

One of the facts we must face is that we, the white race, are a minority on this earth. The majority is made up of Africans and Asians and although these people are not powerful today in international politics, they are on the march and the direction of that march is as much our concern as it is theirs.

The Colombo Plan concerns South and South-East Asia and so it is about that area that I want to talk. We cannot understand its condition today unless we glance at history over the last fifty years. The peoples of South East Asia entered that period almost entirely under the domination of Western powers. This is a fact which still colours their thinking and their political concepts. They were affected, as we were, by the rise of Germany as a military totalitarian state; they were affected by the revolution which brought Communist Russia into being; they were affected by that turbulent period between World Wars I and II, in which disintegration of the world pattern began to take place and which culminated in terrible World War II which defeated one set of totalitarians only to give more scope to another. Above all, we must consider the difference in the effect of that war on Europe and on Asia.

Europe came out of World War II devastated; her lovely cities in ruins, her factories largely destroyed, her trade at a standstill. But Europe still had men who knew how to operate factories; her labour force of trained technicians had been depleted but not destroyed. What Europe lacked was the capital to rebuild her factories and re-start her trade. That capital was supplied by the United States through the Marshall Plan. That plan saved Europe from utter chaos, restored her vigour and enterprise and prevented the Communist forces from taking over even more countries than they already had.

When one turns to Asia, one sees a very different picture. The Japanese had driven the Western colonial powers from many countries and they had occupied them... When at last the Japanese were defeated the countries they had occupied were in a state of economic and political chaos. Then some of the Colonial powers tried to take some of them over again. The people resisted and war again ravished them. When, after these struggles, peace finally came, many of these countries were so disorganized and weakened that they have not even yet been able to tackle the problems of hunger and the raising of the living standards of their poverty-stricken millions.

The old India was not occupied by Japan but the withdrawal of the British and the severe consequences of the partition out of which the Moslem state of Pakistan was born, burdened both these states with millions of refugees whom they have had to support from their slender income and try to rehabilitate and resettle. All this chaos in South-East Asia was particularly