

Economic Development  
Indonesia  
C/55-20

THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE

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Cambridge, Massachusetts  
August 11, 1955

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During the week from April 18 to April 24, 1955, the Indonesian city of Bandung made news. The name of this pleasant mountain resort, located in the most beautiful part of West Java, became known to readers and listeners everywhere, as several hundred correspondents covered the first Asian-African conference.

Delegates from twenty-nine countries--Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, State of Vietnam, Yemen--discussed for seven days matters of common interest.

During this week, the delegates got acquainted, which is a good thing. They agreed on a lengthy communique. Whether they actually made history is open to question. History is made by decisions that shape the future. The participants of the Bandung Conference, united by a tragic past, merely reached the conclusion that they had to accept the realities of a burdensome present.

The final communique is a balanced and reasonable document. Representatives of all major political interests and ideological positions of current importance were able to agree on it. Whatever imagination was mobilized went into drafting diplomatically ambiguous statements. Those on either side of the fence as well as the fence-sitters can, with some effort, take pleasure in the text. They can interpret it, if they so wish, as condemning their enemies, but not themselves. It would be too much to expect that such a skillful piece of draftsmanship should provide, at the same time, inspiration and enthusiasm. Unanimous consent does not necessarily produce collective visions.

While probably not a history-making event, the Asian-African Conference should be regarded as a historical landmark. It made clear that the end of five centuries of Western domination is rapidly approaching. With minor exceptions, only those parts of Africa and

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I wish to express my appreciation to the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for a grant which made this article possible.

of Asia still controlled by European powers--dominated by white men beyond the seas or the Urals--were not represented at Bandung. The participants had eliminated, or at least much reduced in the recent past, Western political controls. It was a meeting of resurgent people.

Antecedents for the Asian-African Conference can be found in the few occasions on which free countries of the two continents gave their moral and political support to peoples fighting for their emancipation. The first such event took place in January 1949 in New Delhi. Fifteen countries extended their moral support to the Indonesian nationalist leaders captured by the Dutch in December 1948. They requested independence for Indonesia. In this action Australia joined with Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. It was a manifestation of anti-colonial, or perhaps regional, unity; it was no sign of racial antagonism.

After 1949 Asian and African members of the United Nations developed a pattern of frequent consultation and joint action on matters involving opposition to Western domination. That group was not joined by Australia, although this country was represented at the Baguio Conference of May 1950, together with Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand. There, a few weeks before the Korean War drastically altered the international scene, the seven participating governments agreed to cooperate on political, economic and cultural matters.

In the years that followed, the Asian-African group became a known and noted entity in the General Assembly of the United Nations. For example, on December 5, 1950, Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, voiceless political non-entities until yesterday, appealed to the advancing North Korean and Red Chinese forces not to cross the 38th parallel at a time when they were advancing against predominantly Western troops, fighting under the flag of the United Nations.

When the solution of the Indochinese conflict was sought outside the United Nations, by the Geneva Conference of 1954, some of the countries which had acted as a group in the General Assembly met at Colombo in April-May 1954. The Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan "proposed that France should declare at the Geneva Conference that she is irrevocably committed to the independence of Indochina." The position of the Colombo powers contributed significantly to the solution that was worked out at the Geneva Conference.

Various other issues, which the Bandung Conference examined a year later, were reviewed at that time by the five Prime Ministers. The

desirability of holding a conference of African-Asian nations was first discussed there and a proposal was favored--to quote from the final communique--"that the Prime Minister of Indonesia might explore the possibility of such a conference."

At Bogor, in Indonesia, the same five Prime Ministers agreed in December 1954 on the holding of an Asian-African conference. They extended invitations to twenty-five governments, set a date and proclaimed their purposes:

(a) To promote goodwill and cooperation between the nations of Asia and Africa, to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests and to establish and further friendliness and neighborly 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, racialism and colonialism.

(d) To view the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and cooperation.

The only one of the invited countries which declined to attend was the Central African Federation. Had it accepted, its Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, could have been the only chief delegate of European descent at Bandung, although he would have spoken in the name of an overwhelmingly African population.

Israel, Nationalist China, North Korea, South Korea and Outer Mongolia were not asked to come. The sponsoring Prime Ministers avoided specific explanations concerning the grounds of exclusion. As for Australia and New Zealand, the official argument was that they constituted a separate continent.

At a mass meeting in Djakarta, following the Bogor conference, Indonesia's President Soekarno, quoting Asian poets and thinkers, proclaimed forcefully that "Asia is one." The Bogor communique stated that "the basic purpose of the Conference is that the countries concerned should become better acquainted with one another's point of view." But the unavoidable build-up that went on in the press during the following weeks created the impression that the conference was indeed intended to demonstrate the unity of the peoples of Asia and Africa, perhaps to create a new political bloc. It was even asked whether allies of the West--such as Turkey, Thailand or the Philippines--would take part in such a gathering.

Did such a unity exist in fact? Was there a strong basis for it? There is, obviously, in Asia and Africa immense diversity of interests, outlook, beliefs, tradition. The countries invited to meet in April 1955 in Bandung were not bound by a common political and cultural heritage such as that which Rome, empire and church, had given to the West. What united them were, on the negative side, comparable experiences with Western domination and, on the positive side, similar desires to benefit from Western scientific and technological advances. Did such common fears and desires provide a cement strong enough to unify about five-eighths of the world's population to the degree that they would become a distinct political factor in the contemporary world? An answer to this question was, in itself, worth the hardships of an international conference.

There were also many concrete problems to be explored. What could be done about danger zones such as the Straits of Formosa, festering sores such as racism in the Union of South Africa, tragedies like that of Palestine? The moral authority of the Great Powers who had won World War II in the name of freedom and justice had been undermined by the "cold war". What could replace it? Urgent problems of economic development became increasingly entangled with military alignments and blocs. Could the two problems be disentangled? Could nuclear energy be harnessed for peaceful purposes only?

Indonesia proceeded with surprising vigor to translate the idea of having a conference into reality. Her efforts were rewarded with one of the most successful housewarming parties a newly-independent nation ever had.

The conference presented a challenge and offered an opportunity. Indonesians had been masters in their own house for only five years, since the transfer of sovereignty of December 1949. The reconstruction of their economy torn by war and revolution was far from complete. They had not achieved either economic or political stability. The mountains around Bandung, the city chosen as the site for the Asian-African Conference, were renowned not only for their beauty but also as hideouts of determined and fanatic terrorists. Could Indonesia play host? The Indonesian government, reluctantly moving toward the country's first general election, could use a spectacular success for domestic purposes. Externally, the country's growing pains were much exaggerated by sensational reporting. It was a wise decision to counter this unfavorable press not with an Iron Curtain, but by opening its doors wide to responsible foreign observers. The Bandung Conference provided an excellent opportunity.

Arrangements were completed in three and a half months. It could not have happened to a nicer city. Bandung's streets were repaired, its communications expanded, its buildings redecorated. By April 18 the scaffolding had been removed. The city was ready. During the conference one could hear nothing but praise from delegates and

observers alike. As a demonstration of Indonesia's ability to act as host, the conference was undoubtedly a great success. Even the complex security measures involved in protecting some of the world's best-hated leaders were handled gracefully though effectively. Despite vast numbers of helmeted and armed troops, the city did not take on a militarist atmosphere.

Domestic arrangements for the conference were handled by an Inter-Departmental Committee set up by the Indonesian government. It was given wide powers to cut through red tape and ample financial means. Students of public administration may find it interesting to analyze the work of this committee. In a country noted for cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, business-like achievements became possible when prewar precedent was swept aside by postwar enthusiasm. In Bandung a local committee took care of details, perhaps with excessive thoroughness. After the conference, the government had to answer charges, made by independent newspapers and in Parliament, that the local committee went beyond the limits of propriety in providing entertainment for lonely delegates.

The conference itself was organized by an international Joint Secretariat, with a main committee composed of the heads of the diplomatic missions in Djakarta of Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan. The Indonesian representative, Roeslan Abdulgani, Secretary-General of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, functioned as the Secretary-General of the Joint Secretariat and as Chairman of its main committee. The staff was recruited from the five sponsoring countries. On the first day of the conference it was decided that this Joint Secretariat should become the Secretariat of the Conference.

During the weekend preceding the opening Monday, hotels and villas, requisitioned for the occasion were occupied by delegates and correspondents. Accomodation was allocated by drawing lots. The delegations to be housed varied in size from Japan's 34 representatives, inconspicuous in their business suits, to the Gold Coast's three, towering impressively over every gathering in their colorful robes.

At preliminary meetings, on Sunday, delegation leaders agreed that at the inaugural open session speeches were not to be read but tabled and distributed. Delegates were strongly urged by Prime Minister Nehru and by other neutralist leaders to avoid sharp controversy, so as to limit discussions to general expressions of views on broad international questions. Controversial issues and problems were to be sidetracked. The suggestion, accepted by a majority of delegates, had been made in the absence of Prime Minister Mohammed Ali of Pakistan who arrived late in Bandung. The next day, at the first formal closed session of the conference, his firm objection, supported by other pro-Western delegates, forced a change in procedure. It was now decided that delegates could deliver addresses at the public

sessions. This was interpreted in the lobbies as a breakaway from the leadership of Prime Minister Nehru. It opened the door for the aggressive anti-Communist tactics of the pro-Western delegates and had the probably healthy effect of preventing a spurious show of consensus.

An even more important procedural decision was the adoption of the rule of unanimous consent, with which three of the sponsoring Prime Ministers were familiar from the British Commonwealth conferences. This principle, which gives the veto power to all delegations, can also be viewed as the expression of a deep-rooted habit of various oriental societies. In the Indonesian village, for instance, decisions are made by unanimous consent. Matters are discussed until consensus is achieved. Then nobody feels hurt and the community-feeling is strengthened, or at worst unimpaired. Of course reaching agreement by diplomatic devices, at the level of the lowest common denominator, is another matter. But the discussions of the conference suggested at times that the ideal standard was the harmony deriving from genuine consensus.

On the morning when the conference opened, Indonesia had more to offer than the scenic setting of West Java and Bandung's thoughtful hospitality. President Soekarno, an excellent orator, opened the conference with a thought-provoking address. "The life of man today is corroded and made bitter by fear", he said. "Fear of the future, fear of the hydrogen bomb, fear of ideologies." He keyed the spirit of the conference: "We are united by a common detestation of colonialism in whatever form it appears. We are united by a common detestation of racialism. And we are united by a common determination to preserve and stabilize peace in the world." He told the conference what it could do, although "the peoples of Asia and Africa wield little physical power: We can inject the voice of reason into world affairs... We can mobilize what I have called the Moral Violence of Nations in favor of peace."

Sound advice. Unfortunately, the moral fervor of the final communique had been dampened by a week's sparring for minor objectives. Basic divisions among delegations were not swept away by the crystallization of a sense of common destiny.

Following Soekarno's speech and the election of Indonesia's Prime Minister, Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, as Chairman of the conference, the heads of delegations decided to form themselves into a Political Committee and established an Economic Committee and a Cultural Committee. They agreed on the rules of procedure already mentioned and adopted the following agenda: (a) Economic Cooperation; (b) Cultural Cooperation; (c) Human Rights and Self-Determination; (d) Problems of Dependent Peoples; (e) Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation. Two items had disappeared from the tentative agenda discussed before the opening of the conference: (1) Peaceful Use

of Nuclear Energy, and (2) Destructive Uses of Nuclear Weapons.

The public got a glimpse of the pro-Western countries' teamwork when in open session, after the Chairman announced the agenda and rules of procedure, the Philippines, Turkey and Pakistan requested in rapid succession approval by the plenary session of the conference of decisions taken by the heads of delegations; approval of communiques by all delegates; the right to send delegates to participate in the work of the Joint Secretariat; and the keeping of verbatim records. The purpose of these moves was apparently to prevent the neutralist group from dominating the conference and shaping it in its own image. The addresses of twenty-five delegations occupied three public sessions. Similar speeches are familiar to those who have attended the annual opening sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. They mirror what is currently preoccupying the participating governments. Sometimes they convey useful suggestions. They recognize the force of moral principles by aiming at a high moral pitch.

The public addresses were delivered in Bandung's new auditorium, the Gudung Merdeka (Freedom Building), a war-destroyed Dutch clubhouse until a few months ago. Four main leit-motifs ran through them: nationalism was accepted as a value of central importance; accordingly, national independence was highly valued, and colonialism or interference in the domestic affairs of nations was strongly condemned. Industrialization was also highly valued; the need for economic development was stressed and the commercial interdependence of nations was recognized. Nuclear energy, while of dominant interest, elicited mainly negative reactions, due to the fear inspired by the new weapons of mass-destruction. Only vague hopes were expressed that these new sources of energy will soon be harnessed for the benefit of mankind. International organization as the guarantor of peace was also highly valued and, contrary to the apprehensions of some observers, the United Nations proved to be still the main repository of hope for mankind's better future.

The major sensation of the open sessions was provided by the sea change that the "cold war" underwent as it reached Bandung. Western political analysts had expected, perhaps projecting their own guilt feelings, vitriolic attacks against past and present Western domination. It was assumed that Red China would speak with cocksure dogmatism, while pro-Western delegates would keep silent under the pressures of an anti-Western, possibly even anti-white, tidal wave. The opposite happened.

Chou En Lai did not speak when his turn came on the opening day of the conference. Among the first speakers, Dr. Mohammed Fadhil Jamali of Iraq launched a vigorous attack on Communism. After discussing "old-time colonialism which has been gradually crumbling since the end of World War II" and "Zionism. . . the worst offspring of imperialism," he continued;

The third force that is causing unrest in the world at large today is Communism. Communism is a one-sided



materialistic religion. It denies God and the spiritual heritage of mankind. One would not consider any religion of any sort as a source of danger to mankind if it were peaceful in its approach and method. Communism, however, is a subversive religion. It breeds hatred amongst classes and peoples. Thus the Comintern and later its offspring, the Cominform, represent the great center of command for the agents of this new anti-God religion and no nation on the globe is left untouched by their activity and subversion. The peoples of Asia and Africa who have been struggling for decades to achieve their freedom and independence are liable through Communist machinations to jump from the pan into the fire.

Chou En Lai answered twenty-four hours later, toward the end of the open sessions of the conference. The English text of a prepared speech in which the delegation of the People's Republic of China gave its support to most of the causes that interested the other participants to the conference was distributed, while Chou En Lai had his interpreter read some supplementary remarks. He said in particular:

The Chinese Delegation has come here to seek unity and not to quarrel. We Communists do not hide the fact that we believe in Communism--and that we consider the socialist system a good system. There is no need at this Conference to publicize one's ideology and the political system of one's country, although differences do exist among us. The Chinese Delegation has come here to seek common ground, not to create divergence. . . .

In this vein, the Chinese Prime Minister stressed that his government had not raised the issue of Formosa or of China's seat in the United Nations "because otherwise our conference would be dragged into disputes about all these problems without any solution." He asked the delegates to respect atheists as well as those who have religious beliefs and asserted that, far from carrying out subversive activities, China is prepared to adhere strictly to the five principles of co-existence. This even-tempered reply and, in general, his diplomatic finesse and personal charm made Chou En Lai--throughout a crowded week--the great social success of the Bandung Conference. If, as was generally assumed, Nehru promoted the Asian-African Conference largely as a coming-out party for Red China, he was lucky in the choice of the debutante he introduced. Whether it also marked more than a tactical twist in the relations between Communism and the rest of the world is unfortunately more difficult to assess. It may be easier for Chou En Lai, scion of the aristocracy of the most polite nation on earth, to show good manners than for Communism to undergo a change of heart.

The following five days of the Bandung Conference were spent behind the closed doors of conference rooms, hammering out paragraphs

of the final communique. These labors took long and arduous hours and produced some interesting samples of semantic teratology.

More fruitful perhaps were the many informal consultations and exchanges of views between Asian and African delegates. Chou En Lai worked hard to make friends and to convince them that he did not seek to influence people. The Japanese delegation, while studiously keeping clear of political discussions, was perhaps the busiest of all trying to further their country's economic fortunes.

The Bogor communique of December 1954 had pointed out "that acceptance of the invitation by any one country would in no way involve or even imply any change in its view of the status of any other country." This facilitated contacts between representatives of governments that had no diplomatic relations with each other. Whether it will eventually lead to further political developments remains to be seen. Speculation centered particularly on Chou En Lai's persistent wooing of Premier Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. Would the latter-- whose pro-Western sympathies had been chilled by the Turkish-Iraqi military alliance of February 1955--move into the neutralist camp and recognize Red China? One month after the end of the Bandung Conference there was no evidence that this would happen. People make friends, countries have interests.

Another interesting aspect of the Conference was the presence of "observers." Among them were representatives of the nationalist movements of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, spokesmen of the African National Congress and of the South African Indian Congress from Johannesburg, the Grand Mufti of Palestine, the Archbishop of Cyprus, representatives of the Kalmuk Brotherhood and of the Turkestani Legion and last, but not least, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Democrat of New York, speaking as an American Negro, telling everybody that "racism is on its way out" in the United States.

While not equally successful in their lobbying, these men influenced-- some of them significantly--the activities of the conference. No observer was officially admitted to present his case before the delegates. To circumvent this procedural rule, the Grand Mufti was made overnight a member of the delegation of Yemen, which enabled him to present to the Political Committee the case of the Palestinian Arabs.

Amidst generalities, the final communique of the Bandung Conference referred specifically to five sources of conflict: the Union of South Africa, the French possessions in North Africa, Palestine, West Irian and the region of Aden. These references were hardly in accordance with the wish of the sponsoring powers that the delegates concern themselves only with broad international questions. That three of the issues were of special interest to the Arab world underlines the strong influence of this group and the successful activities of Arab "observers" at Bandung.

These cases stirred no serious controversies in the Political Committee. They were discussed in the context of general principles. The agenda called first for a discussion of "Human Rights and Self-Determination." Drafting committees agreed expeditiously on statements supporting fundamental principles of human rights and of self-determination of peoples and nations. References were made to the Charter of the United Nations and to resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on these matters.

Concerning Palestine, Burma and India, being--in U Nu's words--"friendly not only to the Arabs, but to the Jews as well," resisted a resolution which would have been too partial to the Arabs, whereas Chou En Lai, playing for Arab friendship, was prepared to give them full support. The outcome was an appeal for "the peaceful settlement of the Palestine question."

It is not surprising that at this gathering of so-called colored peoples a text deploring the policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination was adopted almost without discussion. Among the victims of racial discrimination specific mention was made--at the suggestion of Syria, seconded by the Philippines--of "the peoples of African and Indian and Pakistani origin in South Africa."

The second major item on the agenda of the Political Committee was "the Problem of Dependent Peoples." Indonesia presented her views on the case of West Irian. Iran, Turkey and Pakistan--defending "the name of the United Nations"--blocked a Syrian proposal expressing "regret that the General Assembly of the United Nations has failed to assist the parties in reaching a successful settlement of the problem." To India this appeared to be "surprising tenderness" for defenders of colonialism. China found the resolution very appropriate. When the temperature of the discussion rose, the matter was referred to a small committee which returned a few hours later with a statement acceptable to all delegations.

The case of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria was opened by Egypt, under whose sponsorship the North African "observers" had come to Bandung. Pakistan offered a strongly worded resolution which made Prime Minister Nehru urge the delegates to avoid "agitational language," because "we cannot normally go about in the market place and shout out as heads of governments against other governments." Consequently, the conference "urged the French Government to bring about a peaceful settlement of the issue without delay."

After four days, the conference had not really made any contribution to the formulation of general principles that should guide the conduct of nations. The atmosphere of the debates was not one that promised to mobilize "the moral violence of nations." Unexpectedly, late on Thursday, Sir John Kotelawala, Prime Minister of Ceylon, who had already made some constructive proposals concerning the reform of

the United Nations in his inaugural address, rose to present his views on colonialism in general. He was not considered a member of the pro-western bloc, which added weight to his question:

Think of those satellite states under Communist domination in Central and Eastern Europe--of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland. Are not these colonies as much as any of Africa or Asia? And if we are united in our opposition to colonialism, should it not be our duty openly to declare our opposition to Soviet colonialism as much as to Western imperialism?

The Prime Minister of Ceylon suggested a solemn pledge by the participating countries that they have no extra-territorial ambitions; an appeal to colonial powers to set a definite target for the granting of full independence to all their colonies within the next decade; he suggested some form of international trusteeship under a reformed United Nations; and proposed that a committee should examine how best to achieve these ends.

The following morning Prime Minister U Nu of Burma pleaded with Sir John not to discuss further the "new colonialism" which meant--he said--"candidly speaking" Communist imperialism:

If any of my friends still insists on reviving this same theme at this stage, then I am sure this conference is doomed. . . Denunciation and condemnation of certain ideologies will no doubt evoke counter-denunciation and condemnation and there will be no end to this battle of diatribes.

Sir John agreed not to move any resolution. But he also insisted that the facts must be stated, that the problem of colonial territories as a whole must be considered. He was not concerned, he said, with ideologies but with the degree of independence of the countries of Eastern Europe:

From all I have heard, in my opinion, the countries of Eastern Europe are not independent in the same sense that you and I and the other countries round this table are.

Chou En Lai was now ready to state his position:

The Prime Minister of Ceylon mentioned yesterday the countries in Eastern Europe. He said these countries were under the new colonialism of the Soviet Union. In our view this is not correct. The people in the countries of Eastern Europe have selected their own state system in accordance with their own will. One may like the system or one may not; that is the freedom

and right of everyone. But to put a new interpretation will be of no help to this Conference.

Premier Mohammed Ali of Pakistan joined the debate, stating that "China is by no means an imperialist nation and she has no satellites." But he saw no reason why Soviet Imperialism should not be mentioned merely because China had friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Many participating countries had friendly relations with France, yet felt that she was wrong in trying to keep under subjugation people who are entitled to self-determination.

Dr. Jamali of Iraq conceptualized what was really at stake:

Freedom is indivisible. If we are going to defend the cause of freedom from domination and subjugation we must do so for all and not only for one section of mankind.

A truly dramatic issue had been raised. Turkey and Iran had much to say about their past relations with the Soviet Union and their fears for the future. Reluctantly, Prime Minister Nehru had to concede that "on the whole it is better that the truth comes out," although he tried to bring the debate to an end:

Speaking technically, however much we may oppose what has happened to countries in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, it is not colonialism. It is an objectionable thing, but the use of the word is incorrect. . .

I submit that it is completely wrong for us to consider those territories which for generations past--- I am talking about the Central Asian territories--- formed part of the Soviet Union. I cannot speak from personal experience, but from my general knowledge I cannot say that these people are being subjugated. . .

If you wish to discuss this matter fully and put forward a resolution, then undoubtedly we shall have to consider the question of the pressure exercised not only by the Soviets but many of the Western Powers as well. Take Guatemala, for instance. How are we going to consider all this?

The debate illustrates the dilemma facing the neutralist nations. As they lack physical power and wish to remain uncommitted, what contribution can they make to better relations among nations? Are they to speak up fearlessly for justice everywhere, mobilizing what President Soekarno had called the Moral Violence of Nations? Or are they to act as middle-men between the two blocs, a role not easily compatible with righteousness? If the conference did not make history

it is probably due to its hesitant vacillations between these two roles.

The debate on colonialism continued for more than two days in a Drafting Committee composed of China, Turkey, Ceylon, Pakistan, India, Syria, the Philippines, Burma and Lebanon. At the very last moment agreement was reached on a statement declaring that "colonialism in all its manifestations is an evil that should speedily be brought to an end." This cryptic formulation broke a deadlock that had delayed the closing session of the conference by several hours. It added to the diplomatic prestige of the very able rapporteur of the Political Committee, Prince Wan of Thailand. It hardly established the Asian-African countries as a new moral force to be reckoned with. Prophets are not lukewarm.

After Friday noon prayers, attended by the Moslem delegates, the Political Committee took up the last major item on its agenda, "Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation." Prime Minister U Nu of Burma thought that the answer is to be found in the five principles of co-existence:

- (1) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
- (2) Non-aggression;
- (3) Non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- (4) Equality and mutual benefit;
- (5) Peaceful co-existence.

These principles were first set down as part of the Agreement on Intercourse and Trade between the Tibet Region of China and India, signed in April 1954, and were reaffirmed by Prime Ministers Nehru and Chou En Lai in June 1954, and by Prime Ministers U Nu and Chou En Lai in December 1954 when the Burmese statesman visited Peking. While certainly not objectionable in themselves, the five principles and especially the term "co-existence" had become rightly or wrongly the symbol of lack of concern with the dangers of Communist imperialism. This set the stage for another major debate at Bandung.

To be sure, there was more involved than the adoption or rejection of a certain symbol. Two conceptions of international security confronted each other. One position was well expressed by the chief delegate of Turkey:

If we are to face the realities of the situation, then we must not rely on words like "co-existence." We have to create a situation where realities themselves give us security. . . We have seen only too many small countries perish by placing reliance on such psychological words. We cannot for our part do that.

Prime Minister Nehru countered by saying that "this so-called

realistic appreciation of the world situation. . . had led us to the brink of a third world war." Those who believe in the forces of the human spirit should probably be grateful that a major political figure can make statements like the following one, however bizarre it may appear from a practical point of view:

I am dead certain that no country can conquer India. Even the two power blocs together cannot conquer India; not even the atom or the hydrogen bomb. I know what my people are. But I know also that if we rely upon others, whatever great powers they might be, if we look to them for sustenance, then we are weak indeed. . . I am afraid of nobody. I suffer from no fear complex; my country suffers from no fear complex. We rely on nobody except on the friendship of others; we rely on ourselves and none other.

India opposed the armament race and military pacts, which produced a "false security"; while the so-called five principles are not a magic formula which will prevent all the ills of the world, it is something which meets the needs of the day by lessening tensions. The word "co-existence" was not essential and did not even appear in the Burmese draft resolution which India supported, Nehru argued.

The opposite position was embodied in seven principles submitted by Pakistan. Already, on the opening day of the conference, Premier Mohammed Ali had offered for deliberation "Seven Pillars of Peace," which included the "right of self-defence exercised singly or collectively." The argument boiled down, in fact, to the clash of "co-existence" with "collective self-defence." Seen through Western eyes, it meant that the Communist bloc--which did not expect to be able to conclude military alliances with countries outside its own orbit--was trying for the next best, namely, the hope of neutralizing countries which might otherwise join the Western system of collective defence. The final communique accepted "collective self-defence" and did not mention "co-existence."

As graceful as he ever was at Bandung, Chou En Lai listened impassively to Turkish, Lebanese, Iranian, Iraqi and Filipino speakers who defended NATO, SEATO and other military alliances. He then suggested that the term "peaceful co-existence" may be changed if it is considered to be one used by Communists, but that his government was opposed to NATO, the Manila Treaty and other military treaties:

As for the so-called Communist expansion and Communist subversive activities (Chou En Lai added) the delegates here have been quite courteous. They have only mentioned the Soviet Union without referring to China; but China is also a country which is governed by a Communist Party. So we

feel we are also involved in it by implication. I would here submit that we should adopt some principles which not only China but all of us here can follow. We, on our part, do not want to do anything for the expansion of Communist activities, outside our own country. However, if we do establish any principles, common principles, what are we going to do?

Chou En Lai then suggested seven principles which did not include the term "co-existence." He invited Prime Minister U Nu, Prince Wan and General Romulo--the last two, delegates of countries which do not have diplomatic relations with Red China--to come and see for themselves that China has no aggressive designs against others. He added:

As to the relations between China and the United States the Chinese people do not want to have a war with the United States. We are willing to settle international disputes by peaceful means. If those of you here would like to facilitate the settlement of disputes between China and the United States by peaceful means, it would be most beneficial to the relaxation of tension in the Far East and also to the postponement and prevention of a world war.

This statement, made behind the closed doors of the Political Committee's conference room, at the end of the Saturday morning session, was to remain forgotten in the classified Verbatim Records of the conference. That day, Chou En Lai attended a luncheon with the heads of delegations of the five Colombo Powers--Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan--and of the two SEATO powers--the Philippines and Thailand. There he disclosed his intention to propose that very day direct bilateral talks with the United States on the question of Formosa. His press release a few hours later became the diplomatic climax of the conference.

The same afternoon, while the Chinese offer kept the wires humming, the Political Committee agreed on a text recommending the admission to the United Nations of Cambodia, Ceylon, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal and a unified Vietnam. The question of China's seat in the United Nations was never discussed either in open or in closed session.

A brief discussion of the case of Aden prompted the conference to urge a "peaceful settlement of the dispute," involving Yemen and Great Britain.

In the last few minutes of the Saturday afternoon meeting the heads of delegations approved the reports of the Cultural Committee and of the Economic Committee. These reports became two lengthy parts of



the final communique. Cultural cooperation between Asian and African countries, in the larger context of world cooperation, was recommended. Bilateral arrangements were considered the best way of implementing these ends.

The Economic Committee had a more arduous task, to which it devoted five meetings. It discussed (a) Cooperation and Economic Development; (b) Cooperation and development of Trade; (c) Cooperation in Other Fields; (d) Development of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes; (e) Organization.

The committee was not prone to flights of fantasy. Proposals for the establishment of a Regional Fund for Promoting Economic Development or of an Asian Payments Union were dismissed as premature. Nobody disagreed with the statement of the delegate of Pakistan: "To expect that we ourselves will be able to provide capital assistance to each other is, if I may say so, rather unrealistic."

Concerning development of trade, India raised the question of "removing the embargo placed by America on China in respect to trade." The Philippines objected that reconsideration of the United Nations' embargo had strategic and political aspects which the committee would do better to avoid. The subject was dropped.

With reference to the projected International Atomic Energy Agency--to consist of the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Belgium, Australia, South Africa and Portugal--India argued that

the inclusion of any power in the projected Agency for no reason other than that it controls raw material producing colonies, would be tantamount to giving international sanction and approbation to the continuance of colonial exploitation.

Turkey, Thailand and the Philippines objected that this was a political issue and refused to discuss it. The matter of peaceful use of atomic energy was referred back to the Political Committee, which drafted a statement urging "adequate representation of the Asian-African countries on the executive authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency."

Concerning some form of organization, it was decided that the participating countries did not have experts to spare for a permanent body. It was agreed instead to appoint liaison officers "for the exchange of information and ideas on matters of mutual interest."

During the opening days of the Conference it was asked in the lobbies whether Bandung would occasion a show of hostility to Western economic aid and an attempt to establish a self-sufficient Asian-African economic region. On this point the communique is not the

**Least ambiguous:**

The proposals with regard to economic cooperation within the participating countries do not preclude either the desirability or the need for cooperation with countries outside the region, including the investment of foreign capital. It was further recognized that the assistance being received by certain participating countries from outside the region, through international or under bilateral arrangements, had made a valuable contribution to the implementation of their development programs.

Halfway through the conference, on April 20, President Eisenhower asked Congress to authorize \$3,530,000,000 for military and economic foreign aid in the fiscal year ending on June 30, 1956. The message emphasized that

the immediate threats to world security and stability are now centered in Asia. The preponderance of funds requested of the Congress will be used to meet the threat there. Within the vast arc of free Asia, which extends from the Republic of Korea and Japan to the Middle East, 770,000,000 people, one-third of the world's population, reside. . . Now is the time for accelerated development of the nations along the arc.

This message was never mentioned either in the Economic Committee of the Bandung Conference or in the closing speeches of delegates. How to use American economic aid and especially the \$200 million to be set aside for the establishment of a "President's Fund for Asian Economic Development" was discussed two weeks later at Simla, in India.

After five days of deliberations, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, Malaya and Thailand decided, on May 13, against a regional organization on the model of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, established in 1947 to administer aid under the Marshall Plan. The general view of the Simla conference was that each country should continue to make its arrangements on a bilateral basis, as far as possible. American aid was no stronger unifying factor at Simla than "The Spirit of Asia" had been at Bandung.

The Asian-African Conference ended late Sunday afternoon, when the final communique was approved in open plenary session and nineteen delegates delivered valedictory addresses. The meeting was delayed several hours, while Drafting Committees on Colonialism and on Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation were trying to find words acceptable to all participants. Shortly before 6:00 p.m. "colonialism in all its manifestations" was condemned, and it was recognized that "freedom and peace are interdependent."

Nations wanting to live in peace were advised to follow ten principles, some of which appeared in Chou En Lai's proposals, while others could be traced back to Mohammed Ali's formulation, or to that of U Nu. None added substantially to what has been said ten years ago in the Charter of the United Nations, except No. 6 (a):

Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Bandung Conference is reflected in this injunction. The great powers were absent from the conference. They were defended occasionally by their allies, but there is no evidence that they were loved by anyone. Chou En Lai was personally successful largely because he did not behave like the representative of a great power.

In recent decades the great powers had been increasingly ill-tempered at international conferences. At Bandung, despite occasional sharp exchanges, good manners prevailed. It would be a cheerful thought to consider this gentlemanly behaviour a reversal of the trend started by Nazi and Fascist diplomats, continued by the Soviets and, unfortunately, increasingly followed by their Western opponents.

Beyond such intangibles, it is still too early to assess with confidence whether the Bandung conference achieved anything. Did it break the ice on the Formosa question? Will it foster trade relations between Japan and its former victims? Will China in years to come act more like an Asian than like a Communist power? Did it convince would-be spokesmen for "one Asia" that nobody can speak for this immensely complex continent? Did it even assert convincingly that no form of colonialism is any longer acceptable in our times?

The future alone can tell. To paraphrase Gilbert and Sullivan:

The Bandung Conference, so far  
Did nothing in particular  
But did it very well.

Tugu, Indonesia, May 1955