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FREEDOM MOVEMENT  
IN INDIA

by

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## FREEDOM MOVEMENTS IN ASIA

### Landmarks and Pointers

(An attempt is made in the following paper to emphasise certain general developments in Asia, with a view to indicating achievements and future possibilities and also to warn against dangers to the fundamentals of freedom.)

Our information regarding the freedom movements extending over more than a century in those parts of the Asian mainland which had either been overrun and conquered by foreigners or had come under foreign 'spheres of influence', it must be admitted with regret, is still derived mostly from the meagre literature in the languages of those dominant foreign powers. Yet, the pattern of imperialism on the one hand, and the accents of freedom in which the voices of the exploited in the many lands burst forth in demanding their right of self-determination on the other, offer such close parallelisms that the discerning mind may not err except in matters of detail only.

### Objectives of the Freedom Movement

The voice of freedom in Asia found its pristine expressions in the cradles of world civilisation which were all in Asia and in China and India in particular it found organisational development to make the content of freedom -productive in the many spheres of life, despite the limitations of old-world social distinctions. The lofty and comprehensive message, which pioneers in their mission of the 'conquest of the mind' carried with them, found a safe home not merely in the court circles or scholarly cloisters, but became a part and parcel of the life and living of the average man. Rightly understood, the ethics of many of the social systems of Asian countries, howsoever liable to criticism from the standpoint of a modern scholar who fails to imbibe the atmosphere, sought to make a man's life itself a worship for a cause. External attacks on many an occasion disturbed the placidity of such a contented life and never adjustments became inevitable. But, to cut a long story short, the commercial civilisation from

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1 India is not included in this Study because the movement in India is fully treated elsewhere.

the West following in the wake of a machine-worshipping order, played such an organised havoc on the economic, social; intellectual and political life of the Asian countries, that they were almost submerged. The freedom movement in Asia thus, in essence, is the struggle for the restoration of peoples to their heritage, revolutionised and galvanised by the new science and new knowledge from the West. To-day we are witnessing in Asia a veritable renaissance, the culmination of the search by peoples for a philosophy and material conditions suited to its realisation, which can make them rediscover themselves in the new light of the new world.

Has the freedom movement in Asia been mainly racial? It would be a mistake to confuse the objectives with the outer manifestations of the struggles here and there. There are, of course, the unequivocal statements by leaders of China and India condemning the self-destroying racial doctrines as applied to themselves or to others. Even Dr. Soetan Sjahrir, the leader of one of the newest of the smaller States, has stated in the language of Asia's humanism and also on practical political considerations that though hatred against privileged foreigners is quite common in every national movement, yet a national movement which makes racial hatred its foundation, will surely find itself against the whole world. A national movement gathering strength from racial hatred will, Dr. Sjahrir stresses, finally find its doom in that very source of strength. He pleads that the nationalists' attitude towards aliens who have, owing to historical factors, become strangers or estranged themselves because of their blood, must be based on principles of democracy, on correct and scientific understanding, devoted to humanitarian ideals and social justice. 2

During the early years the urge for freedom was instilled in many Asian countries by educators and even missionaries of the Christian Church who had taken up the task of wooing Asian youth to western methods of thought and action. Nor can any student of history be blind to the sincerity with which leaders and the youth in many an Asian country looked up to the West for guidance and co-operation. Nowhere possibly were conditions so ideal for the application of the principle advocated by the Englishman, John Stuart Mill, to lead backward peoples to the cherished goal of full responsible government under the guidance of a progressive, altruistic set of persons, even if of alien origin. But the intrusion of the West in recent centuries has been motivated by sordid interests, in spite of the presence in Asian

countries of rare devoted souls who felt that the case for the freest realisation by Asian peoples of their destiny in a scientific world could ensure fullness and prosperity in the many spheres of life of the rest of the world. That explains why in spite of the declaration in the Atlantic Charter, Yalta and Teheran, the principles underlying the United Nations Charter and the promises to 'quit', procrastination marks the attitude of Western powers in matters ensuring Asian countries a speedy transition to democratic equality in the comity of nations.

The emphasis on freedom from political bondage has been necessarily pronounced, but the urge for freedom from the restrictive conditions in internal social and economic spheres is evident everywhere. In Asia, as in Europe, the forces of the left are in evidence and it is in the nature of things that along with the debris of past political thralldom, the elements of oriental feudalism and the evils of arrested and dwarfed industrialism, may well be swept away by a contemporaneous revolutionary process. It was Karl Marx who about a century ago in his celebrated articles on India to the New York Daily Tribune, prophetically emphasised the 'regenerating' role of British rule in India in establishing the material conditions for a fresh advance and clearing the way for it by sweeping away certain anachronisms. All over Asia that role has, may be mostly in the interests of imperialist consolidation, been played by western capitalist influences when they have introduced the new methods of communication, recognised private property in land, built up a class educated on western lines 'endowed with the requirements for government and imbued with European science', trained up armies raised from the indigenous population and above all given unity and purpose to political agitation which could be focussed against the foreign influences directly. Western exploiting agencies have thus become the 'unconscious tool of history' in ushering in social revolutions, which have come to a head as a result of the recent knock-out battle between contending capitalist imperialisms both in the Pacific ocean and the Asian mainland.

Wendell Willkie emphasised this very idea, - though he was talking with particular reference to the Negro problem in his own country - when he commented that, just as a true world outlook was incompatible with a foreign imperialism, it was 'equally incompatible with the kind of imperialism which can develop inside any nation.' He added: 'Freedom is an indivisible word. If we want to enjoy it, and fight for it, we must be prepared to extend it to everyone, whether they agree with us or not, no matter what their race or the colour of their skin. We cannot, with good

conscience, expect the British to set up an orderly schedule for the liberation of India before we have decided for ourselves to make all who live in America free.' Verily, the freedom movement in Asia cannot achieve its destiny if the age-old debris of out-moded customs, social inequalities and economic inequities are not swept away. The reforming and constructive voice of the thoughtful and the progressive sections in all Asian lands seems to guarantee such a consummation, in spite of the natural resistance of status-quokers.

### China Bears the Cross

It will be in the fitness of things at this stage to refer to China - not, as is customary, to her very ancient past, but to her glorious struggle in recent years. What a story of suffering endured in resisting the forces of evil, what an epic of a young republic's rising - leaving aside internal problems and differences against an unashamed affront to her sovereignty, what a lesson in fortitude and improvisation in conducting a war against a highly organised and modernised power, against whose aggression against China the big powers in the League of Nations could take courage only to reproach mildly! China has borne the Cross patiently and amidst unparalleled sufferings. To her should go the credit of fighting the forces of fascist aggression, when others were supplying fascists with arms and otherwise offering encouragement.

Unfortunately, China's internal problems do not yet seem to progress towards a solution. Without the support of a part of the Chinese population a constitution embodying a compromise between the principles of western democracy and Sun Yat Sen's 'Three Principles' has been drawn up, which should end the quasi-militarist, authoritarian state which unsettled conditions and war had imposed on China for years past.

While receiving the revised draft constitution passed by the National Assembly (which, by the way, was boycotted by China's Communists and certain other minority groups totalling 565 out of 2050 delegates), Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-Shek in a reminiscent mood observed that 'the Constitution is the result of 52 years of revolutionary history.' It is unfortunate that, as observed by General George Marshall, settling down to constitutional methods seem far from the view owing to acute differences between extremists on both the sides and this great and ancient country has not so far been able to achieve unity and enjoy the full fruits of freedom.

But China's dissensions have a lesson for many outside her borders. 4 In the context of post-war conditions, it would be the great task of leadership in the different countries of Asia to size up the situation and miss no opportunity of opening up the portals of power and prosperity to the masses for their benefit.

### China's Neighbours

The unexplored and yet undeveloped parts of Mongolia and even outer China have not fully come into the picture of mass political upheavals and their resources are the cynosure of many eyes. On the other hand Korea, with her rich history in the cause of the struggle for freedom against Japanese misrule, has not yet achieved independence. Though the first elections, since the Japanese annexation in 1910, were held in a part of Korea, the creation of a unified Korean State provided in the Moscow Agreement is not yet in existence. Korea is still in travail and the Military Government which is in 'occupation' can only claim that in South Korea a legislative body with limited powers has been formed with half of its members elected by 'the people' and the rest nominated by the Military Governor.

### A Constitution for New Japan

An inordinate ambition brought to a halt Japan's rapid progress to a position of influence and power in the comity of Nations.

The surrender of Japan (in August 1945) has, however, made it possible for her people to get a fresh lease of life, freed from the traditional thralldom to war-lords, industrial barons and inhibitions. The picture today is not clear and American hegemony is much too apparent. It is to be hoped that Japan will really be purified of reactionary elements in her life, justifying by a renaissance of her people, the blood-bath and the inhumanity perpetrated by the Atom bomb. It will be pertinent to examine the main feature of the New Japanese Constitution in that context. The preamble declares in the name of 'the Japanese people' that 'Government is a sacred trust, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people and we reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances and rescripts in conflict herewith.'

This is followed by an enunciation of a principle which still should find increasing recognition in the counsels

of other nations also. 'We hold that no people is responsible to itself alone but that laws of political morality are universal and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all peoples who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other peoples.'

The detailed fundamental rights enumerated in Chapter 3 are reminiscent of clauses in the American Declaration of Rights, and if made effective may well be a model to be copied by other countries. The articles dealing with 'the inalienable right to choose public officials and to dismiss them', prohibiting involuntary servitude, ensuring academic freedom, forbidding torture and cruel punishments by public officers, are some of the novel features of this enumeration. Similarly, discrimination in 'electoral matters' because of sex, race, religion or social status' is banned.

Some of the constitutional devices of the new Constitution may also be noted. The Prime Minister is proposed to be 'designated' by a resolution of the Diet', consisting of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. In case of a disagreement between the two Houses, the House of Representatives shall choose the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is given the option of selecting and also removing the Minister of State, with the approval of the Diet. Collective resignation of the Cabinet and also dissolution of the House of Representatives are the other features of this part of the Constitution. In the judicial sphere extraordinary tribunals are banned, nor can any organ or agency of the executive be given final judicial power. It is also provided that, unless mentally or physically unfit, judges can be removed only by 'public impeachment'. Amendments to the Constitution may 'be initiated by the Diet through a concurring vote of two-thirds of all the members of each house and shall thereupon be submitted to the people for ratification which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon at such election as the Diet shall specify.'

Apart from the constitution notable progress in the sociological field has been noted by observers, who think that removal of 'thought control' in Japan will be possible and democratic methods practicable. Shinto-ism is no longer the state religion and Hirohito is bereft of his divinity in whose palace grounds even red flags have recently fluttered. Though big combines still exist, they



are under the spectre of a smash-up. In a little over a year's time, the legalisation of trade unions has resulted in over 10,000 unions and left parties are consolidating popular forces.

### South-East Asia

In South-East Asia freedom movements received a great impetus due to the upsetting of the status quo by Japan. But the struggle is not yet over. In spite of the indignation against the oppression of the Indonesians by the forces of allied imperialism, even to-day the Viet-Nam struggle has become a reminder of the position of helotage which alien interests are keen on maintaining for the sons of the soil. The complaints of breach of agreement with the Viet-Nam leaders by France stand as a stern reminder to realities. The voice of the new leaders in South-East Asia found clear enunciation in a statement by leaders of Indonesian independence, when they challenge western pretensions regarding the introduction of democracy into these countries. The statement pointed out that even before the coming of the Dutch there prevailed a democratic way of life, with votes and full equality for both men and women, although these laws were not written down. Even 350 years of Dutch domination and the exercise of the slogan 'divide and rule' were not able 'to alter the consistent impulse of the Indonesian people towards democracy, nor to destroy national unity.'

The preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia declares in words reminiscent of the French Revolutionary epoch, reinforced by the spirit of defiance of a subject people, that: 'Since Independence is the right of every nation, any form of subjugation in this world, being contrary to humanity and justice, must be abolished.

'Our struggle for Indonesian Independence has reached a stage of glory, in which the Indonesian people is led to the gate of Indonesian State, which is independent, united, sovereign, just and prosperous..

With the blessing of God Almighty, and moved by the highest ideals to lead a free national life, the Indonesian People declare hereby their independence.' 5

The signing of the Cheribon Agreement providing for an United States of Indonesia will mark the end of the protracted armed struggle preceding it. Unfortunately, such an ending is not yet in sight in the lands so long under

French thralldom. But, in French Indo-China, and also the territories sought to be incorporated in a proposed Malayan Union, the struggle has the same ring of sincerity and the determined backing of large sections of people, whom the last world war has delivered from many an inhibition of the past.

India's happy neighbour Burma, devastated and despoiled though by the direct onslaughts of a destructive war between rival imperialisms, is in a position to make a bid for equal powers of self-determination with India. Here has been the glory of sharing with other areas over-ridden by Japan of a determined resistance to any continuation of external aggression and to rouse a spirit of solidarity among the different communities in achieving an autonomous status.

The crux of the problem, according to Dr. Soetan Sjahrir, lies in the fact that the consolidation and continuation of the stranglehold on Asian countries, big and small by foreigners would not have been possible but for the 'influence of the capitalist Imperialism of England and the United States.' Referring to his own country he bluntly stated that in the beginning of the nineteenth century England seized Indonesia from the Dutch and indeed the Dutch would not be in Indonesia except merely as a factor in English policy. 6

### India's other Neighbours

A special plea need be made for the recognition of the responsibilities of the larger states for making up for the neglect in the past specially regarding smaller and isolated territorial units and populations, whose development have been extremely lop-sided. In fact, this is a general problem: foreign capital has systematically in its own interest neglected any symmetrical development, especially in matters economic. While the more resourceful nations of Asia would be able to plan for prosperity more effectively and secure assistance from other quarters, the smaller and newer states may not be so fortunate. But it is essential that such weak links should be strengthened and reinforced, in their interest as well as in the general interests of progress and solidarity.

We may almost at random pick up the instances of Malaya, Tibet and Afghanistan. The Malayan medley is still politically unresolved. As a matter of fact, the 'modern' history of Malaya for a century is what the British

imperialism has made of the country. Beginning with 1786, when Penang was acquired, the British settlements developed, and the neighbouring Malay states which, in the words of Sir Frank Sweetenham, 'were not British possessions and could not be so treated' were furnished with 'advisers' - and then followed a process with whose main outlines students of Indian history who have sought to unravel the relations between the English colonists and rulers of Indian States are not unfamiliar.

It is estimated that after 70 years of economic development only one-fifth is settled land, while some three-fifths remain as yet unreclaimed jungle, and that the economy is based on the extraction of one main mineral tin and the rubber-plantations. 7 Just as a great deal may be done of Malaya's vast natural resources, after the causes of the economic tussle and tension encouraged by vested interests disappear, 8 her mixed population problem may be solved by a rational and planned programme of development in the interests of her people. In fact, the strategic position of Malaya must make it an object of close attention and care on the part of India, Burma and China. But, it is essential that in dealing with these problems and the smaller national units in the making, no one tries to play the 'big brother' either economically or politically. The tendency, if there be any, to think in terms of lebessraum and hunting-grounds for finance-capital or export-drivers, when considering smaller nations, must be scotched, for a complete repudiation of such policy and practice should have been ingrained in us by the havoc played upon us in the recent past.

Tibet is situated just below the heart of the Asian continent. Tibet touches half-a-dozen countries and is comparable to Switzerland in her isolation from the sea. This plateau of about 500,000 square miles has a severe climate and is poor in vegetation. Her mineral and natural wealth is still unexplored, but the 'forbidden land' may well be a centre of notable scientific experiments and specialised economic developments. Her peculiar government, reminiscent of some European countries in the late medieval period, should itself be an object of study, opportunity permitting, based as it is on the experience of centuries of a mountain-people of great traditions in religion and discipline. India's ambassadors of peace had throughout history enjoyed the hospitality of Tibet on their way to China. Tibet has been described as 'an ideal buffer State' offering India 'the best possible protection.' 9 She is something more; one lonely spot where the unbecoming hurry

of modernism has not been allowed to affect the tranquility of life - where it is likely that some of the ideas of decentralised economy associated with Mahatma Gandhi's teachings may find scope in developing the standard of living of the masses - a problem affecting all mountainous tracts.

While till recently Tibet and also the midget States of Nepal and Bhutan, had, for understandable reasons, been largely under the influence of British diplomacy, it is necessary that a future Asian Council of Nations should not only welcome them to take counsel with others in Asia, but also bring them within the orbit of understanding can ultimately lead to the goal of co-operative endeavour and the Inter-Asian Conference should be a prelude to the creation of such a form of ideas and information.

Afghanistan which seems to be 'emerging from her shell' and opening up the gates of her mountain fortress to outsiders and sending her children on missions of exploration, is India's neighbour with a situational conjuncture comparable to that of Switzerland in Europe. The recent Soviet-Afghan frontier agreement regarding several large islands of the Oxus, important for their pastures, sets at rest the ambiguity as to the location of the banks of the Oxus in terms of St. Petersburg agreement of over 60 years between British and Russian Diplomats. Afghanistan's relations with the outside world are also bound to be more cordial after her admission to the United Nations Membership and with the emergence of strong and independent neighbours. She is, moreover, in close contact with the Muslim States through the Treaty of Saadabad negotiated and signed at Teheran in July 1937. The strides made by Afghanistan in the present century towards educational and economic development, auger well for the country and for Asia, for not only in the international sphere, but also internally her people's freedom and progress must be furthered and consolidated on modern lines.

### The Middle East

In the Middle East, the ugly manifestations of power politics have converted the countries into 'areas of potential unrest.' 11 Apart from its strategic importance due to the convergence of naval, air and land-routes, it is the source of supply of high-grade cotton, valuable minerals from the Dead Sea, and oil estimated at about a third of the world's resources. The twentieth century has seen a remarkable manifestation of nationalism in the area though varying in objectives. Besides the renaissance inaugurated by Kemal Ataturk, the Arab League with its headquarters at

Cairo has been responsible for a consolidation of forces and offers a centre for common action and a sounding board for Arab opposition to western imperialism. The Zionist movement, with its international affiliation, is another political force which has been making itself felt in recent years.

Undoubtedly certain areas in the Middle East call for large developments which can only take place if capital and leadership in requisite quantities. 12 But the countries are on the march. The recognition of the ability to attain a stature of freedom has come from the Western Powers in regard to Ethiopia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Great Britain is still the dominant interest in these areas. While the Anglo Egyptian treaty of 1936 is in the stage of active revision, the joint Anglo-Egyptian condominium over Sudan is faced with a growing public opinion in Sudan itself in favour of self-determination. In Ethiopia, Iraq and Sudan, British still has a privileged position by provisions of treaties, while British protectorates in Somaliland and Aden, the dependencies of Bahrein and Kuwait, the friendly state of Saudi Arabia, the mandates over Palestine and Transjordan and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's interest in Southern Iran 13 make Britain such a live force in the politics of the Middle East, that suggestions are being put forward for shifting strategic bases in the Middle East, according to recent geographical developments.

In this tangled problem of self-determination in the Middle East, Soviet Russia and United States are also not inconsiderable factors to be reckoned with. 14 The proposals for a revision of the Montreaux Convention of 1936, (with a view to provide Russia with a control over the Straits at Istanbul and free passage, in peace as well as war, to Russian ships between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean) and the orientation of a favourable policy with regard to the Zionist movement, Eastern Orthodox Catholicism and also Soviet interest in developments in Iran, - manifestations worthy of attention.

The participation of the United States in war-campaigns directed from Middle East had quickened trade ambitions in the area among Americans and also a desire for further consolidation of American oil interests. The Zionist issue and the American Universities at Beirut and Cairo also have brought the Middle East to American notice in other contexts. Nor is France a mere spectator. Her cultural influence apart, she has shown her interest in the

sharing of oil concessions by protesting against recent Anglo-American agreements for exploitation of oil without France's participation.

There is no doubt that the control of the 'British Life-line to India' is an important factor in the mutual suspicion over the schemes of expansion by UK and USSR in the countries of the Middle East. India's independence and closer association and understanding with Middle Eastern countries will go a long way to clear the grounds for effective assertion by the forces of struggle for freedom in the countries of the Middle East - rich in traditions in the realms of history, literature, arts and economic progress.

### Glimpses of an Asian Federation

A new chapter in world's history is being unfolded as the isolated and albeit un-co-ordinated struggle on many fronts by many peoples in Asia are trying to pool knowledge and resources. In fact, the achievement of freedom in the political and social front can come only after many hurdles are successfully overcome: freedom, as is so often emphasised, is itself based on the recognition of the freedom of others and involves co-operation in pursuing a common purpose. The late Deshbandhu C.R. Das in the course of his presidential address at the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress (1922) was one of the first of the leaders of resurgent Asia to recognise this. He observed: 'Swaraj begins when the true development of a nation begins because Swaraj is the expression of the national mind. The question of nationalism, therefore, looked at from another point of view, is the same question as that of Swaraj. The question of all questions in India to-day is the attainment of Swaraj'. He said further: 'Even more important than this is participation of India in the great Asian Federation, which I see in the course of formation....It is the union of the oppressed nationalities of Asia. I admit that our freedom must be won by ourselves but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and co-operation, between India and the rest of Asia, nay, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world is destined to bring about world peace. World peace to my mind means the freedom of every nationality, and I go further and say that no nation in the face of the earth can be really free when other nations are in bondage.'

After a quarter of a century C.R.Das is more than justified. Moreover, so well-understood and even clearly formulated are the demands and objectives of the struggle, that distortion of this idea of the union of brothers-in-bondage into the Japanese conception of a Greater Asia

Co-prosperity Sphere, could not mislead even during a period of very great stress, any but a handful of misguided hirelings. Subhas Bose, Rashbehari Bose and Mohan Singh through the Indian National Army and by declaring a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India); General Aung San and his colleagues in Burma; the Viet-Nam patriots in Indo-China and the Indonesian leaders - all belied the contention that there was any freedom-loving soul among Asia's leaders who wanted either a change of masters or an enthronement of fascism in any form.

The glorious idea of an Asian Federation should not be confused with the propagandist's version of an 'Asian bloc' or an 'Asian hegemony under the leadership of a few 'big' Asian 'Powers', to share in that gregarious game of imperialism to secure the enjoyment of the best of the earth by a few. In fact, it should be the logical culmination of the new nationalism, which in its old narrow capitalistic background is already an antiquated cult. The common interests and aspirations of the Asian peoples, knit together by the traditions and memory of suffering through the same sort of troubles and agony, should bring them together in a cooperative endeavour. Nor, however, can we shut our eyes to the fact that the demons of fascism, racialism, imperialist exploitation and capitalistic greed are still being kept alive, particularly because of the apprehensions of a war due to the bickerings among the great powers. Lest such a catastrophe finds Asia's new-born states unready to be preyed upon by the warring factions, an Asian brotherhood built on closer understanding and collaboration in not only civil but also military spheres is as justified as similar collaboration in the interest of peace between various western powers.

### The Strategy of the Future

In this context, it is necessary to recognise that World War II has italicised the importance of the seas and air-bases in the new strategy of the future. For the co-ordination of oceanic defence it has been suggested that regional bodies a Council of Asia based on India, flanked by a Council of the Pacific and a Council of the Middle East should be set up to secure the 'military and economic self-sufficiency of each region.' 15 The Indian ocean is no longer a British lake 16 and the Pacific Ocean may well be the cockpit of a oceanic war, based on

freedom will therefore involve a recognition of not only their political manhood, but also the responsibilities in matters of military, naval and aerial defence, until universal disarmament and 'perpetual peace' become practical propositions. The emergency of India and China as centres for extensive air-bases is now evident and the United States has already offered her hand of co-operation in the matter. The closest collaboration between India and her neighbours, Burma and Ceylon, is one step which will soon, we hope, be taken; 17 and the prosecution of the war in the East revealed that over the 'hump' and via the land-routes in the Himalayas it is possible to secure the transit of goods between the different countries of Asia, for trade as well as defensive purposes.

The above digression is to indicate the new balance of forces which the emergence of Asian States would presage. A robust faith in democratic methods - and not merely a lip-service to formal democracy which characterise the social and political systems of some western democracies even to-day - and an ability to mobilise the forces released by the freedom movements in Asia to the cause of the service of the people, can really guarantee the participation and even the leadership of Asian people in evolving the socialist and egalitarian state which has been the true patriot's and philosopher's dream through the ages.

### Conclusion

Asia's millions are not only roused, but given proper leadership and conditions may well become the harbinger of a new synthesis in not only the merely political and economic spheres, but in other regions of international disharmony. The end of the World War II has not merely opened a new chapter; in Asia it has released potentialities so long suppressed under the demoralising influences of alien and exploiting agencies.

It is indeed a happy sign of the times that a large section of progressive opinion all over the world is keen on a rational and radical solution of the internal problems of Asian countries. Having established the victory of the principle of self-determination, one wishes Asia's struggle will soon be directed to the consummation of a democratic revolution internally ushering in a renascent Asia, reminiscent of the Europe after the Renaissance.



Hans Kohn, the well-known authority on the development of nationalism in different parts of the globe, characterised nineteenth century civilisation as universal in aim and scope as its 'fundamental attitude was rationalist and individualist, secularist and scientific'. He suggested that in the nineteenth century, thus equipped, modern civilisation enabled Europe to 'conquer and dominate the world politically and economically. The spread of modern civilisation enables the non-European peoples of to-day to reject Europe's political and economic control. The brief epoch of European world domination seems to be approaching its end.' He continues : 'The medieval but flexible civilisations of the East adapted themselves to modern civilisation as the medieval civilisation of Europe had done before them. This universal acculturation and the ensuing birth of a coherent and closely-knit humanity, facing similar social, economic and cultural problems, will determine the new trends of world history.'<sup>18</sup> These new trends are in the process of appearance. They, however, await a planned and concerted emergence under popular auspices in Asian countries.

## FOOT NOTES

- 1 India is not included in this study because the movement in India is fully treated elsewhere.
  - 2 Sjahrir: Our Struggle
  - 3 A Chinese scholar writing in The American Political Science Review (October, 1942) significantly observed:

'The politically articulate groups outside the Kuomintang have always clamoured for democracy, and their voice is likely to be louder once the war is over. But how to arrive at democracy? To expect that the Kuomintang will practice self-denial and give up political power to its rivals or opponents is unthinkable, and the possibility of the rival groups being able to wrest that power from the Kuomintang is also remote. Perhaps to practise democracy inside the Kuomintang is of more real significance than to try vainly to establish democracy for the country at large. If during the period of reconstruction the country shall continue in the hands of the Kuomintang, as it is not unlikely to do, it is evident that it will not be democratised before the Party itself is democratised.' Tuang-Sheng Chien, quoted in L.K. Rosinger's China's Wartime Politics, pp. 49-50.
  - 4 After dealing with the various phases and aspects of the struggle in China's recent history M.N.Roy commenting on a critical stage in China's political development in 1927, (marking the parting of the ways with the Communists) described it as 'a crisis of leadership' when the Chinese bourgeoisie 'failed to rise up to the occasion, because it would not face the reality of the class struggle that constituted the social background of the struggle for democratic national freedom.'
- See his: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China (English Edition), pp. 464-5.
- He further observes that: 'the refusal to support the revolutionary masses in an irreconcilable struggle with the feudal-bourgeois reaction led the Whan group unavoidably towards the break with the working class, and the consequent betrayal of the revolution. But urban workers continued to press their economic demands, and the peasantry continued the resistance to the efforts to deprive them of the freedom of organisation they had conquered in course of the revolution. The

peasantry also began the confiscation of land just as during the French Revolution. 'The French Revolution triumphed when it legalised the similar action of the peasantry. The Chinese bourgeoisie not only failed to carry through the democratic revolution, but turned against it because, themselves being connected with the pre-capitalist system of landownership, they refused to endorse its abolition by the revolutionary action of the peasantry.'

- 5 From a Statement by the Central Committee of Indonesian Independence, Brisbane, Australia.

6 Our Struggle

He also writes: 'English foreign policy towards East Asia has been carried on for more than a century, though new powers and conditions have appeared, such as Russia, Japan, the USA, the Chinese Revolution, and the changed circumstances, especially in China, cannot be overlooked. On account of defeat, Japan will temporarily disappear from the politics of North East Asia, and it can be said that Japan will fall into the hands of the USA which has now become the biggest Pacific Power. In this circumstance it may be possible for us to occupy a position which will agree with the political aspirations of the United States, the colossus of the Pacific, but this possibility is limited as long as the world is Capitalistic and Imperialistic as at present. As long as there is an Anglo-American Capitalist-Imperialism, we cannot achieve 100% independence, however much we try, because of this fate of the people of Indonesia is bound up with international conditions and developments, and more than any other country, we need a changed basis of society, which means the eradication of world Capitalism and Imperialism. More than any other country we depend upon international conditions.'

- 7 A Times (London) despatch dated January 17 mentions orders totalling 40,000 tons of rubber as the object of the visit of the Russian trade representative to China and Singapore.
- 8 For an idea of unsatisfactory labour conditions in Malaya reference may be made to Trade Unionism in the Colonies Fabian Colonial Bureau, and A.G. Russel - Colour, Race and Empire. p 131 et seq.

- 9 D. Macdonald: 'Tibet', p.32.
- 10 London Times despatch to Statesman (Calcutta) dated Jan, 13.
- 11 The French Middle-East has come to refer to 'a large area at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea - an area roughly the size of the continental United States. This region stretches from the Cyrenaican-Egyptian frontier in the west to the Iranian-Afghanistan frontier in the north to the Southern limits of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Ethiopia in the South. It includes Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somaliland, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the British Arabian and Persian Gulf protectorates, Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran.'

Egypt, though not a part of Asia, forms part of the Middle East and her interests are bound up with the neighbouring countries in Asia.

- 12 In course of an expert study on The Economic Development of the Middle East Dr. A. Bonne observed 'Certain of the requisite conditions for intervention by the state or international bodies can be found here even more than in European countries. Economic organization is far less developed and complicated. Years before the present war, some Middle Eastern countries entered the field of comprehensive planning in important economic spheres, preponderantly industry and transport. They understood that planning in Oriental countries means the use of state power for increasing production whereas in Western countries planning was intended, as a rule, to restrict productive forces in order to avoid the consequences of plenty. Thus planning will find a partially paved way in Eastern countries after the war.

He further observes: 'The key for a regeneration of the countries of the Middle East, on the other hand, definitely lies in an increase of total production and productivity per head and the opening up of new resources. ... The task facing the leading statesman of Middle East countries as well as the international bodies concerned with reconstruction problems in this area, is to prepare them for the impact of industrialization and rationed agriculture.'

Dr. Bonne estimates on the basis of an annual investment of £123 millions annually, the sources being annual allocations and International Financial Corpo-

rations or securities and savings at 6½% from the net products of agriculture, industry and tertiary occupation

13 The original agreement for 60 years was secured by William D'Arcaŷ, an Australian who organised the Company, the major portion of whose shares were bought up by the Bank of England on the eve of the World War I, (C/o The World Crisis by Winston Churchill) enabling the Allies to 'float to victory on a sea of oil' in Curzon's picturesque phrase.

14 These ambitions date back to Peter, the Great. Georgia, Stalin's land of birth, was the issue which led to the treaty of Gulistan in 1913, by which Iran recognises Russian annexations, and the Pandjeh Incident on the Afghan border in 1884 brought Russia and Britain into direct conflict to the Indian border.

The treaty between Soviet Russia and Iran in 1921 provided for an Iranian guarantee, in exchange of Russian abandonment of concessions in Iran, that (a) oil concessions in North Persia will not go to a foreign power and (b) Russian troops will be allowed to enter Iran in the threat of an attack on the Soviet Union. On April 6, 1946, the announcement of Russo-Iranian Oil Agreement was made relating to the oil reserves in five provinces of North Iran close to the Caspian Sea, Russian share being 51% during the first 25 years and both the countries sharing equally in the second 25 years.

15 K.M. Panikkar: India and the Indian Ocean, App II

16 'For 157 years (i.e. since the departure of Suffren in 1784 to the fall of Singapore in 1941) the mastery of the sea over Indian history was complete but unobtrusive. The question of sea power did not arise as the Indian Ocean was a British lake. It was as natural and as normal as the air we breathed during that time and no one was interested in discovering the relation of the sea to Indian Defence. In the result the entire emphasis was on the land frontier and Indian Defence was equated with the maintenance of a powerful army on the North-West Frontier' Ibid, p.9

17 The conversion of India into an industrially strong country is essential for a scheme of regionalism. Her industry must be self-sufficient and not dependent on

machinery imported from other countries. She must be in a position not only to build her own ships, but to equip them on the most up-to-date lines. The heavy industries on which alone a naval power can exist must be built up in India. The problem is not exclusively one of peninsular India. Ceylon and Burma are equally interested and hence the political organisation of the Indian Empire should be broadened so as to include these two countries for defence purposes. The triune commonwealth envisaged in my book, The Future of South East Asia, is therefore, an essential pre-requisite for any scheme of regional organisation, which will be in a position to undertake the defence of the Indian Ocean.' Ibid, p. 92-3.

- 18 Hans Kohn : Western Civilisation in the Near East, pp. x - xi.