

'Warning from Bandung', from Luxemburger Wort (27 April 1955)

Caption: On 27 April 1955, the Luxembourg daily newspaper Luxemburger Wort considers the move towards non-alignment apparent at the Bandung Conference attended by 29 countries from Africa and Asia from 18 to 24 April 1955.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 27.04.1955, n° 117; 106e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Die Warnung von Bandung", auteur:M. F. , p. 1.

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Warning from Bandung

They came to Bandung to cement Afro-Asian friendship. This unknown town on the island of Java was the setting for a conference of the leading representatives of the coloured peoples, from countries which are mostly underdeveloped and which account for between one-half and two-thirds of all human life on earth. This conference has underlined as never before the growth of political awareness in Asia and Africa.

For the highly developed West, in other words for our world, Bandung constitutes a warning as well as a reason for hope. The Conference of Asian and African States sounds a warning in so far as it gives us a glimpse of the immense power that lies dormant in these nations. It is a historical necessity that these continents must find and follow their own path. The crux of the matter is who will help them to find their path and how and with whom will they wish to tread that path?

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The Communists are making strenuous efforts to win the trust of those peoples and to export Bolshevik Leninism to these distant parts of the globe, presenting it as the only modern way to organise a state and society. Fortunately, Bandung has shown that many Asians and Africans are determined not to exchange their newly won freedom from Western colonial rule for the chains of Bolshevik imperialism. For very many countries, Communism is not synonymous with nationalist aspirations, wherever it seeks to make a breakthrough in Africa or in Asia. These nations see through the propaganda of the Kremlin. It was hard enough for the Crown Prince from Peking, Chou En-lai, to have to hear these sentiments being voiced. The representatives of Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Ceylon and Siam certainly gave their views with ample clarity. It would have been all too much for Vyacheslav Molotov. Chou En-lai took it on the chin. This he did with good grace, the more so since he and Mao Tse-tung are not averse to the idea of playing the leading role in South East Asia.

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For the Foreign Minister of Red China, Bandung undoubtedly marked a transition, maybe even a transformation. He let everything that was said against Communism and Bolshevik imperialism drizzle over him like warm summer rain, almost as if he were basking in it, or at least as though it did not concern his country. Indeed, his calm and serene manner even helped to ensure that the final resolution made no mention of Bolshevik colonialism but was confined to a condemnation of the evil of 'colonialism in all of its manifestations' and a call for its rapid eradication. Nevertheless, the adopted wording is clear enough to enable the reader to point the finger at Communism. The Soviet Communists have not colonised yet. They have not been able to solve their own difficulties. What they have been trying to do, however, by agitation and other devious means, is to establish an ideological foothold in many nations, stirring up discontent among the masses and using it for their own ends when the time was right. Otherwise their activity has been confined to devouring other, highly industrialised countries in Eastern Europe. Wherever they have gone, they have plundered. There is scarcely a case in which they have given anything beneficial in return. They have taken freedom and have put bondage in its place; at least the Western colonisers helped the colonised peoples in very many instances. Without their presence, the Asian and African nations would not have been meeting in Bandung, because a sense of solidarity and political aspiration would never have developed among the Afro-Asian peoples of the world.

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The type of awakening we have witnessed in Bandung has been particularly gratifying. The nations represented there are beginning to think for themselves and to formulate their own common objectives. They have no desire to be passed from hand to hand like bargaining counters.

It is equally encouraging to note that they welcome the assistance of the advanced democratic countries. They wish to play their own role in the world, but not in isolation. Pandit Nehru's appeal for genuine neutrality won conspicuously little support. Chou En-lai, by contrast, was far more successful with his

apparently magnanimous offer to America to engage in talks about Formosa. This was the Bandung transformation. Peking's Foreign Minister has changed, almost out of all recognition. It remains to be seen, of course, whether his offer is genuine. One would have to assume that he meant what he said, because, if he were subsequently responsible for the failure of such talks, he would have forfeited all the goodwill extended to him by the community of Asian and African nations. In other words, the wisest possible course of action for the Americans now would be to press for a Formosa conference.

And so Bandung has not been a success for Moscow. It may not exactly have been a success for the West either, but it has presented us with a new opportunity. As for Chou En-lai, his success at Bandung will turn out to be an enduring legacy if he can prove that he is not serving the cause of Bolshevist imperialism and that rapprochement with the United States really matters to him.

If Moscow does not become more astute, and if Chou En-lai does not keep his word, the community of Asian and African nations will help to guarantee peace and democracy in the world. This, however, can only happen if the West supports those nations' efforts to develop their freedoms without imposing political demands. Without such — only apparently — disinterested assistance, Moscow would inevitably triumph, whether with or without Peking. That is the warning from Bandung.

M. B.