

## Favourable International Setting

INDIA launches her Second Plan under more favourable international auspices. Peace is a condition of plenty. Peace still eludes the world. There are many world issues still in dispute. But the "cold war" is now less intense. Confidence spreads that the rival power blocs will settle disputes through negotiation, and without the use of force. In under-developed countries, including India, there is growing hope that, as diversion of resources for military preparations ceases, they will receive adequate economic aid and co-operation from the rich, major powers to ensure progress in poor countries. In each and all under-developed countries, poverty is a constant threat to stability. Because they are poor, their economies are not complementary. With the exception of Japan and India, most of them are non-industrial, agricultural countries. There is scope for economic intercourse between them. But they must depend on Russia and the Western Powers for aid in men and money to become industrially strong. They have a common interest in world peace. 49

Bandung is symbolic of their united desire for peace so that they can prosper. Bandung is a conglomeration of countries which are not only poor, but most of which were under colonial rule till the other day. Colonialism is still a threat to some parts of the areas which Bandung represents. Britain still clings to her island fortresses. Trouble intensifies in Algeria. Africa remains a semi-colonial continent, Korea and Viet Nam remain divided. Formosa is a source of irritation to China. SEATO and the Baghdad Pact violate the Bandung principle of freedom from political, military or economic domination by foreign powers. Bandung is determined to end colonialism so that all Asian and African nations can enjoy political freedom which alone can ensure their economic strength and independence. Bandung's political aims have almost been achieved in Asia. These objectives will be in time attained in Africa.

When Bandung's political aims have been fully achieved, its economic objectives will assume significance. Though undeveloped, Bandung countries are not too poor to help each other.

The Second Plan, it is good to see, has not been *unmindful* of the deva-

lopment problems of the under-developed regions of Asia and Africa. For historic reasons, not only has this region been largely under-developed, the economies of all these countries have either remained isolated or developed affiliations with the respective colonial powers, which had dominated them. As a result, says the Plan, "the volume of trade within this region itself (sic) has not developed sufficiently and the scope for complementary effort and mutual assistance as between countries in the region has remained largely unexplored". Some of these countries are now planning their own development and as development proceeds, "problems of mutual adjustments in the matter of specialisation in certain lines of production and of mutually advantageous terms of trade and exchange of know-how and experience will assume increasing importance". This is obvious. It is important, that the development of these countries should be co-ordinated and that a beginning should be made, with freer exchange of information and ideas.

But even more important is some sort of joint action in order to retain within these countries a larger share of the gains from their foreign trade. This could be done by pooling their resources and channelling the control over the shipping, exchange banking and insurance through a corporate body on which all these countries would be represented. A beginning could be made with the group of countries which are contiguous and have close economic relations to make such a proposition workable. The next task for these countries to attain would be, again through collective effort, to secure better terms in the exchange of their products with the capital goods of the West. Bandung countries may be industrially backward, but they are rich in agricultural and mining resources. As the emphasis shifts from aid to trade they should be able to obtain fairer exchange terms for their products so that they can pay for economic assistance secured from the West.

All this could be the prime aim of ECAFE had its parent organisation, the U N, not been dominated by interests which can have little sympathy for all that Bandung stands for. Where ECAFE falls, can the Colombo Plan succeed? It is curi-

ous to find, however, that even after the Bandung Conference, the Planning Commission holds that mutual aid and co-operation could still be channelled through the Colombo Plan. Despite, therefore, its well-meaning observation "that planning in India has thus to be viewed in its wider regional perspective" it falls altogether to get the wider perspective.

Bandung is no racial or economic threat to the West, even though racial, political and economic problems of Asia and Africa are its prime concerns. Good neighbourliness among Bandung countries is as much desirable as world peace. Even without the latter, the former objective is a worthwhile pursuit. But Bandung is no less an influence for world peace than the "hydrogen stalemate". Two years ago the world stalemate was reached. It still continues. There is agreement among the rival power blocs not to start an atomic war. But on all other disputed issues, there is stalemate. East and West are not agreed on Germany. Korea, Viet Nam and Formosa are open threats to peace. There is no agreement on disarmament. Geneva's promises remain unfulfilled.

Allegations and counter-allegations continue. But the international climate is now less uncongenial, America persists in doubting the intentions of the Communist bloc. Immediately after the failure of the Geneva Conference among four Foreign Ministers, Russia started accusing the other side of insincerity. There has been a change in Moscow's tactics in recent months. It started with the Russian leaders' visit to some Asian countries. As the Geneva "summit" conference reached an understanding not to wage an atomic war, Russia, started a peace campaign. She has since been assiduously cultivating friends in Asia and Europe. Moscow has patched up its quarrel with Belgrade. There is now greater understanding between Russia and Britain, and between Russia and France. Russia has gained valuable friends in Asia.

Three developments since the Geneva "summit" Conference deserve emphasis. Asian nations have always been opposed to a foreign policy based exclusively on security. They have always reacted regional military pact as threats to peace.

Bandung embodied their common hope that the rival power blocs will reach an understanding so that the United Nations could concentrate their energies and resources on world economic development. For the first time since the "cold war", the Socialist Government of France emphatically endorsed the Bandung principles of peace. Moscow's bid for gaining friends through economic co-operation combined with the French Socialist Government's insistence on world economic issues has caused a shift in the Western Powers' foreign policy. In both the Karachi and Teheran meetings of SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, the need for implementing the economic functions of these organisations was expressed. Even Mr Dulles now feels convinced that NATO must fulfil the totality of its aims.

Internal developments in Russia since the twentieth Party Congress have impressed the world about Moscow's sincere peaceful intentions. More than the posthumous dethronement of Stalin, the campaign against the personality cult is significant, Malenkov's survival even after his dismissal was the first sign of tolerance within Communist Russia. Much has happened since then. Russia's present leaders have admitted that mistakes have been made. Within the Party, freedom of thought and expression is now encouraged and tolerated. The Communist Party of Russia, may not tolerate the existence of rival parties, but recent internal developments in Russia will be welcomed as significant gestures of the present regime's intention to introduce gradually greater individual freedom within that Communist country.

While these two developments are to be welcomed, the doubts stemming from the American presidential election hang like dark clouds over the world. Since the emergence of America as a dominant world Power, the uncertainties of the presidential elections have always cast shadows over the world. Mr. Eisenhower's ill health creates additional complications. It is useless to speculate whether Mr. Eisenhower will still decide to run for a second term, or whether the Republican Party has any chance to win the presidential elections without Mr. Eisenhower as its nominee. There will be hope that the scheduled meeting between President Eisenhower and Pandit Nehru will not have to be abandoned because of the President's illness.

Russia has furnished ample evidence in recent months that she is sincere in her advocacy of peaceful co-existence. Marshal Tito's impression that far-reaching changes are happening within Russia should convince Washington of Moscow's keen desire to reach an understanding with the Western Powers. Even if the conditions of President Eisenhower's health prevents any serious discussion between him and Pandit Nehru, it may be assumed that the latter will press on Mr. Dulles the need for a change in

America's attitude to Russia. Soon after Pandit Nehru's participation in Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and his talks with either President Eisenhower or Mr Dulles, he will meet, along with Colonel Nasser, Marshal Tito. These three world statesmen are well fitted to act as mediators between East and West. Their task will be to persuade both sides to be more accommodative to each other. There will be hope that they will succeed in their mission.



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