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Asian Nationalism and the West

Edited by William L. Holland

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ciple of selection. What principle, for example, could dictate the inclusion of "Heat" in preference to Mr. Arguilla's other (and, to this reviewer, better) stories like "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" or "Mr. Alisangco?"

The book's value is enhanced by the inclusion of four critical essays: an introductory essay on the stories, by Mrs. Edith L. Tiempo; another on the poems, by Mr. Edilberto K. Tiempo; an essay on "Imaginative Writing in the Philippines," by Mr. N. V. M. Gonzalez; and one on "Certain Influences in Filipino Writing" by Mr. Manuel A. Viray.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

ASIAN NATIONALISM AND THE WEST. Edited by William L. Holland. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1953. Pp. viii-449. \$5.00

This book contains three of the principal papers and a summary of the round-table discussions of the Eleventh International Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations held at Lucknow in October, 1950. The title states the main theme of the Conference, which was attended by delegates from sixteen countries, including the Philippines. The introductory chapter, written by the editor, contains substantial excerpts from other Conference documents, among them the report submitted by one of the Philippine delegates, Dr. Antonio Isidro, entitled "Philippine Nationalism and the Schools"—a bureaucratic piece which calls for no special comment.

Mr. Holland's Introduction takes up the question raised by Prime Minister Nehru in the Opening Address of the Conference: "As you meet here in India to consider problems of Asian nationalism, I wonder what exactly you mean by Asian nationalism. Is it different from its European variety, and, if so, how does it differ? What exactly is nationalism?" (p. 353).

Mr. Holland does not quite achieve the explicit definition desired by Mr. Nehru; he does, however, travel some distance towards it. In the first place, he suggests that Asian nationalism is at present passing from an initial, largely negative, anti-colonial phase to one more positive and constructive. Several characteristic features of this latest phase of Asian nationalism are discernible, among them: "a widespread but ill-defined acceptance of socialist or near-socialist ideas in economic and social policy" (p. 7), the increasing influence of religion—chiefly Mohammedanism and Buddhism, and to a lesser extent Christianity—on political life, and the decided preference of the Asian nations that achieved independent status after the War for democratic forms of government.

Mr. Holland further notes a basic similarity in the problems

confronting the nationalist movements which have obtained control of government. They are, in one form or another, the problem of internal security—of “peace and order”—in the face of continuing dissidence inspired and led for the most part by highly organized Communist elites; and the foreign-policy problem of whether to take sides, and if so what side to take, in the cold war.

Dr. Kahin, the Executive Director of the Southeast Asia Program of Cornell University, contributes a wealth of factual material, much of it gathered at first hand, on how the nationalist government of Indonesia has come to grips with these problems. His paper on “Indonesian Politics and Nationalism” begins with a careful analysis of the composition, social base and platform of the major Indonesian political parties, and goes on to describe political developments since the Hague Agreement of December, 1949, whereby Holland transferred full sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia.

Serious threats to internal security came mainly from demobilized troops, from the abortive attempt of the *Darul Islam* movement to establish a Mohammedan state independent of the Republic, and from the activities of the Indonesian Communist Party (P.K.I.).

Prior to 1948, Communist effort was chiefly directed at capturing control of organized labor, especially among the dock workers, and weakening the existing government both politically and economically by the calling of successive general strikes. This was annoying but not particularly dangerous, especially since the Indonesian Communists were divided into “Trotskyite” and “Stalinist” factions. It is interesting to note in passing that one of the most prominent Trotskyite leaders was Tan Malakka, whose visit to Manila in 1926 had a great deal to do with the formation of the Communist party here.

It was not until 1948, according to Dr. Kahin, that the P.K.I. achieved unity under definitely Stalinist direction, through the assumption of command by the younger party leaders after their return from the Cominform conferences at Calcutta and the W.F.T.U. and International Youth Conference at Prague. Orders were brought to the P.K.I. directly from Moscow by Musso, who called for a revolution against the government of the Republic. Due to faulty coordination it was prematurely launched in mid-September, 1948, and lacking popular support was crushed within a month. The top leadership of the Party, included Musso, perished in the attempt, and Dr. Kahin believes that the anger and resentment against the P.K.I. which it aroused among the common people “dealt it a blow from which it has not yet recovered.”

Nevertheless, the danger of a Communist *revanche* remains as long as the causes of agrarian labor unrest are not effectively dealt with. The Indonesian nationalists are well aware that this cannot

be done without a drastic reconstruction of the national economy, for which the cooperation of Western, especially Dutch and American, capital is indispensable. And yet, the foreign policy of the Republic continues to be one of strict neutrality in the struggle between Communism and the West. This attitude can be understood only if full account is taken of "the extreme sensitivity to anything that can be interpreted as outside control," engendered in the Indonesian by their long experience of colonial exploitation. This sensitivity makes them suspicious of United States policy in the Far East to an extent Filipinos would find it difficult to understand.

One fruitful source of misunderstanding was United States intervention in Indo-China. According to Dr. Kahin, most Indonesians who have given thought to it, regard the struggle of the Vietnamese against the French as similar to their own struggle against the Dutch, that is, a nationalist struggle against colonial rule which only the pressure of American-supported French arms drove into seeking the aid of Chinese Communism.

Prof. Devillers' paper, "Vietnamese Nationalism and French Policies," throws some light on the real facts of the Indo-Chinese situation. His conclusions are, briefly, that a truly popular nationalist movement had developed in Vietnam after the War; that the communist-led Vietminh was only one faction, and that not the most influential, in this nationalist movement; that the unwillingness of the French government to make any real concessions to legitimate Vietnamese aspirations gave the Vietminh a splendid opportunity to obtain control of the whole nationalist movement; that having done so, the Vietminh immediately proceeded to use Vietnamese nationalism as an instrument for establishing a Communist puppet state; and finally that United States support of French arms was intended not to crush Vietnamese nationalism but to contain international Communism. The last distinction is a valid one, but it is easy to see how fatally open it is to misconstruction under the circumstances.

"Nationalism in Malaya" is the subject of a third paper by Prof. Silcock of the University of Malaya and Mr. Ungku Abdul Aziz. It brings out the fact that Malayan nationalism is conditioned by the unique demographic structure of the country, which is composed of three major social groups: Malays, Chinese and Indians. This results in an extremely difficult situation, since the majority of the Indians and the Chinese are more attached to the country of their origin than to the country in which they reside and earn their livelihood. Because of this, the native Malays oppose the granting of equal citizenship rights to these immigrant communities, and the antagonisms thus set up constitute a formidable obstacle to the formation of a united nation. It is a situation peculiarly favor-

able to communist exploitation, and the British government has a long and difficult task ahead of it in creating a constructive and truly Malayan nationalism that alone can ward off the Communist threat.

All in all this is a very informative book, in spite of the unevenness of style and treatment inevitable in such collections.

H. DE LA COSTA

REPORT ON MAO'S CHINA. By Frank Moraes. Macmillan, New York. 1953. Pp. 212. \$3.75

GOD'S UNDERGROUND IN ASIA. By Gretta Palmer. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York. 1952. Pp. vii-375. \$3.75

So great is the contrast between these two books that it is hard to believe that both are written about the same country and cover in part the same period.

Mr. Frank Moraes, editor of *The Times of India*, made a trip to Red China in April-June 1952, as a member of the Indian Cultural Delegation, whose head was Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of Nehru, former Indian Ambassadress to Moscow and to Washington, now president of the Assembly of the United Nations.

The author frankly states that this was a conducted tour; that the delegates saw only what the Reds wished them to see, spoke only to those to whom the Reds intended they should speak. Even such incidents as the "accusation meeting" against a Cantonese shop-keeper may not have been "accidental."

The thesis of the book is practically the same as the thesis proposed a short time ago by Mrs. Pandit in a radio address to the American people. It is an *apologia* for the policy of Nehru, which policy, granted such specifically Indian elements as the doctrine of non-violence, is roughly the Asian counterpart of the *troisième force* in Europe.

The impression is that the author, though anti-communist, is striving painstakingly to be fair. By putting the Communist answers to specific Western charges into the mouths of third persons, notably of India's Ambassador to Peking, K.M. Pannikar, the author states them, yet disassociates himself from them in varying degrees. But the arguments will be remembered long after the careful nuances of the author's disagreement are forgotten, and however good may be the author's intentions, the net result of the book will be to show that despite the terror, the denial of personal liberty, Communism has done much good, that the vast majority of the people is for the government, that, at least, it is much better than the government they had, and finally about as good as the Chinese people, given their history