

if we do, we find them tending to seek out their ancient cultural backgrounds. They do not seem to be seeking nationalism as we Westerners understand the term. The followers of Islam, for instance, in every Muslim country — excepting only those under Russia's domination — are looking to, and trying to bring about, a resurgence of Islamic civilization and a co-operation between Muslim countries to blend and strengthen the Muslim world. The leaders of Burma today are a band of devout Buddhists. Mahatma Gandhi, still the idol of India, was a devout Hindu and his teachings have had, and are still having, a profound effect on India's thought and development today.

All over Asia, and particularly in Southeast Asia, there is an overwhelming tendency for these peoples, now free from Western domination, to return to their own indigenous cultures, and to endeavour to work out their destinies in their own ways. The Communists, of course, pretend to go along with them, but we know, and they are beginning to find out, that the final aim of Communism is the destruction of all indigenous cultures and the stamping out of all religions and every philosophy and ideal, except that of militant Communism.

Here is a wonderful opportunity for the free world, if only we can find the unity of purpose necessary to embrace it. We could make it clear, and stand by it as a cardinal principle, that the free world we are trying to bring into being and expand, is broad in its concept as well as free; that all cultures are welcome within it and can, once a part of it, develop in their own way their own religions and other philosophies to the full, consistent only with maintaining the personal freedoms of their peoples.

This, I feel, together with the material aid we are already supplying, would tend to attract our Asian brothers towards us, and would give us a free world policy and a cohesion, which is now so palpably lacking.

Gradually, under such a policy, we might begin to combat the effects of the flood of Communist literature which pours into the area, and particularly into India, at the present time. Literature which is obviously heavily subsidized and offered for sale on every bookstall, well printed, mostly in Russia, Czechoslovakia or China, and sold for the equivalent of five or six annas; whereas our Western books cost from five to ten rupees. There is not much doubt about which gets the most circulation!

#### Time Running Short

If we of the free world could evolve a policy with which free Asia could really co-operate, there is still time to bring a vital free world into existence. Such a powerful world would have to be based on sound international law which encouraged and upheld the self-determination of all peoples and defended their right to maintain their own indigenous religions, cultures and backgrounds. But time for the creation of such a world is running short and before we can have such a world, we Westerners must search our own souls. We must shake off our apathy, forget our arrogance and broaden our minds. We must find a way to give our Commonwealth partners, in Southeast Asia particularly, a sense of really belonging to our free world. We must try to capture the minds of the youth of Asia with ideas that are more dynamic than those of the totalitarian Communism they are imbibing today in their millions.

If we are prepared to admit for one moment that our free world has no dynamic ideal which can compete with Communism, then we may as well also admit that human freedom and our Christian civilization have no future. The truth is, of course, that in freedom and democracy we have a dynamic challenge to Communism which can defeat it utterly, but only if we realize in time that Communism can win simply by our default, by our lack of the will, determination and, above all, the understanding of the situation which faces us.

Unfortunately, we must be prepared for war lest the modern set of totalitarians attack us, but let us also fully realize the terrible nature of modern war and the fact that it could deal a blow to our civilization from which it might not recover for a decade. But if we seek, whilst there is yet time, to lay plans for a free world which will attract and not repel our free brothers in Asia, we can become so strong that the Communist world will not dare to attack us. The Commonwealth has a great part to play in expanding and holding together the free world.

The fact that the Commonwealth has six times as many Asians in it as it has Westerners, shows clearly the great part it can play if only we can win their support and real co-operation; and, without their support, a continuing Commonwealth is meaningless and a free world with real strength impossible of attainment.