

In the East

Mesamarat al-Gayb, 25 November 1945

The West's own trials are neither light, nor easy — the West holds her own complex problems, growing only more difficult by the day. But the West has already grown accustomed to problems, and already knows how to extricate herself from them, through patience and forbearance at times, through haste and rivalry at others, and through war, sparing nothing and no one, whenever war itself proves unavoidable. Let us leave the West, then, and her own never-ending problems, and turn instead to the East, and her own problems, which seem intent on rivalling the West's own, in thorny, thoroughly complex confusion.

The East's own problems, at the very least, never come from within herself, these days — they come, rather, from the West. We know of no Eastern state genuinely wishing to attack another Eastern state, nor any Eastern people genuinely wishing to subjugate another Eastern people. Had the East's own affairs simply been left to the East, it seems entirely likely she would have proceeded along her own path toward genuine progress, walking that same path calmly, steadily, until reaching whatever point God willed her to reach, free of turmoil, free of confusion. But the East's own affairs are never left to the East — the West intervenes in them continuously, complicating them continuously, exhausting the East's own efforts to no genuine benefit, neither the East's own, nor the West's either, in this same violent struggle that consumes strength, and spreads through people's own souls little hope, a great deal of despair, and, in any case, unending sorrow.

There exists, in the East, at present, no single place of which one might genuinely say: hearts there are at ease, souls there are content, and affairs there proceed exactly as Easterners themselves might wish, or as Westerners might wish, or exactly as affairs genuinely ought to proceed, for civilization's own advancement, the realization of benefit for all people alike, and the establishment of that same benefit upon a genuinely sound foundation of justice, equality, and fairness.

The Far East remains in genuine, violent, thoroughly detestable turmoil — and this same turmoil has no cause whatsoever, except that the Europeans, who spilled their own blood, and the blood of others, to eradicate injustice, and establish justice, have simply been unable, even now, to console themselves for the loss of exactly the injustice they

themselves had grown so accustomed to, and had built their own position upon. It might well have been expected — once the war laid down its own burdens, once Japan suffered this same absolute defeat — that China's own affairs would be left entirely to China alone, especially given it had already been said, a thousand times over, that China counted among the five great powers sharing in establishing the new world. Yet it stands entirely clear that China's own affairs remain far from exclusively her own — they remain, rather, shared among the great European and American powers, the very subject of a dispute, some small part of it open, most of it concealed, between the Russians and the Americans.

It would be a genuine mistake to say, or to imagine, the English look upon China's own affairs with a gaze genuinely free of greed, and colonial ambition — European and American interests remain genuinely, thoroughly entangled in China, and China has not yet reached a level of purely material advancement sufficient to dispense with either of them. The great European powers retain their own concessions, their own colonies, their own zones of political and economic influence there, and these same powers must genuinely preserve their own concessions — should they ever relinquish any part of them, they would relinquish it only in exchange for genuine payment.

Communism has already spread across certain parts of China, rising to a position of genuine significance, and the Chinese people have found themselves genuinely divided against themselves. It would only have been natural to leave the Chinese entirely to their own affairs, to organize them exactly as they themselves wished — but communism has a genuinely great champion, and communism's own opponents have genuinely great champions too, with immense American forces present in China besides. Russia and China share, moreover, both proximity, and thoroughly entangled interests — the dispute between communism and capital, in China, is exactly the same dispute between communism and capital found across every country on earth, except that, in China, it comes armed with American and Russian weapons alike.

It would hardly be an exaggeration, then, to look upon what is now happening in China exactly as we once looked upon what was happening in Spain, before the Second World War. China's own confused affairs, then, might well have been genuinely capable of resolution, arriving at some common accord, had they never grown complicated by the clash of American and Russian interests, in those same lands.

Europeans possessed colonies they had exploited before the war, for a longer or shorter span of years — colonies Japan seized from them for a few short years, before Japan herself was defeated, and the Europeans resolved to reclaim their own colonies once again. But these same colonies had genuinely believed they could reclaim their own freedom instead, once right and justice had triumphed, in this same war's own aftermath, a war they believed had been kindled to establish right, and spread justice. How swiftly, though, did these same colonies discover they had merely wished for something — and that wishing is one thing, attaining one's own wishes quite another — and that the war was never kindled to establish right, and spread justice at all, but kindled, rather, so the strong might grow stronger still, the mighty mightier still, and to bar the ambitious from any real competition, or the stirring up of fresh problems.

What mattered, then, was never that right should triumph, and justice spread — what mattered, rather, was that Germany, Italy, and Japan be restrained from their own colonial ambition, and colonial competition, and that the earth remain the exclusive preserve of exactly those who had already monopolized it, to the exclusion of everyone else!

And so we now witness exactly these same sins being perpetrated in the Far East: the people of Indonesia want genuine independence over their own affairs, in fulfilment of the very covenants the victors gave to people everywhere — yet they are told, instead: no, you must submit to Holland, since you were already subject to her before, and nothing genuinely new has happened in the world calling for any change to the old order. Should the people of Indonesia refuse to submit, death is poured down upon them, every variety of horror unleashed against them, the victors themselves plugging their own ears, so the voices of those demanding right, justice, and fairness might never reach them. What matters is never that ninety million Indonesians enjoy their own right to freedom, and independence — what matters, rather, is that eight million Dutch enjoy exactly what they enjoyed before the war, of colonialism, and exploitation.

The former are Easterners, and must submit; the latter are Westerners, and must prevail. Holland sacrificed for her own English allies; Great Britain, then, must sacrifice for her own Dutch allies. The result: the war has laid down its own burdens — yet blood still flows, in the Far East, since Europe has never consoled herself for the loss of colonialism, has never genuinely, sincerely believed in restoring rights to

their own rightful owners, believing, rather, only in the giving of promises, and nothing more.

Exactly what is happening in Indonesia happens equally in Indochina — it would hardly do for Holland to reclaim her own colonies, while France falls short in reclaiming what colonies were once her own. Nor was France any less sacrificing, for the Allied cause, than Holland — she was, after all, the one who absorbed the first shock, excelled in resistance, and took part in subduing Germany. And yet the British assist France in reclaiming her own Far Eastern colonies with nothing more than lukewarm assistance, very nearly amounting to outright obstruction — they would, if they could, turn her back from these same colonies entirely, since real rivalry exists between France and Great Britain, while none genuinely exists between Holland and Great Britain.

The news has already told us the people of Burma, too, demand independence, and struggle for it — but Burma was once a British colony, and so must remain a British colony, with the armies of the British Empire holding sufficient strength to convince her to submit to colonial authority. India's own story is far too evident to require any real elaboration by those who might speak of it: India might well demand independence, exactly as she pleases; India might well say she took part in the war, took part in the victory, and holds a genuine right to share in the fruits of that same victory. India might well point out that her own sons still labour, still spill their own blood, in the Empire's own service, and in assisting the Empire's own allies — Indian soldiers, indeed, are pouring death upon the people of Indonesia, in aid of the Dutch. India can say all of this, and more besides — yet her own people remain divided, and must remain divided, since this same division serves to consolidate British colonial rule.

As for the Middle East, her own case proves genuinely astonishing indeed: Iran once lived calm, and secure, proceeding through her own life, harming no one, harmed by no one — yet, once war broke out, her own occupation appeared necessary to the Allies' own interest, and so they occupied her, changed her own system of government, and bound themselves, even then, to a solemn pledge: never to endanger her own independence, never to prolong their own presence upon her own soil, beyond the war's own end. The war has ended — yet occupation of Iranian soil still persists, the Russians settled in one part of this same land, the British in another, each side regarding the other with real suspicion, real unease, each side spreading whatever rumours it pleases

about the other.

Iran asks both sides to honour their own pledge, and receives from them only sweet, honeyed answers — recalling the ancient poet's own words:

*He gives you sweetness from the very tip of his tongue,
then slips from your grasp, exactly as the fox slips away.*

Revolt breaks out in Iran — whether kindled by herself, or kindled by the foreigner — and, whenever Iran wishes to restore order to its own proper place, she finds herself flatly prevented from doing so. The English grow indignant that the Russians prevent Iran from restoring order in the northern region — yet, had revolt broken out in the British-controlled region instead, they too might well have prevented Iran from restoring order there, and the Russians, in turn, would have grown indignant at English interference in Iranian affairs. Both sides think of themselves, and of their own interests, far more than they think of Iran, and the interests of Iranians themselves.

There lies, in the Iranian revolt, a genuine danger to Turkey, and a genuine danger to Iraq — and the British grow genuinely anxious over this same danger, not because it might harm Turkey, or harm Iraq, but because it might jeopardize certain major interests of the Empire itself. Order and calm must genuinely settle in Turkey and Iraq, then, so the British Empire's own interests in the Near East remain safe — the Near East, as you know, being the very point of connection between the Empire and her own colonies.

For exactly this reason, the calm of the Near East proves a genuinely, deeply significant matter, for our own British allies and friends: this same calm must never be exposed to danger, whatever its own source, and the British must remain genuinely vigilant, so that no harm ever reaches Turkey or Iraq from Iran, and remain genuinely vigilant, too, so that matters never grow disturbed in the eastern Mediterranean, under any circumstance whatsoever. Should the French err, then, breaking their own promises, and the Syrians and Lebanese grow genuinely unsettled, Great Britain remains fully capable of setting the French back on the right path, compelling them to honour their own word, fulfil their own pledge, and evacuate Syria and Lebanon. Should Syria and Lebanon then say: this is well and good, but we want complete evacuation, the evacuation of every foreigner alike — the British would answer: this same evacuation will indeed take place, but only once we

have agreed that harm might reach the Near East from Iran, exactly as it might reach the Near East from the French own position in Syria and Lebanon — yet it might just as easily reach the Near East from Palestine, too, where the British Mandate itself stands, and where this same Mandate proves incapable of preserving order, since it either refuses, or is simply unable, to grant the Arabs their own fair due, and restore right to its own rightful owners.

This, then, is the genuinely complicated problem: it is not the Russians who complicate matters in Palestine, nor the French who complicate matters in Palestine — it is the English themselves, and their own American allies, who complicate matters. They created the Palestinian problem from nothing whatsoever; offered up, as a gift, what did not even belong to them; promised what they could not possibly fulfil; gave mutually contradictory promises to Arabs and Jews alike — and both sides believed them. And once the time came to honour these same promises, the matter simply collapsed in their own hands, leaving them in exactly the state of bewilderment they now occupy, one bringing considerable harm upon the Near East, and upon themselves alike.

Harm might well reach the Near East from Egypt too — Egypt holds her own rights, which she demands, genuinely believing the time has already come for these same rights to be restored to her; genuinely believing she holds these same rights by the very nature of things, since God created her free, and no one ought ever to enslave her; genuinely believing, too, that she holds these same rights because she sacrificed a great deal for them throughout the war — indeed, throughout both wars. Should these same rights not be restored to her, she may well grow genuinely angry — and her own anger might well become a source of genuinely great harm, exposing the British Empire's own interests to real danger.

Harm might well come from North Africa too — she likewise wants to be free, since God created her free, and since she has, besides, gone genuinely far too long already deprived of freedom, and independence. Harm, then, as you can see, might well come from every single corner of the East — and real precaution must genuinely be taken against it. But what could such precaution possibly consist of...? It could consist of only one of three things, admitting no fourth. The first: that Europe remain in continuous war, massing immense force across every single part of the East, to prevent her own people from ever rising up. There is no genuine way toward this same option — the people of Europe are genuinely

exhausted, in genuine need of some measure of rest, and there exists no genuine way of compelling them into continuous war. The second: that the West genuinely submit to whatever the East demands, restoring her own rights entirely, her own independence in full measure. There is no genuine way toward this same option either, short of some magic wand touching the Europeans, transforming them, in the very blink of an eye, into virtuous angels. The third: that the West resort, instead, to manoeuvring, and evasion — practising enticement at times, intimidation at others; fear on one occasion, temptation on the next.

This, then, is exactly the option the West will pursue tomorrow — since she pursues it today, and pursued it yesterday, and since it has already brought her, up to now, everything she has ever wanted. The genuinely significant question, though, is never what the West might do, to confront the East's own aspiration toward freedom — the answer to that same question is already well known. The real question, rather, is this: what might the East itself do, to make its own aspiration toward freedom a genuine, actual reality?