

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-

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

THE WESTERN WORLD AT BANDUNG 175
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 Chanel, 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.