

REPORT



FROM BANDUNG / By NORMAN COUSINS

THE PLACE

BANDUNG.

"COULD you please tell me what you think of our city?" the man asked.

"It's one of the nicest cities I've ever seen," I replied.

"It is a big relief," he said. "For four months we have worked to get it ready for the Conference. Do you know that every building and every home had to be painted or whitewashed? Maybe 20,000 whitewashing jobs. Every store-front had to be fixed up. They even imported special goods to put in window displays but not for sale."

"Every street had to be paved or repaved or fixed up. I know. I filled in hundreds of holes myself. It is all for you: it is a big relief that you like it."

My companion, whom I happened to meet near the Dutch-style hotel where I stayed, was not a road-repairer by occupation. He was an elementary-school teacher. In common with numberless other Indonesians, he had volunteered for the special task-force set up by the Government to

prepare Bandung for the Asia-Africa Conference.

Preparations involved much more than the appearance of the city. Delegations from twenty-nine nations had endless needs that had to be anticipated and provided. Comfortable quarters, compatible foods, special transportation to and from the Conference sessions—all these had to be arranged. For the hundreds of "pressmen," as they were officially designated, there was the problem of all the foregoing plus the need for peak-load cable facilities and short-wave broadcasts to the rest of the world. Like soldiers in the field, each of the delegates or pressmen on the front line had to have six or seven men in depth behind him to keep him going.

From the standpoint of place and facilities, then, Bandung passed every test. Bandung is near the equator but it is on a high plateau, impressively rimmed by mountains. The temperature during the day never gets much above 80°. At night it drops to a sleep-inducing 60° or 65°.

The principal attraction, apart from the people, is the Indonesian sky. No-

where in the world do clouds and colors combine to put on a more spectacular performance than over these serried lands. Anyone who collects memories of skylines as a hobby and can afford to indulge himself should settle down here for life. As a special fill-up he might take a plane ride towards sundown.

The people seem initially shy and reserved but warm up instantly on a smile from a stranger. Once they learn of your desire to be friendly there isn't enough they can do for you. Once you establish rapport with children they hold you by the arm and won't let you go. People whose earnings were only a few cents a day would offer you a place at their table.

In its external aspect, as might be expected, Bandung combines the Dutch look with the Orient. The architecture of the private homes and business buildings is unmistakably European resort style, but the general layout of the city is somewhat reminiscent of parts of Madras—reflective in part perhaps of the large Indian population in the city.

This, then, is the city that may eventually become the capital of Asia, if

the long-term visions of some of the delegates come to pass.

THE CONFERENCE AS SYMBOL

Easily the most remarkable thing about the Asia-Africa Conference was the sense of history it represented and reflected. The nations at Bandung possessed as large a variety of political views and cultural or religious backgrounds as exist anywhere in the world; yet all the delegates seemed to feel they were part of one vast idea to which each was paying homage. The work of the Conference, the public and private sessions, the general statement which required so many hours of debate and compromise—all this was actually minor compared to the symbolic significance of the event. Bandung was more important as ceremony than as conference.

The ceremony, of course, was the graduation exercises of two continents—graduation into equality in the family of free nations.

The process of breaking loose from colonial rule had been spaced out over a generation or more. The individual gains had been celebrated, but now for the first time, all at once and in a single place, more than 1,300,000,000 human beings who had achieved freedom were observing the total event. It created a sense of exultation and kinship difficult to describe to anyone who wasn't there. The historical momentum was so great that it affected almost everything that was said or done.

Thus, it was no surprise that most of the delegates had a single answer for the question put to them at the end of the Conference: "What would you say was the principal significance of Bandung?" Their answer, in one form or another: "The fact that it was held." Every delegate I spoke to felt keenly the honor of having been able to represent his people at the one event towards which his nation had been aspiring for so many years. Triumphs or defeats over Conference statements were lost alongside the mountainous fact that each person present gloried in the historical aura of the occasion.

The men at Bandung marked their freedom, but there was neither gloating over the event nor the eruptive release of resentment towards the former captors or governors. General Carlos P. Romulo, who emerged from the Conference as one of the most influential and eloquent spokesmen for the new Asia, keyed the spirit of the meeting when he said:

"The success of this Conference will be measured not by what we do for ourselves but by what we do for the

entire human community. Large as is the cause of Asia and Africa, there is a cause even larger. It is the cause of the human community in a world struggling to liberate itself from the chaos of international anarchy. In short, our cause is the cause of man.

"Fellow delegates, our strength flows not out of our numbers, though the numbers we represent are great. It flows out of our perception of history and out of the vital purpose we put into the making of tomorrow. If that purpose is stained by resentment or the desire for revenge, then this Conference will turn out to be a fragile and forgetful thing. Let us therefore not seek to draw strength from hurt or heartbreak but from our common hopes—hopes that can come to life in all peoples everywhere. And if the test of that strength should be our ability to forgive, then let it be said that we were the giants of our time."

The spirit of the Conference gave substance to General Romulo's remarks. Certainly, those who had loudly predicted that the Conference would serve only as an intercontinental amplification system to denounce the United States in particular and the Western world in general were made to look foolish. Nor was this a "lynch party in reverse," as a few writers had blithely forecast. It was a sober event, soberly observed.

THE CONFERENCE AT WORK

This did not mean that the Conference was all sweetness and light. There were debates—plenty of them; but the dominant feeling was a desire to achieve positive results and to preserve the largest measure of unity possible.

This desire for unity was remarkable, considering the composition of the Conference. As one's eyes traveled from one side of the Conference Hall to the other, he was aware of strong and contrasting undercurrents. First of all, of course, one looked at Premier Chou En-Lai of the People's Republic of China, as it was officially designated.* Not far away were some of his severest critics: General Carlos P. Romulo of the Philippines; Prince Wan of Thailand; Dr. Fadhil al-Jamali of Iraq; Sir John Kotelawala of Ceylon, and Mohammed Ali of Pakistan. The apprehensions and grievances of these countries, however, were not directed solely towards Communist China. Pakistan, for example, was having its troubles with

Afghanistan, with relations between the two countries at rupture point. Nor was Pakistan forgetting for a single moment its long-standing dispute with India over the Kashmir. India's own views on the Kashmir were hardly less emphatic. And, though India was not saying much about it, the long border between Nepal and China was a matter of significant concern in view of political developments inside Nepal itself.

One's gaze shifted from Nepal to the delegates from North Vietnam and those from South Vietnam, appropriately seated far apart in the Conference Hall. As though the Civil War between the two factions had not caused enough anguish to the people, South Vietnam now had to contend with insurrections within itself, and the danger that it might become so weakened through internal convulsions that, ironically enough, the people themselves might turn to Communism in a desperate attempt to put an end to the chaos.

Not far away from the South Vietnamese sat the Japanese delegation. Not so long ago the Japanese were in military control of Bandung and, in fact, of almost all Southeast Asia. One wondered how the Indonesians felt when they went about the business of being the polite host to a nation that only a short time ago held them in subjection. Almost everywhere one looked in the Conference Hall, in fact, one looked at differences, large and small, relating to disputed territories, borders, economics, politics, or minority groups. Yet the sense of historical continuity was so great and the feeling of shared experience so dynamic that current differences almost seemed irrelevant.

This feeling of unity was the big story at Bandung, even though some of the accounts appearing in the American press stated that the Conference was split into two warring groups. According to these accounts, Sir John Kotelawala of Ceylon headed one camp and Prime Minister Nehru the other. It was made to appear that Nehru flew from one temper tantrum to another largely because of Sir John's denunciation of Communism as the new imperialism at one of the early sessions of the political committee. The only trouble with those stories is that two central facts were missing:

► First, Prime Minister Nehru championed Sir John Kotelawala's Conference policy statement on peace.

► Second, the final Conference communique denouncing all forms of colonialism and imperialism found Premier Chou En-Lai of Communist

* The desk plate in front of Chou En-Lai's seat simply read "China" at the start of the Conference; several days later it was replaced by "People's Republic of China."

China as the principal objector and Prime Minister Nehru as the most effective supporter. The Nehru position was adopted. Far from attempting to monopolize the spotlight, Nehru seemed to go out of his way to avoid it. Some delegates were surprised, for example, when Nehru declined to join the roster of delegates who made opening addresses at the public sessions. [Originally the Conference hosts had decided against opening statements. But a number of the delegates claimed that they hadn't come thousands of miles just to sit still or applaud politely. Premier Chou En-Lai declined to vote one way or the other but made it clear that he had come to the Conference with a prepared speech—just in case.]

Prime Minister Nehru's most interesting difference of opinion was not with Sir John but with General Romulo. At the closed meeting of the Political Committee Mr. Nehru said he was appalled at the world's dangerous drift into coalitions and military alliances, citing SEATO in particular as a disturbing manifestation of narrowly conceived power politics. Carlos Romulo rattled no sabres in his reply. He too recognized the danger of coalitions. But he pointed out that SEATO did not exist in a vacuum but was the result of a specific and all-too-recognizable cause: a world which had not yet been made safe from aggression. He said that the Government of the Philippines would be the first to move for an end to SEATO once the United Nations enjoyed effective police powers and the machinery to ensure world justice.

General Romulo then praised Prime Minister Nehru's statesmanship in Asia, and said that the full development of the U.N. offered the best hope for the durable peace and stability that both Mr. Nehru and he were working for.

The final communique issued by the Conference seems to represent a logical fusion of these two positions. It also reflects the determination of the delegates to define the largest area of common ground. In the communique the delegates:

► Stressed the importance of economic cooperation among the Asian and African nations, but also recognized that this was a world problem and that, accordingly, economic cooperation would be sought with nations outside the two areas. [This was an effective answer to those who had feared the creation of a regional economic bloc.]

► Recognized and praised the effectiveness of outside economic aid. [This was a far cry from a statement repudiating American support, as had

been grimly predicted in some quarters in the United States.]

► Welcomed the offer of "the powers principally concerned" to share information relating to the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

► Called for strengthening the cultural ties among nations, and for removing whatever barriers existed to the fullest possible interchange of ideas, information, and people.

► Recognized that the cultures of Asia and Africa rested on spiritual foundations. [There was no indication here of objection by Communist China.]

► Supported fully the Declaration of Human Rights as set forth in the United Nations Charter. The Declaration was hailed as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." [Premier Chou En-Lai, of China, had originally objected to any Conference statement based on a United Nations principle or position. He declared that since the People's Republic of China was not a member of the United Nations, and therefore had no opportunity to participate in the formulation of such U.N. statements or policies, his country could not be expected to attach its name to any Conference statement tied to the U.N. There was general enthusiasm in the Committee, however, for the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights, and Chou En-Lai withdrew his objection. This was a major break in the Communist Chinese position at Bandung, for it enabled the Conference to proceed to a half-dozen other points involving

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"The people seem initially shy . . .



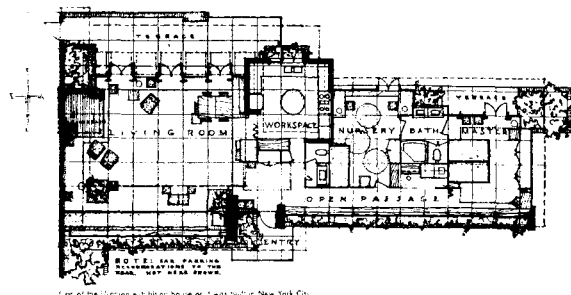
. . . but warm up [at] a smile."



—Photographs by N. C.

Inside the conference hall—"historical aura of the occasion."

THE FUTURE OF THE CITY



From Japanese earthquakes to New York building codes to skeptical engineers to Wisconsin tax-collectors, Frank Lloyd Wright—at nearly eighty-six the Grand Old Man of his profession despite himself—has battled elements, indolence, and greed in his service to Organic Architecture: the perfect blend of stone, color, and texture for the home of man. Although his early Prairie Houses were severe by the standards of the Nineties, he is by no means a “functionalist” in the modern sense; all his rooms and buildings have the rich forms and dim recesses that mark a Wright perspective. Neither the slum nor the hard, gleaming glasscraper for him; Mr. Wright has written here a polemic against these things. And against the modern city, which he sees as a jammed, stink-ridden pesthouse and—in these days of perilous politics—a deathtrap.

By FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

HERACLITUS of Athens—a radical Greek—was stoned in the streets by his foolish fellow citizens for declaring that only one law is unchangeable—the law of change. “All is in a state of becoming,” he wrote. Today we also know, of course, that the law of change is the law of growth.

At this time in our own fantastic century of change Americans must not deny the changes that already are operating on yesterday's changes with inscrutable force and increasing rapidity. Our own fearsome mechanization is meant to promote human comfort, but instead it has thrown into ugly confusion nearly everything our lives touch. Our responsible authorities are sunk in vested, static institutions. They fear change. We citizens ourselves actually lack the necessary perspective, vision, courage, and the common sense to face the inexorable law of change. We pass by great opportunities with a wisecrack, now and then; but we want the wit to see them as they are and plan accordingly.

American big cities are perhaps the most heretical violation of Heraclitus's law of organic change. But sponsors of the modern city, first founded by Cain (the murderer of his brother), refuse to consider fundamental and human alteration in the city's structure because of our gigantic “investment” in the city as it is. And so the Machine Age has not liberated us.

We are imprisoned: witness the new buildings on our city streets. Isn't it true to say that—in these buildings—Novelty is mistaken for Progress? Of steel and glass we have aplenty; but what of the imaginative and creative powers which make of these glittering materials structures responsive to the needs of the Human Individual? What of Real Sun, Real Air, Real Leisure?

Now, the mind is not modern that is still conditioned by self-interest, or clings desperately to quantity instead of quality. It is folly to believe that, instead of a new and different city, our present ones—born in ancient times and captives of commerce—can yet be made over to survive, if not suit, modern man. The old sun itself may be one of those stars going their way to make room for greater ones. So our present cities must go to make way for the greater city we can now build: a plan for man liberated, freed from his own excesses by the integrity of his vision.

Since “science-in-uniform” has already dated and perhaps doomed the urbanites of our planet, and continues to date even itself, why should we continue to believe that science will make an exception of the city? Science, having—in the city—taken society all apart in human terms, cannot put it back together again. Integration and humanization of society must be, as they always have been, the work of the Creative Mind: of the architect, the artist, the poet, the prophet. Especially at this moment we need the architect, for so long ab-

sent or a prostitute. The creative mind must rehumanize the decentralized society that is coming when the city at last dies. Without such conscientious spiritual leadership, this nation of ours—so long ridden by fear and commercial selfishness—must accept cultural, and therefore political, mediocrity. That means inferiority—if our democracy endures at all.

Our American cities are the most overgrown, yet definitely dated, form of centralization. Certain insects have gone further (and done better) with the act of centralization as a principle; but, anyway, centralization as a principle is always a dubious one, at best, where the concern is humanity. During the past half-century radical changes wrought in all our lives have settled the fate of centralized urbanization. A true vision of tomorrow (modernity) sees that decentralization is the basic principle of the good life. Any sensible man must see that further centralizations of any American city are only postponements of the city's end—if not its post-mortem. Can people be expected to live indefinitely in such prisons as our “new” metropolitan housing projects? What about Lever House—a very dangerous mirror used as a poster for soap. (Too bad that indecent exposure can't be achieved by safer means than such an abuse of glass.) And now comes the whiskey-building [EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Seagram Building going up on Park Avenue and 52nd Street in New York*], trying to trump the deck of facades in this rat-race for natural extermination.

THE deadline for eventual decentralization and planned reintegration of our cities is being continually tightened by science itself. Art and Religion, already declining, have been forced either to sink with or abandon the city. The alphabetical bombs now dropped into our already overstuffed tool-box—wherein are so many other marvelous new tools we have not learned to use—are rendering the survival of our cities more hopeless than ever. Had we really learned to use