

Nationalism in the East

FIVE hundred years hence another H. G. Wells may arise to make a further survey of man and his world, in a book we'd all like to read. His treatment of some topics might astonish us. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he were to devote to the East-West controversy that bulks so largely in our minds only a few paragraphs at the end of a chapter entitled "Political Results of the Industrial Revolution." But I'm sure one topic of today would have a most important place. Our historian might call it "The Rise of the New Nations." A sub-title might even be—we none of us know—"The Decline of Western Civilisation."

China . . . is potentially the greatest of these nations. . . She's had little reason to love the West—the West here includes the old Russia—for the Western countries showed remarkable unanimity not so very long ago in using the weak, sprawling country for their own ends. Recently Mr. Nehru reminded us once again of the upsurge of nationalism in the East, and pointed out the urgent needs of these countries—needs which the Western nations can help to satisfy. Here, full marks to the United States for its gift of 1,000,000 tons of wheat to Pakistan. To help China will be sound policy. Russia's already doing so, and is probably reaping a reward for services rendered in an hour of need.

The first step, of course, is the recognition, already made by India and Britain, of Mao Tse Tung's government. The United States, as we all know, has been the main stumbling block to this so far, but it's possible there may be a little less self-confidence there today after the Korean debacle and the expression of world opinion over the tragic Rosenberg case. It's often been said there are two paths open to the West in regard to China—one of co-operation, the other of obstruction. I'm one of those who believe co-operation with China in the United Nations is the only possible path. Some of us, perhaps many of us, will be reluctant to tread it and the going will be hard, but if we're to have any sort of hope for the future, I feel we must do so. The end of the other path is, as yet, obscure. It may be disaster. It's the path that'll be trodden by any nation that, like Syngman Rhee's Korea, may decide to "go it alone."

DR. RHEE is now 78 and a sick man—he's said to be suffering from gastritis and chronic insomnia. He's the last of the old revolutionary leaders in the struggle for independence against Japan—a struggle in which he suffered imprisonment and torture. He succeeded in escaping ultimately to the United States where he spent long, tireless years spreading information about Korea and working on its behalf. . . In 1945 he returned, to be welcomed with overwhelming enthusiasm—the symbol of the resistance spirit of his people. From what I've read he appears to them as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And that's the first thing we've got to note about him. He has, without any doubt, the

DR. RHEE

unquestioning support of the bulk of the Korean nation.

And the second is his singleness of purpose. On his first public appearance after his return to Korea he called on both the American and Russian occupation forces to withdraw, leaving the united, independent country he's always wished and worked for. And if singleness of purpose be an attribute of a statesman, Dr. Rhee qualifies 100 per cent on that count. A further point is—he hasn't the slightest interest in things outside those that affect Korea. With him it's always been Korea, first, last and all the time. He's ruthless in pressing his aims. He doesn't care what people think of him. According to an American paper, he said once in reply to an official note from the United States, "You don't like me, and I don't care." He's not the sort to let any consideration for wider issues affect his plans unless he sees something coming his way—and he's in a position to cause even more trouble than he's already done.

—FERGUS MURRAY,
June 27, 1953

THE struggle between these two men [Malenkov and Beria] goes back some way. Until he died unexpectedly in September, 1948, Andrei Zhdanov was Stalin's logical successor. When he died he was one of the three most powerful men in the Kremlin—that is, the three most powerful men outside Stalin. The other two were Beria and Malenkov. Since Zhdanov's death there has been a struggle for power . . . which apparently grew more intense as Stalin's death approached. In this struggle Beria lost all the way. His friends, his supporters, and his subordinates were gradually replaced here, there and everywhere by men with whom he had no association and over whom he had no influence or authority. That was before Stalin's death. After Stalin's death something else happened of tremendous importance. Fifteen doctors accused and convicted in Stalin's time of conspiracy to destroy high government officials were released and acquitted. It was explained that a mistake had been made—and worse. This announcement was made by Beria's own Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the blame was put on the head of the Ministry of State Security, Ignatiev. But in fact Beria himself was in overall charge of security at the time the doctors were arrested, tried and convicted. In effect, therefore, Beria when he released the doctors also accused himself of misbehaviour. And don't let us forget—these men were released less than a month after Stalin's death. If this means anything, it means that even then Malenkov was in a position to get his way. I say Malenkov, because it seems, and it has always seemed, that Molotov is very much the lesser figure.

BERIA'S DOWNFALL

—R. M. HUTTON-POTTS,
July 11, 1953

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 24, 1953.

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