, calm down. It's all very simple. The woman was straightening her hair. You said that she was using something that looked like a comb . . . That can of *Sterno* was to heat her metal comb which she uses to straighten her hair. And she did not want you—'

'But why would she straighten her hair? Her hair seems all right.'

'Her hair is all right. But it's not straight. It's kinky. But she does not want you, a white woman, to see her when she straightens her hair. She would feel embarrassed—'

'Why?'

'Because you were born with straight hair, and she wants to look as much like you as possible . . .'

The woman stared at me, then clapped her hand to her eyes and exclaimed :

'Oh!'

I leaned back and thought : here in Asia where everybody was dark that poor American Negro woman was worried about the hair she was born with. Here, where practically nobody was white, her hair would have been acceptable; no one would have found her 'inferior' be-

cause her hair was kinky; on the contrary, the Indonesians would perhaps have found her different and charming. (In fact, there are some Indonesians in some of the islands who have kinky hair!)

'So that's why she changed colour so often,' the woman spoke in a tone of quiet wonder.

'What did she do?'

'She would go into the bathroom, lock the door, and stay for an hour or more . . . And when she came out, she'd be much lighter in colour. When she went in, she was black, naturally black; but when she came out, she was much lighter, pale, sort of grey—'

'She uses chemicals on her skin,' I told the woman.

'But why?'

'Negroes have been made ashamed of being black. Dark Hindus feel the same way. White people have made them feel like that. The American Negroes are black and they live in a white country. Almost every picture and image they see is white. The Hindus have been conditioned to regard white skins as superior; for centuries, all the authority and power in their country were in the hands of whites . . . So these people grow to feel that their lowly position is associated with their being black. They have been told time and again that they are inferior. And this woman, your room-mate, is trying to make herself look as white as possible. Can you blame her? It's a tribute that she pays to the white race. It's her way of saying: "Forgive me. I'm sorry that I'm black; I'm ashamed that my hair is not like yours. But you see that I'm doing all that I can to be like you . . ."'

'That's horrible,' the woman breathed. 'She crucifies herself—'

'Every day that woman commits psychological suicide,' I tried to explain. 'That is why twenty-nine nations are meeting here in Bandung to discuss racialism and colonialism. The feeling of inferiority that the white man has instilled in these people corrodes their very souls . . . And though they won't admit it openly, they hate it.'

'Now I remember something—'

'What?'

'One night she passed my bed; she stopped and said: "I'm walking softly so that I won't awaken you." And, you know what I said? I was half asleep and I mumbled: "Don't bother, I see everything." After that, she acted like she hated my very guts . . .'

'She felt that you'd been spying on her shameful ritual of hair-straightening and skin-lightening.'

'But what can I do?'

'Nothing,' I told her. 'This is much bigger than you or I. Your father and your father's father started all this evil. Now it lives with us. First of all, just try to understand it. And get all that rot about voodoo out of your mind.'

The woman stared and tears welled into her eyes.

'I'm ashamed,' she whispered.

'The whole world ought to be ashamed,' I told her.

She rose, reached out her hand to me, then she jerked it back. I wondered if I'd offended her with my frank talk about what the black woman had been doing.

'What's the matter?'

'That woman was telephoning today and I overheard what she was saying . . . Say, now it comes clear. She was begging some Negro reporter to try to find a can of Sterno for her. And she wore a cloth about her head. She begged and begged for a can of Sterno . . .'

'Maybe her Sterno is all gone.'

'That's what she told the man—'

'Then that means that she cannot now straighten her hair. This heat and humidity will make it kinky again. And she doesn't want anybody to see her hair in its natural state—'

'God in Heaven, why doesn't she forget her hair? She's pretty like she is!'

'She *can't* forget it. The feeling that she is black and evil has been driven into her very soul . . .'

The woman stood and stared off into space for a long time. I saw sweat beads on her forehead and nose. Then I heard the scream of a siren as some car belonging to the delegation of some Asian or African coloured nation sped down the street, followed by a truckload of white-helmeted troops armed with Sten guns and hand grenades. The woman shook hands with me abruptly and said :

'Thank you. Goodbye.'

'Goodbye,' I said. 'And tonight, for God's sake, try to sleep.'

'I shall,' she said and was gone.

Even among Indonesian intellectuals I found strong racial feelings. I spent an evening with a group of artists, poets, and writers who spoke of their attitudes towards the West quite freely. To my surprise, I was told that even in the city of Jakarta there were not many contacts between intelligent Indonesians and Europeans and Americans. White missionaries had established some areas of contact; businessmen had created relations of a commercial nature; and of course the Communists maintained the closest and most intimate contacts of all . . .

The only two public places where Indonesians and

Europeans can meet on a basis of informal intimacy are the city's two main bars, but since Indonesians, because of religious reasons, are not great drinkers, they rarely frequent these bars. This lack of routine and steady contact stems, no doubt, from the heritage left here by Dutch rule.

'The Dutch, the Americans, and the English do not know us,' a young and well-known poet told me. 'Where can we meet them? In those two bars? No! We don't like night clubs. And our experience in meeting these Europeans has always turned out badly. When they leave Indonesia, they write false things about us. We are exotic children to them. Why, one white woman journalist went away and wrote an article saying that we grew banana trees in our homes! Can you imagine that?'

On many occasions I found that the moment a European or a white American entered a room in which I was talking to Indonesians, a sense of constraint and awkwardness at once came over the Indonesians, and the conversation would veer quickly from intimate descriptions of their personal feelings towards general topics.

In an intimate interview with one of the best-known Indonesian novelists I asked him point-blank:

'Do you consider yourself as being coloured?'

'Yes.'

'Why?'

'Because I feel inferior. I can't help it. It is hard to be in contact with the white Western world and not feel like that. Our people are backward; there is no doubt of it. The white Western world is ahead of us. What we see of the white West is advanced; what we see of Asia is backward. So you can't help feeling inferior. And that is why I feel that I'm coloured.'

This writer heads a powerful cultural organization; he is devoutly religious and is highly respected among his colleagues. Yet he holds the most violent attitudes towards the Japanese.

'Those *yellow* monkeys!' He spat as he referred to them.

'But they are coloured too,' I reminded him.

'But we Indonesians are *brown*,' he told me proudly.

Since all progress and social change are measured in terms of the degree to which Asian and African countries resemble Western countries, each tiny alteration wrought in the traditional and customary habits of the people evoke in them feelings of race consciousness. Said a young Indonesian bureaucrat to me :

'We Indonesians are just discovering the weekend. We used to hear about people going away for the weekend, but it was an experience we had never had. We saw American movies in which people went away from the city to the seashore or the mountains for weekends. Now we are doing what we saw the white Americans do in the movies . . . Funny, isn't it? Under Dutch rule there was no such thing as a weekend for us. Either we were too busy working to make a living or we didn't have enough money for a weekend. Now we Indonesians can go and enjoy a cool weekend in the mountains like the Americans.'

Even mild-tempered Buddhists echo this attitude of defensiveness towards the West in religious matters. Said U Mya Sein, Chargé d'Affaires of the Union of Burma Embassy in Indonesia, in an address before an audience of the Islamic University :

'When Western colonialism annexed Burma about a century ago, nearly one per cent of the then population were *bhikkus* or Buddhist monks. Gradually, however,

Buddhism suffered a decline through neglect under conditions of colonialism. As a matter of policy, colonialists introduced non-Buddhist missionaries into Burma on the one hand and on the other deprived Buddhist monks and monasteries of the status enjoyed during precolonial days.

'Today, after regaining its independence from colonialism, Burma is returning to the traditions of Buddhism in everyday life. The Constitution of Burma provides for a Secular State although it endorses that Buddhism is [the religion held] by the majority (i.e. 90 per cent) of the nation.'

Still another result of the Western impact upon the temperament of the Asian is the mushroom growth of a race-conscious and chaotic literature born of inferiority feelings; self-criticism runs rampant; extreme attitudes, smacking of omnipotence of thought, take the place of calm, constructive plans or projects. It is as if the Asian, smarting under his loss of face, were trying to offer to his new god of industrialization a sacrifice of ultramodernity of attitude and idea to redeem his state of racial degradation and humiliation. One hears the most abstruse ideas being debated by sweating brown or black or yellow men in sweltering bamboo houses . . . Deprived of historical perspective, feeling his 'racial' world broken, the new Asian makes a cult of action, of dynamism, to fill the void that is his; hence, motives for action are neurotically sought for. Racial insults, slights, and offences, no matter how trivial, are hugged and nursed. If the past is shameful, and the future uncertain, then the present, no matter what its content, must be made dramatically meaningful . . . Rendered masochistic by a too long Western dominance, carrying a hated burden of oversensitive racial feelings, he now

rushes forward psychologically to embrace the worst that the West can do to him, and he feels it natural that the West should threaten him with atom or hydrogen bombs. In this manner he accepts the dreadful bombing long before it comes, if ever. Europeans told me that if an atom or hydrogen bomb ever fell on Asian soil from Western planes, every white man, woman, and child in sight would be slain within twenty-four hours.

The most racially pathetic of all the Asians is the Eurasian, those black-white men of Asia . . . The West created this class as a kind of buffer between themselves and the illiterate yellow and brown and black masses, but now they want none of these Eurasians in their ordered Western societies. And the brown and yellow and black masses will have none of the Eurasians, for they, with their European dress, attitude, and manners, remind the masses too much of the white Europeans who once held them in subjection. Hated by both sides, shunned by all, the Eurasian ends by hating himself, alone in a lonely world.

'But why,' an internationally important official asked me in worried tones, 'do these people keep on talking and feeling this racial business when they are now free?'

'They can't forget it that quickly,' I told him. 'It lasted too long. It has become a way of life.'

The Western world set these mighty currents in action, and it is not for that Western world to say when and how these currents, now grown turbulent and stormy, will subside and flow again in the normal channels of human intercourse.

The echo of racial consciousness assumes a truly agonizing ring when it is sounded by sensitive whites who try to

penetrate the colour curtain. A young, morally sensitive white Christian implored me to tell him how he could square the racial role he was forced to play with his love of the poor and the oppressed.

'I must earn my living; I have a wife and child,' he explained. 'Yet what I'm doing here is hurting these Indonesians. I try to make as many friends among the Indonesians as I dare, but I must be careful. My white comrades in the company where I work think that I'm odd, crazy. The company pays the Indonesian who works with me less than it pays me, yet that Indonesian is as efficient as I am . . . I'm white and he is not; that is the only justification for this inequality in pay. And that Indonesian knows it and it makes him bitter. But if I so much as lift my voice about it, I'd be fired, black-listed; I'd be guilty of the greatest sin that a white man could commit out here. I'm rewarded for doing wrong and penalized for doing right. Maybe you'd say, "Leave". But that's no solution. At least by remaining, I can talk to a few Indonesians. But that too is dangerous . . .

'Here I must belong to my European circle; they want me to belong to their clubs and drink with them. The life we Europeans live out here is unnatural. For example, I cannot keep rabbits here like I did in Europe. Even for a European to keep a garden and do his own work in it makes him suspect . . .'

It was hard for me to advise him. He was a Christian and the Christian church has not found any practical answers to questions such as he had posed. For such moral problems the Communists have ready answers; they would have directed the man to remain on his job and organize, serve the interest of the Party, thereby enabling him to

assuage the moral outrage done to his feelings . . . But Christians have no Party, no practical cause to serve. Hence, such men carry out their colonial duties with loathing. Filled with a bad conscience, they find it impossible to defend the policies of the Western world.

‘Have you tried to talk to some Indonesians?’ I asked him.

‘It’s hard,’ he lamented. ‘A white man out here goes through agony before he can approach an Indonesian in an honest manner. First, he has to overcome his inhibitions. Then he has to be certain that the Indonesian he approaches has not been corrupted by the whites. There have been cases of Indonesians who have betrayed whites who sought their friendship, who tried to help them. Many Indonesians have seen whites sit behind big desks and earn good money, easy money; and, once some Indonesians reach such positions, they wish to keep them. They side with the whites.’

It was not simple or easy.

V

The Western World at Bandung

THE Western world was at Bandung in a way that could not be denied; it was on everybody's tongue, for the English language was the dominant language of the conference. The Indonesians, having spurned the Dutch language as soon they had heaved out the Dutch, had enthroned their own native tongue; but they knew that they had to have an auxiliary language, and English had been chosen. French was spoken by some of the delegates from North Africa, but that precise and logical tongue which was once the *lingua franca* of all such international conferences was all but dead here. Due to French intransigence towards all new nationalism, and thanks to French selfishness and chauvinism towards her millions of blacks in Africa, there were but few delegates at Bandung who felt the need for French . . . Today, as never before, it can be seen that the future of national cultures will reside in the willingness of nations to take up modern ideas and live out their logic. The British, imperialists though they are, have been much more flexible than the French; they have not felt that they were compelled to insist on their own national ideas and have accepted the indigenous nationalisms of their subjects; hence, there were more free and independent former subjects of Britain participating in the Asian-

THE WESTERN WORLD AT BANDUNG 169
African Conference than those of any other Western nation . . .

I felt while at Bandung that the English language was about to undergo one of the most severe tests in its long and glorious history. Not only was English becoming the common, dominant tongue of the globe, but it was evident that soon there would be more people speaking English than there were people whose native tongue was English . . . H. L. Mencken has traced the origins of many of our American words and phrases that went to modify English to an extent that we now regard our English tongue in America as the American language. What will happen when millions upon millions of new people in the tropics begin to speak English? Alien pressures and structures of thought and feeling will be brought to bear upon this our mother tongue and we shall be hearing some strange and twisted expressions . . . But this is all to the good; a language is useless unless it can be used for the vital purposes of life, and to use a language in new situations is, inevitably, to change it.

Thus, the strident moral strictures against the Western world preached at Bandung were uttered in the language of the cultures that the delegates were denouncing! I felt that there was something just and proper about it; by this means English was coming to contain a new extension of feeling, of moral knowledge. To those who had heard (or, more exactly, read) similar strictures levelled against the French and the English in bygone days by Frenchmen and Englishmen during the French and American Revolutions, these Bandung preachments had the tonal ring of a closing of a gap in history. For, if those past French and English revolutionaries had had the moral courage to have extended

their new and bold declarations of a new humanity to black and brown and yellow men, these ex-colonial subjects would never have felt the need to rise against the West . . .

The results of the deliberations of the delegates at Bandung would be, of course, addressed to the people and the statesmen of the Western powers, for it was the moral notions—or lack of them—of those powers that were in question here; it had been against the dominance of those powers that these delegates and their populations had struggled so long. After two days of torrid public speaking and four days of discussions in closed sessions, the Asian-African Conference issued a communiqué. It was a sober document, brief and to the point; yet it did not hesitate to lash out, in terse legal prose, at racial injustice and colonial exploitation.

I repeat and underline that the document was addressed to the West, to the moral prepossessions of the West. It was my belief that the delegates at Bandung, for the most part, though bitter, looked and hoped towards the West . . . The West, in my opinion, must be big enough, generous enough, to accept and understand that bitterness. The Bandung communiqué was no appeal, in terms of sentiment or ideology, to Communism. Instead, it carried exalted overtones of the stern dignity of ancient and proud peoples who yearned to rise and play again a role in human affairs.

It was also my conviction that, if this call is unheeded, ignored, and if these men, as they will, should meet again, their appeal would be different . . . IN SUM, BANDUNG WAS THE LAST CALL OF WESTERNIZED ASIANS TO THE MORAL CONSCIENCE OF THE WEST!

If the West spurns this call, what will happen? I don't

know . . . But remember that Mr Chou En-lai stands there, waiting, patient, with no record of racial practices behind him . . . He will listen.

The Bandung communiqué stressed economic co-operation among the Asian-African powers; did not condemn the acceptance of foreign capital; adjured the participating countries to aid one another technically; encouraged joint financial ventures; recognized the need for a greater flow of Asian-African trade; urged collective action to stabilize the prices of primary products; recommended that the participating nations process their own raw materials wherever possible; resolved to break the shipping monopoly of the Western maritime powers; agreed upon the necessity of establishing banks among themselves; advised for an exchange of information relating to oil, remittance of profits and taxation, all tending towards the formulation of common policies; emphasized that nuclear energy should be for peaceful purposes and urged its internationalized control; concurred in the decision to appoint liaison officers in the participating countries to facilitate a continued exchange of information; and stated that it did not consider that it was forming a regional bloc . . .

The first section of the communiqué sounds innocent enough, but to those who know the intricate and delicate economic structure of the Western world it spells out what Jack London called the 'Yellow Peril' and no less! For the 'Yellow Peril' as Jack London conceived it, was not primarily a racial matter; it was economic. When the day comes that Asian and African raw materials are processed in Asia and Africa by labour whose needs are not as inflated as those of Western labourers, the supremacy of the Western world, economic, cultural, and political, will

have been broken once and for all on this earth and a de-Occidentalization of mankind will have definitely set in. (Thus, in time, the whole world will be de-Occidentalized, for there will be no East or West!)

To have an ordered, rational world in which we all can share, I suppose that the average white Westerner will have to accept this ultimately; either he accepts it or he will have to seek for ways and means of resubjugating these newly freed hundreds of millions of brown and yellow and black people. If he does accept it, he will also have to accept, for an unspecified length of time, a much, much lower standard of living, for that is what a de-Occidentalization of present-day mankind will bring about. Indeed, if the above programme were only slightly implemented among the one and a half thousand million people involved, it would result in a need for radical reconstruction of the social and economic systems of the Western world.

On the cultural front, the conference communiqué was no less ambitious; it called for a renewal, in 'the context of the modern world', of the ancient Asian and African cultures and religions 'which have been interrupted during the past centuries'; condemned colonialism without qualification; demanded the cultural liberation of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco from the hegemony of French rule; castigated racial and discriminatory practices of Europeans in Asia and Africa; urged Asian and African countries to place educational and cultural facilities at the disposal of their less developed neighbours; etc.

On the plane of human rights and self-determination, the communiqué endorsed the principles of human rights as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations; declared its support of those people now struggling for self-govern-

ment; extended its sympathy to the victims of racial discrimination in South Africa and deplored such systems of racism, etc.

On the problems of so-called dependent peoples, the communiqué declared that all existing colonialism should be brought to a speedy end; and, for the second time, and in even sharper and blunter language, condemned the French government for not granting self-determination to Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco; cited its support of the Arab people of Palestine and called for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on Palestine; backed the claim of Indonesia to West Irian; appealed to the Security Council of the United Nations to accept Cambodia, Ceylon, Japan, Jordan, Nepal, and a unified Vietnam as members of the United Nations; etc.

In general terms, the communiqué deemed inadequate the representation of Asian-African countries on the Security Council of the United Nations; called for the prohibition of thermo-nuclear weapons and pressed for international control of such disarmament, and for the suspension of all further experiments with such weapons; etc.

It is to be noted that the emotional tone of the communiqué differed sharply from the highly charged speeches of the heads of delegations at Bandung. Indeed, it is to the credit of the taste of Nehru that he was violently opposed to those speeches but gave in when other heads of delegations insisted upon their right to make known their views upon world issues. And I suspect that Chou En-lai, materialistic and rational, was ill at ease when, on the final night of the conference, an Ethiopian delegate rose, mounted the rostrum, and, as though he were

in a pulpit, preached for fifteen minutes an old-fashioned sermon about the 'eternal values of the Spirit'. And I dare say that Nehru, agnostic, poised, and civilized, must have winced more than once as that tide of fervent emotion spilled over him . . .

What are the chances of the Asian-African nations implementing the contents of that communiqué? Frankly, I think that they are pretty good. The Western world erroneously thinks that its techniques are difficult to acquire; they are not; they are the easiest things that the East can take from the West. The hard things are the intangibles, such as the Western concept of personality, and also the attitude of objectivity . . . But will the implementation of the communiqué solve the basic problems of Asia and Africa? I do not think so. Those problems have so vast and intricate a design and frame of reference, they have been left so long to rot, germinate, and grow complex, that I doubt seriously if such concrete and limited objectives can cope with them.

The question of time enters here. (Not the kind of time that the West speaks of, that is, how long will it take these people to master mechanical processes, etc. The West is much simpler in many ways than Asia and Africa, and Asians and Africans can understand our civilization much quicker than we can grasp their poetic and involved cultures!) The time I speak of is this: Can Asian and African leaders keep pace with the dynamics of a hundred thousand or more people loosed from their colonial shackles, but loosed in terms of defensive, irrational feelings? Bandung represented mankind negatively freed from its traditions and customs, and the conference at Bandung was the first attempt in history on the part of man as

man to organize himself . . . And he is not prepared to do so. He has been kept too long in ignorance and superstition and darkness. (But to use this as an excuse to keep him under tutelage longer will certainly not help matters.) But now, there he is, free and on the stage of history!

Who can harness this force? While at Bandung listening to the delegates rise and make their speeches, I got a belated glimpse, couched in terms of concrete history, of the convulsive terror that must have gripped the hearts of the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1920 . . . Lenin, no matter what we may think of him today, was faced with a half-starving nation of 160,000,000 partly tribalized people and he and his cohorts felt that they could trust nobody; they were afraid of losing their newly gained power, their control over the destinies of their country. Now, today, there are one and a half thousand million people loosed from domination and they too were afraid of losing their freedom, of being dominated again by alien powers, afraid of a war for which they were in no way prepared. What Lenin had faced in Russia in 1920 was here projected on a stage of history stretching over continents and augmented in terms of population a thousandfold!

Bandung was no simple exercise in Left and Right politics; it was no mere minor episode in the Cold War; it was no Communist Front meeting. The seizure of power was not on the agenda; Bandung was not concerned with how to take power. ALL THE MEN THERE REPRESENTED GOVERNMENTS THAT HAD ALREADY SEIZED POWER AND THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT. Bandung was a decisive moment in the consciousness of sixty-five per cent of the human race, and that moment meant: HOW SHALL THE HUMAN RACE BE ORGANIZED? The decisions or lack

of them flowing from Bandung will condition the totality of human life on this earth.

Despite the hearty verbal endorsements of the Asian-African Conference by Moscow and Peking, the Communists at Bandung were more than usually silent. I think that that reticence stemmed from the fact that they understood all too well the magnitude of the problem confronting them. They did not want to disavow that problem, yet they could not actively seize hold of it; it was too big . . . Pending their elaboration of a method or a theory of seizing hold of this vast multitude, they eyed it coldly and cynically to determine what 'use' they could make of it. And they began making 'use' of Bandung before the conference was over. To evade or dodge enemies hot on their trail, they began 'hiding' amidst this motley host, surrounding themselves with it for protection, etc.

I feel a difference between the Russian and the Chinese attitude towards Bandung. Committed to their strait-jacket dialectics, the Russians looked greedily at Bandung, but like a dog that had once eaten poisoned meat and wanted no more of it for the time being. The Russians had once lived through a situation like this and they had paid tragically for it. And it must be remembered that the Asians and Africans have no sturdy tradition in modern ideological socialism, no body of proven materialistic political thought, no background of trade-union consciousness on to which Stalinist-trained Russian Communists can easily latch. True, there are vast millions of Asians and Africans who are angry, frustrated, poor, and rendered restless and rebellious by their past relationship to the Western world. But this mystic-minded throng of coloured men would not respond readily to the slogans born of

Russian conditions of revolutionary struggle, and the Communists at Bandung knew it . . .

The Chinese, I suspect, are more sanguine, but secretly so. They have had no little experience in organizing mystic-minded peasants. But these Asians and Africans were shy and had been warned. Hence, Chou's cautious approach. He committed himself to nothing but to play the role of a fellow traveller. He would be content for a while to snuggle as close as possible to this gummy mass and watch and wait . . .

If the Asians and Africans cannot handle this, and if the Communists would merely play with it to gain time, to 'use' it for their own advantages, who then can master this massive reality that has, like a volcanic eruption, shot up from the ocean's floor?

I know that there are Westerners who will decry my positing this unwieldy lump of humanity on their moral doorsteps when I state again and again that it was their past relationship to these baffled millions that made them angry and wilful. I can only cite a British authority for my attitude. Says F. S. Furnivall in his *Colonial Policy and Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1948), page 8 :

' . . . In policy, as in law, men must be held to intend the natural consequences of their acts, and it is from the results of colonial policy rather than from statements of its objects that its true character can be ascertained.'

But it is most difficult for a Westerner to understand or accept this; he insists upon the nobility of his intentions even when all the facts are dead against it. Whatever the Westerner *thought* he was doing when he entered these tropical lands, he left behind him a sea of

anger. I'd call his attention to an objective observer's appraisal. Furnivall in *Colonial Policy and Practice*, page 299, judges the state of life among the natives after Britain and Holland had done their best. He says :

' . . . they are the poorer for the loss of things that are bought without money and without price . . . they remain imprisoned in a dying civilization and their social life is impoverished and not enriched.'

In seeking intelligent reactions to the meaning of Bandung, I found a highly competent official who met my qualifications on grounds of elementary honesty; this particular man was a reformed American of the Old South. His grandfather had owned slaves and he was eagerly willing to own up to what had happened in history and was most committed to try to do something about it. I questioned him, narrowing my request for information to the situation obtaining in Indonesia, taking that baby nation and its case of measles as my point of departure.

'Let's start with Communism,' he said. 'It's no danger here, not yet . . . What this country needs in order to make rapid progress is assistance; it needs it badly and in all fields . . . Above all, it needs personnel trained in modern techniques. Now, I'd advocate that we Americans ought to take about a hundred and fifty Indonesian students each year and train them . . . No political strings tied to that. In that way a body of trained and educated young men would be built up—'

'How long would this training process go on?' I asked.

'For fifty or a hundred years,' he answered.

I stared at him in amazement.

'Have you got that much *time*?'

'What else can we do?' he asked, spreading his palms. 'We can't interfere here. Our ethics prohibit such as that.'

'Man,' I said, 'civilization itself is built upon the right to interfere. We start interfering with a baby as soon as it is born. Education is interference. I think you have a right to interfere, if you feel that the assumptions of your interference are sound.'

'I'm a Jeffersonian Democrat,' he said. 'We will help, but we won't interfere.'

'Does your concept of non-interference take into consideration what others might be doing?'

'What do you mean?' he asked.

'Well, there are people who have a conviction that one can educate people in how to build a nation,' I began cautiously. 'The Russians have institutes in which to train people in the principles of nation-building—'

'No institutes,' he said with finality. 'That's the beauty of our position. Look, when we select students to go to America, it is done on an informal basis. We don't have the right to mould and insist like that—'

'But suppose the Indonesians needed or wanted just that?'

The conversation broke down and I suspected that that man had suspicions of my political leanings . . . We had at once clashed over two concepts of what was 'good'. He was insisting that Indonesians develop and progress precisely as Americans had done, and that this was 'good' for them. I doubted if many Indonesians could have stated with any degree of accuracy what was 'good' for them. They were much clearer about what they did not want than about what they wanted.

I did not question the man's intelligence, sincerity, or

generosity, but I knew that he did not see the problem as I saw it, that he felt no sense of urgency, did not grasp the terrible reality that was sprawling so directly and dramatically before his eyes. He was inclined to take the high-flown rhetoric of Sukarno and others as mere spell-binding tricks and not as a true index of the nature of a reality that had to be grappled with.

In my search for a more modern and scientific attitude towards Asian problems, I was introduced to Mr Benjamin Higgins, social scientist of the Centre for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mr Higgins was the head of a field team which was gathering facts about colonial problems in the South Pacific and it was hoped that the facts found would enable new and effective solutions to problems to be worked out. Mr Higgins was intelligent, quick, and admitted at once :

‘The hour is late, very, *very* late.’

‘But not *too* late?’ I asked.

‘I don’t know,’ he said.

In his most recent scientific paper, entitled *The ‘Dualistic Theory’ of Underdeveloped Areas*, Mr Higgins, an American liberal, takes issue with Dr Boeke, a renowned Dutch social scientist and apologist for former Dutch colonial policy in Indonesia. Mr Higgins brilliantly exposes Dr Boeke’s essentially reactionary position, which consists of such profound statements as :

We shall do well not to try to transplant the tender, delicate hothouse plants of Western theory to tropical soil, where an early death awaits them.

Dr Boeke feels that Eastern society is moulded by ‘fatal-

THE WESTERN WORLD AT BANDUNG 181
ism and resignation'. In dealing with Indonesian personalities, Dr Boeke recommends :

. . . faith, charity, and patience, angelic patience.

Mr Higgins, with scientific precision, rips into Dr Boeke's limited, prejudiced theories, branding them as 'defeatist, and indeed dangerous, because it is precisely slow evolution that cannot succeed in face of all the obstacles'.

What has Mr Higgins, then, to offer? He outlines :

If truly ambitious programmes of capital and technical assistance are undertaken, with full, wholehearted, and sympathetic co-operation of the underdeveloped countries themselves, I believe there is a good chance that the social and cultural obstacles may disappear without having to be attacked directly. However, this result will be attained only if the scale of such assistance is big enough both to provide a 'shock treatment', and to turn the present large-scale disguised unemployment into an asset. The programme must be big in relative terms (measured, let us say, in terms of the rate of *per capita* capital accumulation or rate of increase in man-hour production) as was the Industrial Revolution in Europe; which means, in view of the very much larger populations in the new underdeveloped areas, that it must be very much greater in absolute terms than anything that occurred in Europe in the eighteenth century or in the New World in the nineteenth and twentieth.

Mr Higgins is speaking in historical terms and what he here proposes makes a Marshall Plan sink into relative insignificance ! He continues :

If the programme of capital and technical assistance is big

enough to produce a rate of increase in productivity high enough to outrun population growth for a time, there is good reason to suppose that the social and cultural barriers to further development will melt away.

The transformation of the traditional and customary attitudes will come about in the following manner, according to Mr Higgins :

. . . Similarly, the feudal attitudes towards entrepreneurship will tend to disappear, if trade and industry provide a route to the top of the social scale—even if it takes one or two generations—as it did in Europe and in the New World. If the economy is expanding and businessmen are being trained, opportunities for accumulation of wealth will be created; and if enough people in the underdeveloped areas become rich through trade and commerce, the feudal attitude towards ‘sullyng one’s hands in trade’ will break down in the Orient as it did in Europe. Similarly, if standards of living are really improving, so that people have before their eyes a picture of families moving from one standard of living to a higher one through their own efforts, the ‘backward-sloping supply curve’ will give way to a willingness to work harder, save more, and assume greater risks in hope of attaining a more ample life.

I believe that this is today’s typical Western attitude; and it is to be noted that there are no political considerations mentioned there. *But where are such skills and such vast sums of money coming from on the scale visualized by Mr Higgins?* We are here dealing with one and one-half thousand million people living on 12,606,938 square miles of the earth’s surface! Human engineering on the scale proposed by Mr Higgins would bankrupt the United

States in one year . . . Mr Higgins's vision is frontal and honest, lacking that unexpressed assumption of the biological inferiority of the Asian which buttresses Dr Boeke's theories. But can such a project be implemented in terms of skilled men and money as we know these items today? The subcontinent of India alone contains five hundred million human beings; as one official told me, rolling his eyes :

'There are just so many of them!'

Implied in Mr Higgins's programme is a picture of how he feels that America, the leader of the world, developed; and he now proposes to lure the Asian and African masses out of their torpor by presenting them with a highly visible and dramatic analogy, hoping that they will prefer concrete wealth, health, and other satisfactions to their static, traditional modes of living. I believe that the psychological assumptions involved here are correct; by and large, when and wherever they have been confronted with the choice, custom-bound, tradition-trapped men have voluntarily doffed their past habits and embraced new and exciting horizons . . . The problem here is not whether these Asian masses can or will make progress; the problem is one, above all, of means, techniques, and *time*.

It is far preferable that the Western world willingly aid in the creation of Jack London's 'Yellow Peril' in terms of Asians and Africans processing their own raw materials, which would necessitate a radical adjustment of the West's own systems of society and economics, than to face militant hordes buoyed and sustained by racial and religious passions. Industrialized Asia and Africa would be rational areas that could be dealt with; even the aims, then, of intercontinental wars would be clear, the

military objectives of both sides understandable. But to wage war against racial and religious emotion is ultimately meaningless and impossible; atom and hydrogen bombs would only inflame racial and religious passions more, rendering the objects of military struggle ludicrous. It should be remembered that when Cortés captured Mexico City, his military prize consisted of a city whose streets were covered with heaps of Aztec dead whose religious fanaticism did not allow them to surrender . . . William H. Prescott in his *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (Modern Library edition, New York), page 420, says :

. . . the Aztec, hitherto the proud lord of the land, was goaded by insult and injury, till he had reached that pitch of self-devotion, which made life cheap, in comparison with revenge. Armed thus with the energy of desperation, the savage is almost a match for the civilized man; and a whole nation, moved to its depths by a common feeling which swallows up all selfish considerations of personal interest and safety, becomes, whatever be its resources, like the earthquake and the tornado, the most formidable among the agencies of nature.

But, one might ask, is it too late? Have racial and religious feelings already set in so deeply in Asia and Africa that it would be impractical to transform and attach them to secular and practical goals? What would be the ultimate results of welding this Asian consciousness with its present content of race and religion on to the techniques of the twentieth century? Was not Japanese Fascism the flower of such incongruous grafting of plants of different genres? There is no indication that the Japanese abandoned any of their earlier mystical notions when they em-

braced the disciplines of science and the techniques of modern industrial production. It is not difficult to imagine Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, and Shintoists launching vast crusades, armed with modern weapons, to make the world safe for their mystical notions . . .

One might argue, of course, that the present content of Western consciousness is not much better, that what I now cite as a peril from the East is exactly what the West did for four hundred years. Indeed, I'm inclined to believe that that is true. After all, the pot must not call the kettle black . . . There is, however, one cardinal difference: a part of the Western world, out of the process of religious conquest by its Christian soldiers, did develop a secular outlook grounded in the disciplines of science and projected concretely in an astounding industrial universe which, like a web of steel, wraps our daily lives round. That secular outlook and that industrial atmosphere now dominate the centre of gravity of the Western scene. And it is this fact that prompted Romulo, while bitterly denouncing Western racism, to remind the Asian-African delegates at Bandung in solemn tones:

' . . . this white world which has fostered racism has done many another thing . . . just as Western political thought has given us all our basic ideas of political freedom, justice, and equity, it is Western science which in this generation has exploded the mythology of race . . . '

Is this secular, rational base of thought and feeling in the Western world broad and secure enough to warrant the West's assuming the moral right to interfere *sans* narrow, selfish political motives? My answer is, Yes. And not only do I believe that that is true, but I feel that such a secular and rational base of thought and feeling, shaky

and delicate as yet, exists also in the *élite* of Asia and Africa! After all, the *élite* of Asia and Africa, for the most part educated in the West, is Western, more Western than the West in most cases . . . And those two bases of Eastern and Western rationalism must become one! And quickly, or else the tenuous Asian-African secular, rational attitudes will become flooded, drowned in irrational tides of racial and religious passions.

Yet I do not think that any merging of these rational, secular areas of East and West can come about within the terms proposed by Mr Higgins; those terms are allied too organically with personal and national interests, to the capricious ebb and flow of that most mercurial of all realities: capital. New terms will have to be found, terms that will fit the nature of the human materials involved. And I think that Bandung, however fumblingly and naïvely, presented those materials . . . If Asians and Africans can sink their national and religious differences for what they feel to be a common defence of their vital interests, as they did at Bandung, then that same process of unity can serve for other ends, for a rapid industrialization of the lives of the people of Asia and Africa, for a shaking loose of the Asian-African masses from a static past.

Unless the Western world can meet the challenge of the miraculous unity of Bandung openly and selflessly, it faces an Asian-African attempt at pulling itself out of its own mire under the guidance of Mr Chou En-lai and his drastic theories and practices of endless secular sacrifices. And there is no doubt but that Communism can dredge down and rake up the hidden reserves of a people, can shake them, rip them out of the traditional and cus-

tomary soil in which they have stagnated for centuries. But can Stalinism repeat in Asia and Africa what it did in Russia, leaving aside for the moment the question of its aspects of limitless murder and terror, its wholesale sacrifices of human freedom and human life? It can, if the populations involved are made to feel that such a bloody path is preferable to a new loss of their freedom. (Men will give up their freedom to save their freedom, just as they will give up their lives to save their lives!) Indeed, I think that the very intensity of their racial and religious conditioning would lead these masses to accept such a desperate path, has prepared them to accept on a global scale ceremonies of collective crucifixion and rituals of mass rebirth . . .

Seen through the perspective of Bandung, I think that it can be said that FEAR of a loss of their power, FEAR of re-enslavement, FEAR of attack is the key to the actions of the Russian Stalinists who felt that any and all efforts to modernize their nation would be preferable to a return to the *status quo* . . . Today the Russians can feel bitterly, defiantly satisfied that they did what was brutally necessary, no matter how hard, inhuman, and terrible, to keep their power and industrialize their country. BUT MUST THIS TRAGIC METHOD, WITH ITS SECULAR RELIGIOSITY OF HORROR AND BLOOD, BE REPEATED ON THE BODY OF THE HUMAN RACE? Is there no stand-in for these sacrifices, no substitute for these sufferings?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Wright was born in Mississippi in 1908. Self-educated—his childhood is detailed in his autobiographical *Black Boy* (1945)—he began publishing poems and short stories in *avant-garde* magazines in Chicago and New York in 1935. In 1938 he was awarded first prize in a prose fiction contest sponsored by *Story* magazine. The appearance of his first book, *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938), was soon followed by his first novel, *Native Son* (1940). A documentary study of migrations, *12,000,000 Black Voices*, appeared in 1942. In 1946, Mr Wright and his family left the United States and settled in Paris. A screen version of *Native Son*, which Wright supervised and acted in and which was directed by Pierre Chancel, was made in 1949. *The Outsider* was published in 1952. *The Colour Curtain*, this present book, dealing with the Bandung Conference, can be considered a companion to *Black Power*, which deals with African nationalism, and will be appearing this summer.

