

THE INTERNATIONAL

SITUATION IN 1961

BY

JANE GOOL

BEING AN ANALYSIS PRESENTED AT THE
CONFERENCE OF THE NON EUROPEAN
UNITY MOVEMENT HELD AT EDENDALE
PIETERMARITZBURG IN JANUARY 1962

REPRINTED BY APDUSA VIEWS

P.O. BOX 8888

CUMBERWOOD

3235

E-MAIL: MALENTRO@TELKOMSA.NET



Jane Gool

NON-EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT Ninth National Conference, Edendale, Pietermaritzburg.

3rd-5th January, 1962.

Address on THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

In dealing with the International Situation I could not find a better way than to quote Mr. Macmillan, the British Prime Minister, who, speaking in London, is reported as saying, "We are now watching the sensational growth of China, so we are faced with a completely different balance in the world in which we have to live. And the all-important task of maintaining this balance between the free nations and the Communist empire must be the first charge on our resource." Here, the British Prime Minister has expressed succinctly the attitude of mind of the imperialists throughout the world. They see the emergence of China as dramatically altering the balance of power which for centuries had been in favour of the West. Right up to the Second World War, the West with its Colonies and its spheres of influence had been the unchallenged ruler in the world. After the Second World War, Britain lost her traditional role, of leader of the West and America emerged as a colossus with its vast industrial resources to take over the leadership. Simultaneously there appeared on the scene the Soviet Union with its socialist base, to challenge the very existence of capitalism. From this time on, it became the primary function of Western diplomacy to organise its resources to keep the challenger at bay. The Cold War itself with its localised wars that have been going on since the Second World War was a struggle to maintain the old balance of power in favour of the West.

The war had so weakened the old imperial powers, Britain, France and Belgium, Holland, etc., that they could no longer hold down their various colonies by forcible means. The struggle for freedom took the form of anti-imperialist struggles everywhere. Immediately after the Second World War, India was granted a so-called freedom and a new state, Pakistan, was created, the better to maintain Britain's economic domination over both sectors. The French were driven out of their only stronghold in Indo-China and Holland had to scuttle out of Indonesia

and Malaya. The stranglehold of British and American imperialism was completely shattered in the mainland of China, a fact which they have never forgiven. Today America maintains a puppet regime in Formosa under the discredited Chiang Kai Shek. From the point of view of the imperialists the picture was a gloomy one; the anti-imperialist struggles burst forth with a boldness that gave them breadth and scope. The Bandung Conference was the first expression of the new spirit of nationhood on the part of the ex-colonial slaves together with those of their brothers in chains who were still groaning under the yoke of imperialism. Here was formulated the cry of Anti-Colonialism that was to be the battle-cry of all colonial countries.

The next phase of the anti-colonial struggles shifts over to the Continent of Africa. But here the imperialists have learnt from their failures in the East. They use both force and persuasion with crumbs to maintain their power. Bankrupt and worn-out from the long drawn-out war of attrition in the East and fearing to lose her vast colonies in Africa, France evolved a new scheme to ward off the disaster. She clothed colonialism in a new garb - a French Community. While offering the semblance of freedom, she tied her colonies more firmly to the mother country. This scheme was calculated to buy over the leadership of the colonial countries and give it a stake in the exploitation of the masses. France could now exploit the raw materials of the colonies with all the greater intensity, knowing that she could safely leave the task of keeping the masses in control in the hands of the local leaders who would mercilessly crush any revolt by the masses, since such a revolt would endanger their newly-acquired share of the fruits of exploitation. When Guinea called the bluff of this magnanimous grand gesture, this so-called granting of independence by refusing to join the French Community, France revealed herself in her true colours, a cornered tiger snarling with outstretched claws. She promptly withdrew all her technicians, her teachers, her machinery; including telegraph poles and wires, in an attempt to bankrupt the country and make it impossible for it to live as an independent state. In this attempt she failed miserably, for Guinea turned for assistance to the Soviet Union and China.

It is when we turn to Britain and her empire that we see more clearly the drift of things and here we will quote one of her spokesmen, Margery Perham, from 'The Listener' of November 16th, 1961; "It is

upon the colonial aspect of this world situation' that I want to direct our attention. This is the part which most intimately concerns us in Britain. For by far the greater number of the newly emancipated peoples were in our Empire. Consider for a moment the scale of the operation. Sixteen years ago we ruled some 600 million people. Today we rule some 40 million, and East Africa's 20 million are on the very edge of independence. We shall soon be left with some small scattered posts and islands The Britain of 1961 is very different as regards her external power from the Britain of 1939 or even 1945. But perhaps even more startling than the loss of governing power has been this outburst of anti-colonialism which has accompanied it. It condemns our past record, it weakens our present influence. It threatens to harm our future relations with many of our former subjects and other Coloured peoples."

Quite apart from the wail of self-pity and the touching concern for the Herrenvolk in South Africa whose representatives, Louw and Fourie, were given the hot treatment, both at the Conference of the Commonwealth and at the U.N.O. Assembly, this article reveals the fear on the part of the imperialists of the mounting tide against colonialism. She proceeds, "Colonialism What does it mean? It is certainly a word of abuse. It is nearly always coupled with imperialism as if to make sure that the abuse is all-inclusive. For anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism represent the latest phase in the reaction of the rest of the world against the long domination of the West." She goes on to quote Russia as saying:

"Colonialism regards poverty, disease, ignorance, brutality, treachery, the bondsman's chains and the hangman's rope as its allies in Africa." "These", she says, "of course are the extremes of propaganda. But they are intended to prolong, to enlarge and exacerbate something which already exists, that great movement of assertion amongst the Non-European peoples which has so suddenly changed the balance of forces in our world."

Accusing Russia of exploiting the tide of anti-colonialism, she writes, "These two attacks, the communist and the anti-colonial, are simultaneous and the Communist States are working hard to make them a fully-combined operation. This would set some three-quarters

of the world against the West." In this statement the writer gives expression to the nightmare which is haunting British Imperialism and indeed all imperialisms throughout the world. They are caught between the horns of a dilemma. Unable any longer to rule the Colonial peoples in the old way, they hatched a new 'independence' formula by which they entrusted the job of holding down the masses to their ambitious local leaders. They are now finding that this 'independence' plan has its own logic. The idea of freedom has gone so deep in the consciousness of the masses and the hatred of oppression associated with colonialism is so consuming that it is not merely a question of substituting a black foreman in place of a White boss. It is much more than that. The masses demand a radical change in the social and economic forms of their existence. That is why the boss boys in the newly independent countries are not able to establish a stable regime. It is not that they want to spite their masters but that the forces from below, pushing in a different direction, are so powerful. The oppressed masses today are cognisant of the existence of another system which is free of the evils of colonialism. It is this pressure of the masses from below, which makes the leadership veer now this way, now that. In order to maintain their position¹ the leadership has to give the appearance of moving to the left while in fact it is tied hand and foot to its imperial masters.

The dilemma of imperialism was brought into sharp focus by events in the Congo; when Belgium; the weakest of the imperialist countries, following the example of the others, "offered independence" to her colony. No sooner had the Congolese taken the offer at face value, and tried to re-organise the Congo under the leadership of Lumumba, than the imperialists took fright at the consequences of their own actions. They immediately clamped down on the Congolese, released terror and shamelessly re-introduced all the old shackles of colonialism.

The rest of the imperialists found it necessary to come to the aid of Belgium. Brushing aside all protestations from the smaller nations, they used the U.N.O. forces as an instrument for the defence of finance capital invested in the Congo. Prime Minister Lumumba was ruthlessly murdered by the imperialist agents and their puppets were openly supported with bayonets in hand. At this very moment they are arranging for a puppet government to take over the Congo.

Portuguese imperialism, taking advantage of the confusion deliberately created in the Congo, released a reign of terror on its subject people in Angola. A veritable holocaust followed in the wake of the Portuguese which had been called in to crush the spirit of the people of Angola. All this took place with the connivance of international imperialism. Further north, in Algeria, the French are still engaged in a 7-year old war. She is using the most vicious methods with the most barbarous means of torture to break the struggle for freedom, for fear of losing the vast oil resources in the Sahara, which is part of the territory of Algeria. While the rest of the imperialists are sympathetic to France, they cannot invent a plausible excuse for open intervention and times are long past for the old method of blatantly employing military forces for colonisation. The world balance of power in the military sense has shifted considerably. Imperialism today has to camouflage its actions for it needs to win over the active, or at least tacit, support of the smaller nations. This in itself dictates the methods that are still open to it. The altered balance of power was revealed most dramatically during the Suez incident. One threatening word from the Soviet Union was sufficient to make the British ships swivel round and go back home. Little Egypt could tickle the beard of the British Lion with impunity. A short 15 years ago it would have been quite impossible for the little island of Cuba to drive out the American imperialist colossus from its soil, confiscate its sugar plantations and its installations and completely smash its stranglehold over the people of Cuba. But all this is possible today because little Cuba could find shelter under the Soviet umbrella.

The question may well be asked: What has happened to cause this change that seems to have tempered the ferocity of the cannibalistic instincts of imperialism immediately after the last World War, the world was seething with revolutionary ferment, country after country was on the verge of a revolution which would have meant a break-away from capitalism-imperialism.

Countries like Greece, Italy, France and Cyprus in Europe and practically the whole of the East - all of these would have succumbed but for the intervention of the American colossus, assisted by the weakened Britain.

America used her vast economic resources as well as her military might to stamp out what she called the red menace in Europe, and helped to stabilise the crumbling Western world. At this time she was the unchallenged colossus in the world, both in the economic and the

military sense. She could boast that she was the only country that had the knowledge and the means of nuclear warfare. She vaunted the superiority of the combined western strength in conventional weapons over that of the Soviet bloc. The methods used in the Cold War itself were determined by this vaunted superiority.

But the speedy development of the Socialist countries soon produced a shift of emphasis in the Cold War. When the Soviet Union caught up with the West in conventional weapons America limited its boast to its superiority in nuclear weapons. But this was not to be for long. The Soviet Union soon discovered the method of splitting the atom and produced its own atomic bombs. The first Sputnik settled the argument. From then on the West could no longer, boast of leadership in this field. From then on the race for the conquest of space and the production of bigger and more deadly weapons of destruction went fast and furious. In this race America with the rest of the West was visibly seen to lag behind. Again the argument was put beyond doubt when the Soviet Union demonstrated its greatest mastery in the field of rocketry by catapulting the first men into space to encircle the world in controlled capsules. To make doubly sure that the whole world recognised its complete superiority in rocketry and weapons of destruction, she now fired the 50 megaton bomb into space, the biggest man has ever made. Is it any wonder then that the imperialist tiger has been forced to sheath its claws, tame its ferocity and attempt to hide its nature.

Thus when the Berlin crisis took place and America whipped up a war psychosis, neither West Germany, Britain, nor all the N.A.T.O. forces were willing to risk war over Berlin. All the bluster of the war-mongers in America came to nought. Germany remains divided into two separate states with West Berlin as an unhappy enclave within the Eastern sector.

The Western powers then having lost their superiority in the military sphere now concentrated their energies on economic competition as a means of carrying on the Cold War. This was all the more necessary because it served two purposes; firstly, that having suffered a blow at the loss of their colonial possessions they had to re-organise their tottering economies to make up for the loss. Secondly, they had to pool their financial resources in order to counter the effects of the planned

economy of the socialist states on foreign markets. In this field, too, the Western powers were faced with grave difficulties. While the Western world could boast of superiority in terms of overall production, it was nevertheless faced with the fact that it was unable to increase its rate of production of 3½% per year at the most whilst the Soviet Union's is reputed to be at least 10% per annum. Something had to be done to save the situation.

The chief instrument that was forged to overcome these difficulties was the creation of the European Economic Community, known as the Common Market. Its purpose is to break down national barriers and eliminate tariffs among the member states of this community. By the time it is fully established, approximately 12 years, an Italian will have the right to set up a shop anywhere in Germany or a French worker will be free to displace a German worker, and vice versa. Goods as well as people will be able to circulate freely within the bounds of the Community.

The point to remember here is that while breaking down the tariff barrier within, the Community will ring itself with a wall of high tariffs against all non-member states. The European Economic Community today consists of 6 European states - Belgium, France, Western Germany, Luxemburg, Italy, Netherlands, with Britain applying for permission to join. These states are full members, but a decision has been arrived at that the ex-colonies of the member states be drawn in and these shall be accorded the status of associate members. Note the African states shall be accorded a second-class status and shall not be represented in the governing bodies responsible for deciding policy. Under the regulations the raw materials from the ex-colonies shall be available to all the six members on the same terms which formerly existed only between themselves and the mother country. It is clear that the purpose of the European Economic Community is to create a more efficient machinery for the intensification of exploitation of the working masses both at home and in the ex-colonies, and at the same time to introduce a rationale in the chaotic capitalist method of exploiting the raw materials and markets. Finance capital finds the national boundaries too narrow and circumscribed and the financiers within the various states, no longer able independently to meet the challenge of the planned economy of the Soviet bloc, are now attempting to create a

supra-state within which they will try to plan collectively, without altering the capitalist base.

In other words, they are attempting to introduce a planned economy in Europe without altering the class structure of society - an impossible task, for the very essence of capitalism is anarchy and cannibalistic competition. At best, they can only gain time. But the European Economic Community has other ramifications in the political and military spheres. The member states would have to sacrifice their sovereignty with respect to some of the most important questions, like foreign policy. A bureaucracy standing above the member states will be in sole charge of such matters and central military power like the Nato shall be the instrument of defence of the imperialist interests within the Community.

We have said that with all these complicated schemes they are evolving they can at best only gain time. And that time is fast running out. Up to a few years ago they regarded themselves as having to contend with Soviet competition alone. Even then they had grave fears about the ability to maintain their own against the speed of a planned socialist economy.

But now a new giant, China, has arisen alongside the Soviet Union. A little more than 15 years ago, China was a backward, poverty-stricken, semi-colonial country, exploited by Britain and America. Since the revolution, when the imperialists were thrown out, China has developed at a speed unprecedented in history. Today she stands as the second largest coal producer in the world. In machine tools she has surpassed Britain and Germany, in iron and steel she is second only to the United States and the Soviet Union. In cotton production she has already surpassed the United States of America. In textiles the city of Shanghai alone is out-producing Britain. These are breath-taking achievements. How has this come about?

Felix Greene in "The Wall has Two Sides", gives an account of the vast changes that have transformed China from a backward country to the third greatest power in the world.

One of the greatest problems it had to solve was the liquidation of illiteracy. Felix Greene states, "Within her boundaries, China includes one-quarter of the human race, probably more than a quarter of the

world's children, and certainly more than a quarter of the educational problems of the world. Consider the China of eleven years ago. A population of over 700 million people, 80 per cent or more of them illiterate; a land predominantly agricultural, but with almost no schools in the rural areas; a nation with virtually no industry, little technological or managerial experience; desperately short of skilled labour, teachers, professional people. "Consider further that this nation had been devastated by a prolonged civil war and a seven year military occupation by Japan. Consider a country in which disease and illness were rampant, in which there were so few doctors that there was only one for every 25,000 people, and where a province twice as big as France (Sinkiang) had only fifteen; consider a people so close to starvation that (according to foreign estimates) 20,000 bodies were picked up each year from the streets of Shanghai alone - adults and children who had gone under, who had succumbed in the relentless struggle for survival. And consider, finally, the determination of this country to shed this nightmare past and thrust forward, swiftly, into the twentieth century. That in brief was China's educational problem..." "It is difficult for us to imagine even remotely the hunger that exists for education in countries in which, until recently, educational opportunities for most people were denied. This is not only true of China but of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Education to millions of people is the tool, the magic key that opens new worlds, new undreamt of opportunities. For an adult to learn to read is, as one Chinese said to me, "like a blind man being granted sight."

The next greatest problem that China had to face was the utter degradation, misery and mass starvation of almost 500 million peasants living in the countryside. With supreme confidence and courage it tackled this superhuman task. First the whole countryside was divided into hsiangs or communes. These communes comprised several villages with a total of 5-10 thousand families, about 84,000 members. Some of these communes were even larger, with twice as many members. The purpose of the communes was to make them economically self-sufficient, rouse the peasants from their centuries old lethargy, hopelessness and fatalism and imbue them with a zest and a hope in the future. Today there is a spirit of dedication in the communes. Greene, in giving a picture of a typical commune, writes:

“The communes put aside funds for investment in such things as school and hospital buildings, tractors and machinery for the workshops, capital improvement of the land by dams, electric pumps, irrigation projects.

Tractors and industrial machinery can be bought from the factories on an instalment plan without interest charges. (It is not lack of money, but the shortage of industrial output that prevents the communes from mechanising as fast as they would wish.)” “This investment is indeed one of the most economically significant features of the commune system - in that it enables the country to finance agricultural improvements and to establish rural industries with almost no help from central funds. Large sums are being ploughed back into capital investment rather than being used to increase the standard of living. “The way in which the workers will accept austerity today in the hope of a better tomorrow is astonishing. In a commune near Chengchow, the poorest I visited, I came across an extreme and revealing instance of this.

“If their agriculture is backward, the Chinese still believe that the Communes give the best prospect for advance. The fact is that China's peasants are lifting themselves by their own bootstraps out of an abyss inconceivable to our imagination. Life is tough; life is austere; yet I found it often lightened by a certain gaiety and enthusiasm, and, above all, by hope.”

These changes, so revolutionary in scope, so stupendous in extent, have completely shattered the old way of life. The women of China, who have had for hundreds of centuries been submissive to ancient patriarchal laws, and enslaved from birth to the grave, and oppressed are for the first time tasting freedom. This has released the latent energies of the women, freed them from the narrow confines of the home, so that they are now participating as equals with their men in the great leap forward to establish China once more in the vanguard of the greatest nations in the world. Greene states: “The higher level of political understanding, particularly among the women during the Great Leap Forward, the excitement and enthusiasm, all made it difficult for housewives to sit quietly at home - they all wanted to come out into life and take part.” “ So they began to set up little workshops together in the streets, in people’s houses, any-where where there was a spare room. And they began, as we say ‘with empty hands’, that is, without any financial help from the Government.” Then, of course, because the workers were housewives, something had to be done about the

children. They started kindergartens and nurseries and then canteens so that women did not have to cook after they went home..." By altering the status of millions of women, both national productivity and national income have been increased.

In order to bring about the active participation of each individual member in the swiftest possible time in the change-over from feudalism to socialism, Greene has some interesting comments: "By whatever name one wishes to speak of it (the Chinese call it democracy) an outstanding feature of life in China is mass participation by means of meetings and discussions.

"It is through these meetings that the Chinese leadership keeps closely in touch with public sentiment and has often been able to correct errors before they create too serious a problem. Many traveler like myself soon becomes conscious that China is a country where discussions, talks meetings, debates take place everywhere and on every conceivable subject.

"I have come to believe that the Chinese derive their deepest satisfactions not from a sense of personal importance but in sharing in activities which have aims beyond the individual. The Government has been extremely skillful in giving nearly everyone a sense that his work fits in somewhere. A floor boy in this hotel feels he is participating in the rebirth of China every bit as a big shot in the Government. All of them down to those who do the most menial jobs - pedicab drivers, say and made to feel that they are an essential part of the whole show."

In summing up Greene states: "No one can come away from a visit to China today without being impressed, even overwhelmed by the experience. It is impossible not to feel while one is there that one is witnessing one of the great episodes of history and all our futures are bound to be influenced by it.

"With China's vast manpower, the industriousness and intelligence of the people, and the aptitude they are showing for advanced technological processes, it is quite possible that our children, or theirs,

may see China regain the position of world leadership which she held before for so many centuries.

"The advances achieved by the Chinese people in the past eleven years have been too well documented to be denied. But questions at once come to mind. The material advances may have been great, but at what human cost have they been achieved? At what loss of human dignity? With what denial of human freedom?"

"It is difficult for us who stand so far above the corroding effects of poverty to understand that some people's conception of human dignity is very different from our own. The values of free thought seem remote and irrelevant to those whose history is being written in the language of sheer physical survival.

"When a Chinese worker or peasant says he is freer today than he has ever been in his life, he means it. And he sounds as if he means it. Perhaps he does not mean it in our way, for he has never known the particular forms of political and social freedom which have been the product of our own historical past and which are the fruit of our relative physical security.

"A Chinese uses the word "freedom" in a very personal, down-to-earth, non-theoretical sense. He is not talking about abstractions, but experience.

He means that he is at last free to eat, and not to starve; he is free, of the landlord and the money-lender; he is free to learn to read and write; he is free to develop skills that would otherwise have remained hidden; he is free to send his children to school, and when they are ill there is a doctor to help make them well; he is free to look at the future with hope, not despair. For him these are all new freedoms. And it's not such a bad list."

Is it any wonder that the imperialists shiver in their boots when they think of China today? Is it any wonder that the British Prime Minister sees in the sensational growth a colonial force which will completely change the balance of power in the world? He trembles at the very thought of the impact this colossus on the minds and the physical conditions of the colonial peoples in the near future. The lessons that the oppressed peoples throughout the world and in particular in Asia and Africa are learning are that dire poverty is inseparably bound up

with lack of freedom. Once the Chinese people got rid of the domination and shackles of British and American domination and their agents and got the opportunity to govern themselves for the benefit of themselves; once they decided to use the rich minerals of the country and all its resources, financial, technological and cultural, for their own benefit, new energies were released and were harnessed in this gigantic task of uplifting a quarter of the human race from a state of backwardness and dire poverty; to the position of one of the greatest powers within a mere 15 years.

It is this active participation and the involvement of the whole population in working out their own destiny that gives impetus to this tremendous development. Only a free people can reach such heights of achievement.

Issued by the NON-EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT 778
Mquqo Street, EAST LONDON.

