

INDONESIAN INTRODUCTION



**GERALD
PEEL, M.A.**

**WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE
DUTCH EAST INDIES**

PRICE SIXPENCE

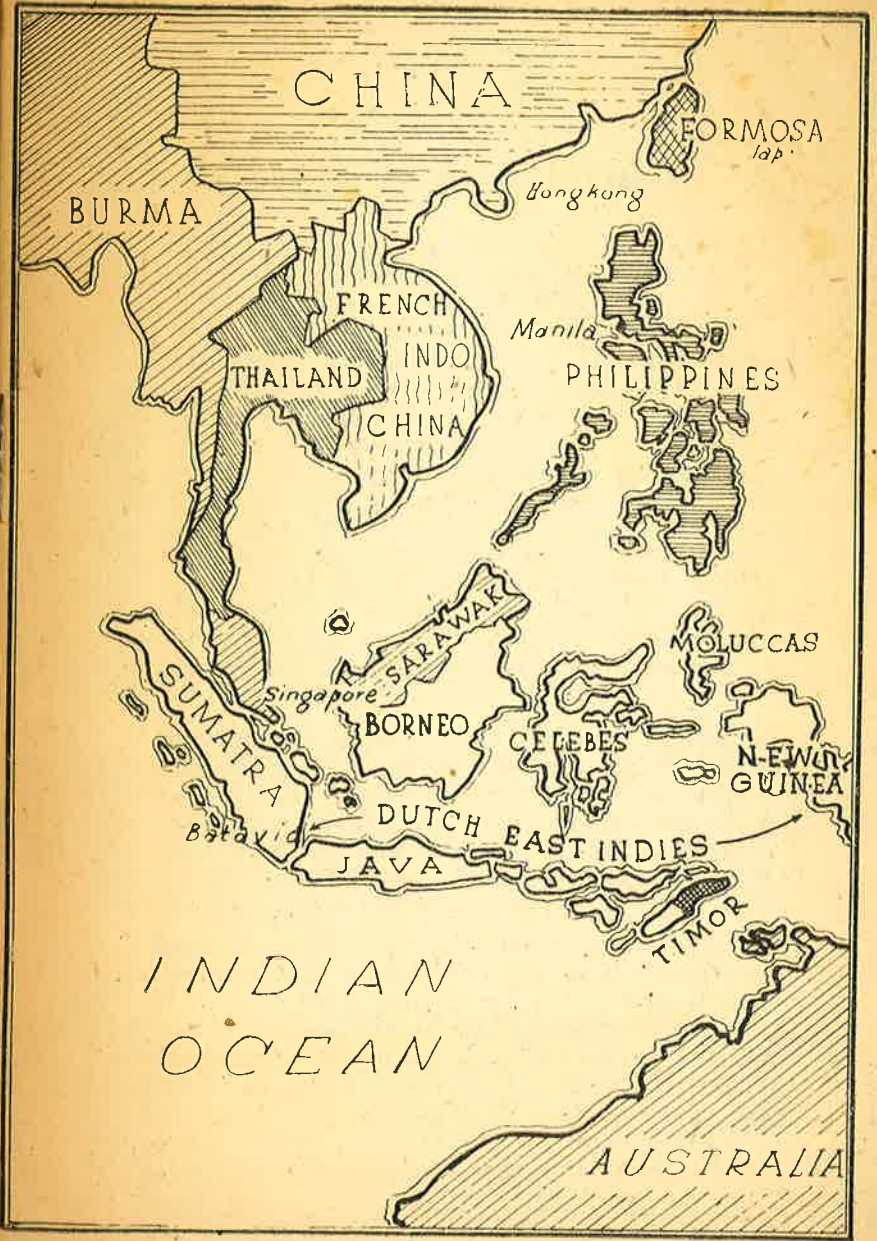
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lion, and the Dutch East Indies with about 72 million, all fell so easily before the Japanese invaders. Why?

Because the peoples of these countries were not free. Imagine if these millions had been free peoples in arms; it's obvious that no force the Japanese could have put in the field would have conquered them. But the Japs found *peoples before them who had no say in their own destinies*. To Indonesians, for instance, the choice seemed one of two imperialist masters, Dutch or Japanese, that was all. Before the invasion far-seeing Indonesian patriots demanded arms with which to fight the Japs, but *they were not given arms to defend themselves*. Their white overlords feared to mobilise the people of Indonesia for defence. Many of the Indonesians who formed the bulk of Queen Wilhelmina's regular army in the Indies gave up their lives and fought bravely in defence of their fatherland, but they were rankers and all the officers of that army were Dutch. This question of *freedom* for the peoples of the Pacific *affects you and me*, every Australian, personally. It is a vital factor in our defence. That was why I thought this booklet urgent.

GERALD PEEL,

Sydney,

April, 1945.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Mr. Gerald Peel, the author of this pamphlet, is a Master of Arts of Cambridge University, England. He is the author of "Brutalities in Nazi Germany," "India and Australia," and other anti-fascist publications.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE EMERALD ISLES

"Despair not — something great can be achieved there in the Indies." (Jan Pieterszoon Coen, 1618)

THE name Indonesia was originally coined by a German ethnologist named Bastian. By Indonesia he meant all the islands of the region including Formosa, British Malaya, the Philippines, and Madagascar. By use this name has become more and more restricted to *the Dutch East Indies*. It is in this sense I shall use it in this booklet. This definition of Indonesia incidentally gives it practically the same territory as that of the old Hindu Kingdom of Madjapahit to which I shall later refer.

Unnatural Boundaries

Culturally the people of British Malaya are close to those of the Dutch East Indies. But they have different political problems due to British overlordship, and a different national-problem. In British Malaya, the Malays, though the largest single community, are a minority of the population. In the last census the proportion was: Malays 1,962,021, Chinese 1,709,392, and Indians 624,009 ⁽¹⁾. Malaya is a separate study.

Then, obviously, the British parts of Borneo, and the Portugese part of Timor, properly belong to Indonesia, while the Dutch part of New Guinea does not. But these parts are thinly populated and they more or less balance each other out; so their inclusion in statistics does not affect general arguments.

No Stove No Ice-Box.

Indonesians call their home "The Emerald Isles." Truly, these islands, populated by over 72,000,000 people ⁽²⁾, are among the richest and most beautiful in the world. This is due to the geographical conditions.

The islands have many natural advantages, not the least of which is their climate. Since records have been kept in Batavia the temperature has never been known to rise higher than 90 degrees Fahrenheit or fall lower than 66 degrees. Average temperature in Batavia the year round is about 79 degrees, rising to 80 degrees in the hottest months and dropping to 78 degrees in the coolest months ⁽³⁾. It will be seen that the time of the year makes little difference to the temperature. The higher you go in the hills, of course, the cooler it becomes.

Umbrellas In Demand.

There is a copious rainfall. Humidity is high and the average rainfall in Batavia, capital city of Java, is over 80 inches. In Borneo and Sumatra it is 10 to 12 feet ⁽⁴⁾. Rainy seasons are defined, but there is good rain the year round. This weather makes possible more than one crop a year and big yields.

For administrative purposes the Netherlands Indies is divided into two, Java and the Outer Provinces. With Java is also included Madura, the small island to the north east, divided from Java by a narrow sea channel. Java, 7% of the total area, accounts for 69% of the population. The figures at the 1930 census were: Java 41,718,000, Outer Provinces 19,009,000 ⁽⁵⁾.

Manure From The Mountains.

Java is the most highly organised part of the territory, has the best harbour facilities and is the centre of administration. From the steamy green coastal regions

the island rises in the centre to considerable volcanic heights. *The fertility of Java is due to volcanic eruptions which enrich its soil by constant replenishment from ash and mud streams flowing from the mountains.* The different soils at varying levels give Java its wide range of agricultural products. Java can boast *one of the richest soils in the world.* She has also vast riches underneath the earth's surface.

There's A Lot In A Name.

94% of Indonesia's population is rural ⁽⁶⁾. Indonesians are wedded to the soil of their islands. They are a peasant people. The word Indonesia has a magic. It binds the peoples of the islands. A common history, a common fate, and a common struggle against Dutch Imperialism draws them together. The Malayan lingua franca gives them a common language.

The population consists mostly of Malays. There are a few Papuans and negritos in the more remote parts of several islands, also in New Guinea. The 1931 census showed 97.4% of the population to be natives, 2% Chinese, 0.4% Europeans, and 0.2% other non-indigenous Asiatics ⁽⁷⁾. Europeans include Eurasians born in the islands and Indonesians who have acquired Dutch citizenship. The figures for Chinese include many Chinese-Malayan half-bloods and Chinese who have lived in the islands many generations and speak Malay as their mother tongue. The majority of non-indigenous Asiatics are Arabs who are also Mahommedans. It will be seen *there is no large alien group in Indonesia.*

A Common Language.

Excluding New Guinea, there are eleven main groups of languages in Indonesia ⁽⁸⁾. These eleven are distinct though more or less related languages. There are many

dialect variations within each group. In Java there are three languages, Sundanese in the west, Javanese in the middle and south, and Madurese in the north east. According to the 1930 census the Java people numbered 27,809,000, the Sunda people 8,595,000, and the Madura people 4,306,000 ⁽⁹⁾. Language groups live in contiguous territories. The idea of a confused Tower of Babel would be wrong.

There is a common language for all the islands called *Laag maleisch* or Low Malay. This language originally came from Sumatra. Though Javanese is spoken by many more people as their mother-tongue than Low Malay, the latter can be understood in every island of the archipeligo as well as, with variations, in British Malaya and other parts of the Pacific. It is in this language that newspapers, other than the Dutch ones, are published for all-Indonesian circulation. This is the language of the National Movement of Indonesia.

60,000,000 Muslims.

There is no difficult religious problem in Indonesia. Nearly nine-tenths of the population,—according to the 1930 census, 60,000,000—are Mahommedan. Pagans come next with 3 million, Christians 2 million, and Hindus (confined to Bali), 1¼ million ⁽¹⁰⁾. Some whole areas are Christian, for instance the narrow strip at the north of the Celebes, and generally speaking of one denomination only in each territory, due to the policy until recently of separate fields allotted by the Imperialist Government to each denomination to work in.

Added to the wonderful climate, the rich soil, and the mineral resources of Indonesia, is her 72,000,000, of an industrious and skilled peasantry, or peasant stock. Yes, "something great can be achieved there in the Indies."

CHAPTER TWO

QUEEN WILHELMINA'S FATTED CALF

"We know that the day of the exploitation of the resources and the people of one country for the benefit of any group in another country is definitely over."
(April 20th, 1943, the late President Roosevelt.)

Idea of the tremendous wealth given the world by Indonesia is contained in the following figures. *Indonesia provides the world with the following portions of its needs, Rubber 40%, tea 19%, cinchona 91%, cocos products 29%, tin 20%, kapok 77%, tow fibres 33%, pepper 92%, sugar 5%, bauxite 80%, oil 2½% ⁽¹¹⁾. Minerals in which she abounds include oil, bauxite, iron ores, coal, tin and to a smaller degree gold and silver. In 1940 Indonesia produced 7,934,000 tons of crude oil, putting her in fifth place among the oil producing countries of the world ⁽¹²⁾. She is the second largest producer of tin in the world, which is mined mainly on the islands of Banka and Billiton off the coast of Sumatra and largely by Chinese labour. Mineral exports make up 29% of the total value of Indonesia's exports ⁽¹³⁾, the rest being agricultural products such as rubber, tea, sugar, cocos products, etc. Exports of manufactured goods are nil.*

Who Gets The Rake Off ?

It goes without saying that the oil wells, the tin mines, and other mineral wealth of the islands do not belong to the natives of Indonesia but to the Dutch and other foreign imperialist combines. What about the agricultural exports ?

69.3% of agricultural exports are produced on estates (which are practically exclusively owned by Dutch and other foreigners), only 39.7% on native farms ⁽¹⁴⁾. In 1938, 99.4% of sugar exported was plantation grown, and 81.9% of tea. Kapok, copra and pepper

were mostly grown on native farms while in the case of cambier and rubber the proportion is about fifty-fifty⁽¹⁵⁾. But even in regard to the 39.7% of agricultural exports that are grown on native farms it must be realised that the big foreign trading concerns and shipping magnates who have the monopoly, can dictate prices to the farmers, and get the main rake-off.

They Share It Out.

The only real effect Indonesia's part in providing the world with a large portion of its needs has on the Indonesians, is an extra burden on the farmers to provide food for the coolies who work the estates and get the minerals from the earth.

While peasants in Java are advanced in their knowledge of farming methods, those of the Outer Provinces practice a relatively simple agriculture in the vicinity of the large plantations owned by foreigners where commercial crops are produced. *In Sumatra 89% of the land is controlled by the plantations*⁽¹⁶⁾.

The country which gets the main share of the colossal wealth exported is of course Holland, but other Western Imperialist Powers also import large quantities of raw materials from the Indies.

But Not With Natives.

Some idea of how little Indonesians share in the great wealth of their country is shown by the following figures. Though Europeans are less than 0.5% of the population, they receive 65% of the income which is individually subject to income tax, non-indigenous Asiatics, 2% of the population, receive one-fifth, and natives, 97.5% of the population, receive only one-eighth of this income⁽¹⁷⁾.

The Dutch Imperialist policy has been to keep Indonesia in place as a producer of raw materials and source of cheap native labour only, with the natives not sharing in the wealth of the land. That is why she has stifled growth of native industry. Only since the 1930's has there been development of industry in Indonesia, — first railways and roads of course, since 1930 some development in metallurgical industry, also light industries

such as native-cigarette factories etc. By 1936 there were still only 1½ million Indonesians out of a population of 70 million working in any kind of industrial work, and of these only about 120,000 were working in large European factories⁽¹⁸⁾.

Drain Of Wealth.

Perhaps the best method of all to show the drain of wealth from Indonesia to the benefit of the foreign capitalists and detriment of her people, is to compare *export and import figures*. In 1928, imports were Fl. 1,003,492,000, exports Fl. 1,580,488,000. In 1940, imports were Fl. 437,678,000, exports Fl. 881,913,000⁽¹⁹⁾. The great decrease in total figures is accounted for in the difference between 1928, during the boom before the depression, and 1940, a year of economic upset, the year Holland fell to the Nazis. It will be noted however that the export surplus has been kept up to nearly the 1928 level in the low year of 1940, viz., Fl. 576,996,000 in 1928, and Fl. 444,235,000 in 1940. In other words the main burden was put on the backs of the Indonesian people in the form of less good things of life while profits were kept up.

A Poor Excuse.

In face of the fact of this tremendous surplus of exports over imports which was sustained right through the depression years, Mr. Preger, Dutch Imperialist apologist in Melbourne, had the hide recently, referring to cuts in the administration's activities for the welfare of the people, to write⁽²⁰⁾ that during the depression *the financial resources of the country had been inadequate** to maintain all these activities and that "many of them were curtailed and retrenchment took place throughout."

Mr. R. Dixon, assistant-general-secretary of the Australian Communist Party, pointed out in a recent article,⁽²¹⁾ that in the last year prior to the war, Indonesian exports were around the £225 million mark whereas imports were about £125 million. This meant that Indonesia *with ten times Australia's population imported*

* My italics—G.P.

very little more than this country, for in 1938-39 Australia's imports amounted to £114 million. It can be understood from this how low is the standard of living of the Indonesian worker, and farmer, and people generally, in comparison with ours. The Dutch policy is the same as that of Imperialists the world over:—From them that have to give let it be taken.

Too Many Mouths.

To accentuate this economic unbalance, is a population problem, especially in the rich island of Java. The population of the whole archipelago according to the 1930 census, was 60,727,000 ⁽²²⁾. By 1940 the estimate was 70,000,000 ⁽²³⁾, and by 1942, 72,000,000 ⁽²⁴⁾.

The special population problem however was confined to Java. *Java is one of the most highly-populated countries in the world, coming second only to Belgium.* But while Belgium is a highly industrialised country and therefore able to partly absorb her surplus population for other useful work, the growth of industry in Indonesia has been stifled as is usual in a colonial country with no say in her own affairs.

The 1930 census showed 818 people living to the square mile in Java ⁽²⁵⁾. The official estimate in 1940 was 990 ⁽²⁶⁾. In some areas the density was as high as 4,700 to the square mile ⁽²⁷⁾. To get what this means, compare it with Japan-proper, thickly-populated industrial centre of a mighty empire whose density figure was (1935) 474.3 per square mile ⁽²⁸⁾, or the Outer Provinces of Indonesia with 82.6 per square mile, ⁽²⁹⁾ or Australia with 2 per square mile.

Land Hunger.

The speed of population increase in Java is shown by the following figures. The native population (not including Europeans, Chinese and other non-indigenous Asiatics), was only 4,449,250 in 1815, had risen to

34,428,711 by 1920, to 40,891,093 by 1930 ⁽³⁰⁾, and the official estimate for 1943 was about 50,000,000 ⁽³¹⁾.

When it is remembered that in Java only 6% of the population lives in cities ⁽³²⁾, the land hunger that exists can be imagined. In Java with its 50 million or so inhabitants there are only six cities with a population of more than 100,000, of which Batavia is the largest with 437,433 ⁽³³⁾. Palembang in Sumatra is the only town in the Outer Provinces with more than 100,000 ⁽³⁴⁾.

A Bare Subsistence.

The land under cultivation in Java cannot be increased, as deforestation has already exceeded the danger limit, and further cultivation of virgin country would endanger the water supply. The result of this land-shortage has been, smaller holdings which are uneconomical, and a bare subsistence for the Javanese farmer. In Java (1930) it was estimated that 81% of the natives were getting incomes below 300 florins (about £25 a year) ⁽³⁵⁾. Since then the situation has greatly deteriorated. Where tenancy predominates, as in Central Java and around Batavia, exceptional population pressure has meant that rents rise as high as one-half of the harvest ⁽³⁶⁾.

"... it is clear," says an Australian Army Educational course on Indonesia written for the guidance of Australian soldiers in the Pacific ⁽³⁷⁾, "that because of the rapid growth of the native population, the natives on the whole have not shared in the commercial progress of the colony."

There Is Only One Solution.

Nor will they, until the control and economy of their country is in their own hands in a free Indonesia. Dutch schemes of emigration to Sumatra from Java and so on, do not get to the root of the problem. The solution is development of a native industry which can

absorb the surplus agricultural population, a stop to the drain of wealth from the country for which nothing comes in, and raising of the general standards of living of the people, in a free, democratic and prosperous Indonesia.

Present problems will only be solved when Indonesia wins the independence which is her democratic right. Then there will no longer be a 500 million florin surplus of exports over imports, but the wealth of the country should be the same as the wealth of her people, and there will be healthy balanced trade developed with other nations, she supplying our needs, we hers, as equals with equals.

CHAPTER THREE

A SHORT HISTORY BEFORE AND SINCE THE DUTCH

" . . . dat deutsche loy verteilt
Dat van onrechte ghewelt.
Eighindoem es comen. . . "*

Maerlant, 13th century.

The first outside influence on Indonesia was Hindu influence from India. The first Hindu colonists arrived about the 2nd century A.D. But it wasn't until the 5th century A.D. that Hinduism really entered the archipelago in force, and it didn't spread to Java until the 7th century A.D. Other early invaders of the islands were the Mongols, including Kublai Khan.

The Adat, which still remains the basis of present-day native Law, is said to date back to times even before the first Hindu colonists, but it was *the Hindus who brought the use of iron and writing*, and it was in this early Hindu period that the native alphabet was developed in Java where the standard of culture was highest. Translations of Hindu classics are among the literary works of this time. Hinduism also profoundly influenced Sumatra.

The Arabs Came.

From the end of the 13th century, after the invasion of Kublai Khan, to 1447, year of the Arabian conquest of the island, the famous Javanese Hindu Empire of Madjapahit held sway over the islands. In the Madjapahit period Sivaism and Buddhism were practised side by side within the tolerant framework of Hinduism. Accompanying the expansion of East Indies trade in the

* " . . . the Dutch law proclaims that property has come from unjust violence".—G.P.

15th century, Mahommedan migrants, who had arrived much earlier in Sumatra moved southward and eastward to Java and the other islands, and other Mahommedans came in from the north and west. With the Mahommedan migrations began the process of Islamisation. Today, as we have already seen, Islam, while modified by earlier indigenous beliefs, is the prevailing religion of Indonesia and is especially strong in Java. Hinduism survives only in Bali.

From the opening of the 15th century to the arrival of the first white men, Mahommedanism spread very rapidly, and a number of petty Mahommedan states were established. The first Europeans to appear on the scene were the Portugese, though before them Chinese traders had been attracted to the islands, had settled there, and have ever since formed an important trading community in Indonesia.

The Portugese.

The first Portugese arrived in 1509. In 1511 a Portugese company was formed. The main attraction for these first Europeans was the trade in spices, specially nutmeg and mace then much in demand, and they established their first trading centre therefore in the Moluccas. Friction quickly developed between Portugal and Spain over the Indies trade. This rivalry commenced about 1529. A Spanish-Portugese Treaty was signed in 1529, but in 1580 with the annexation of Portugal by Spain, Indies trade became a Spanish monopoly. But not for long. *Holland, a young and more virile bourgeois trading nation than old Spain appeared in the scene.* The first Dutch trading contract with Indonesian natives was signed in 1596.

The Dutch East India Company was first formed in 1602. The first trading station was established at Batavia in 1611. Ever since that date, until the Japanese conquest in 1942, with the exception of a 5 year interregnum, 1811-16, under the British, Indonesia has been under Dutch overlordship.

Company Rule.

The first period, until 1798 when the Dutch Government took over, was a period of Company rule. The Company had been given power, east of the Cape of Good Hope, and west of the Straits of Magellan, to perform acts of sovereignty in the name of the States General of Holland, such as, concluding alliances and making contracts with princes and potentates of the east, also sole monopoly in the shipping trade. The Dutch Government retained only a right of control. It was with these great powers that the Company went to work.

The Dutch merchants quickly mastered the regions, and there followed a period of *enormous profits* for them, a period of shameless robbery of wealth from the peoples of these islands only rivalled by the stripping of Bengal carried out by the British East India Company about the same time. On this wholesale spoilation of the East and amassing of big fortunes in the West, was built up the strong bourgeois class whose accumulated wealth made possible the Industrial Revolution in England, and whose accumulated power made possible the French Revolution on the continent and establishment of a bourgeois order in Europe. The great glories of the European architecture, palaces, statues, paintings and other achievements of the 17th and 18th centuries, of baroque and rococo, had as basis the full coffers of a merchant class in London, Amsterdam, and the other trading cities of Europe, got from blitz-spoilation of the native peoples of the East.

Long Live The Queen.

But the Dutch East India Company didn't have everything its own way. There was continuous rivalry between the Dutch and British East India Companies. The Dutch Company got little support from the naval authorities at home. Nor was its only difficulty from outside. In Indonesia itself there were *frequent rebellions* against Company rule, sometimes led by princes who objected to usurping foreigners interfering in their domains, more often spontaneous rebellions of the people

against forced labour imposed by the Dutch. In 1798 however the Company was dissolved and the Dutch Government took over.

After the fall of Holland to Napoleon, the British took the Indies and for five years Raffles, the man who first hoisted the Union Jack at Singapore, was the Governor. Several present-day administrative practices date back to this period.

When the Dutch took over again after Napoleon's defeat, they established their system of *dual administration* by a European civil service, alongside hereditary native officials which is still in operation in general principle today. The 19th century witnessed rapid expansion of Dutch overlordship, not only in the island of Java, main field of the East India Company's activity, but also in the outer islands.

CHAPTER FOUR

DUTCH RECORD

*"In een land miteen beperkte vrijheid is voor Oranje geen plaats."** (Queen) Wilhelmina, 20th century.

And what is the picture of Indonesia today after 350 years of Dutch rule. That is to say what was the picture before the Japs took over. Let us first examine progress to democracy.

Indonesia is governed by a Governor-General appointed by the Crown. *His powers are roughly similar to those a Governor-General had in Australia in the early 19th century.* The Governor-General has an advisory council of not less than four or more than six members, all appointed. In 1942 this council consisted of two Dutch members and two appointed Indonesians, besides the Governor-General and Vice-President ⁽³⁸⁾ ₍₃₉₎. The Governor-General is also commander-in-chief of all the armed forces. The Governor-General has almost autocratic powers, though in some executive decisions he needs consent of council.

A Cigar King.

Rule is through the Governor-General, Governors, Dutch Residents, Native Princes and Chiefs. The system consists of direct rule through Dutch officials, and indirect rule through native hereditary princes, side by side. Some of the native princes, such as the Sultan of Deli who gets a bit of dough out of every Sumatran cigar you smoke, are very rich. But generally Indonesian native princes have not got the power or the wealth of their distant cousins, the Indian Princes. Chiefs are just petty hereditary officials in the pay of the Dutch Government.

* "In a land with a limited freedom there's no place for the House of Orange".—G.P.

The old Dutch East India Company dealt mainly with the natives through their chiefs or regents. When the Dutch Government took over, the Dutch Residents began to take over the functions of the regents, but later they tried to revive the status of the regents to the extent of making out of them hereditary officials under constant supervision of Dutch officials. When they opened up the outer provinces however they realised the mistake they had made in weakening the power of the native rulers, and bolstered up a form of native reaction by "forming native states." (40). "The natives were encouraged to observe their festivals and ceremonials in traditional^o fashion" (41). Today the native states in the outer islands account for 60% of the total area. 253 native princes transferred part of their powers to the Government in the "Short Declaration," 1938 (42).

Powerless Parliament.

Besides the Governor-General and Council, the Governors, Residents, Princes, Chiefs and other officials, there is a so-called Parliament, Volksraad. This body consists of 60 members made up as follows:—30 Indonesians, 25 Dutch and 5 non-indigenous Asiatics, (Chinese, Arabs etc.) Of these 10 Indonesians, 10 Dutch, and 2 non-native Orientals are appointed. The remaining 38 are elected on a very limited franchise, and by an indirect system of election.

This Volksraad meets twice a year, once to discuss the budget, and once besides. It has no power to pass laws. Between sittings there is a committee that acts for it. Its *raison d'être* is given by one authority in these words, it "helped the Government to keep in touch with the wishes of the people" (43).

Four Freedoms.

So much for the "democratic" Government of the country. What has been the Imperial attitude to questions of human uplift?

The general attitude to the four freedoms is well shown by the Dutch Government's record as far as religion is concerned. Substantial Government grants are

^o My italics—G.P.

given to both Catholic and Protestant Churches which cater for the needs of the Dutch in Indonesia, but no grant is given to the religious bodies of the 60 million Mahommedans.

In relation to missionary work among the natives the Government's attitude has been dictated by material interests. Christian missionaries are not allowed into Hindu Bali. The feudal chiefs who stand for the old order which the Dutch wish to preserve, pointed out to the Government that "*the public order and peace would be endangered by systematic missionary activities*" in Bali (44). That was enough for the Dutch Imperial Government—no public order, no missionaries.

Bible Banned.

The original blanket-opposition to missionary activity has been modified. The Government impounded the first translation of the New Testament into Javanese because they feared it would be subversive of law and order. Later however the system of separate fields already referred to was introduced, and "The only question the Government now raises when permission to engage in missionary work in any section is sought is whether the undertaking will cause political unrest" (45).

But some say a benign dictatorship, is better than a bad democracy. Lets look what the Dutch have achieved in 350 years in just one important branch of social service, education. In 1937, 1 in 11 children were attending school (46). The annual cost of the education system is about £3,250,000 a year, less than 11d. per head of the population (47). Most of the pupils included in official figures get an education of only a very nominal kind, in primitive schools with unskilled teachers and no facilities. The construction and upkeep of these village schools is paid for by the villagers themselves. Then there are more advanced schools for those who can afford it, up to secondary school standard of the Dutch schools. All such secondary education is carried on in the foreign Dutch tongue. Total pupils recorded in all

schools in 1942 were 2,502,694 of whom 53,000 were Europeans ⁽⁴⁸⁾. Compulsory education is not known in any part of the islands. According to one authority 99% of the population of Indonesia is illiterate ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Open Door.

The boasted efficiency of the Dutch colonists, let's face up to the reality, is not efficiency in the interest of the people. The natives are poor peasants producing rice, and other food crops such as peanuts, cassava, sweet potatoes; commercial crops for the big Dutch trading monopolies like tea, coffee, kapok, tobacco and pepper; or they are coolies on the Java plantations, or labourers, mainly imported Javanese, in the Outer Provinces on contract and liable to punishments if they break their contract. The capital invested in the Indies on the other hand is foreign capital.

The Dutch have been forced to practice to an extent the "Open Door" policy in Indonesia. For instance capital in estates, while mainly in Dutch hands, is also shared by British, American, Belgian, French and Japanese concerns. This was made necessary by the lesser industrial development in Holland than in other European Imperialist countries; also by the need for powerful allies, who had also a stake in the Indies; with big navies, armies and air forces for defence.

The Philanthropists.

The following figures show the real "philanthropic" motive that dictates Dutch policy in Indonesia.

In 1939, no less than 61% of the total export tonnage was to Holland ⁽⁵⁰⁾. Three-quarters of the capital in the islands is Dutch ⁽⁵¹⁾. The nationality of incoming shipping is as follows, Dutch 46.7% (of which KPM is by far the largest), United Kingdom 30.7%, Japan 9.4% ⁽⁵²⁾. Of incoming coastwise and inter-island shipping the share is, Dutch 79.1%, United Kingdom 11.9%, Japan 2.7% ⁽⁵³⁾. £32 million profit flows every year from the Indies to Holland ⁽⁵⁴⁾.

CHAPTER FIVE INDONESIA AWAKES

"Obviously if the Atlantic Charter is to be made genuinely effective, then the close of the war cannot see the perpetuation of a system whereby 8,000,000 Netherlanders most of them living half the world away, rule and exploit 70,000,000 of the people of these islands." (An Indonesian loyalist, quoted by Hallett Abend, well-known American writer. Ramparts of the Pacific, 1942.)

The National Movement in Indonesia is young, even as colonial national movements go. This is explained by several factors.

Unlike India, there is no developed native Indonesian capitalist class. Development of industry has been backward, the working-class small in numbers. Outside Europeans, Indonesian trade is mainly in the hands of Arabs, Chinese, British Indians etc. Eurasians, treated like Dutchmen by the Dutch, identify themselves with Dutch rule. There is no Eurasian middle-class with anti-imperialistic interests and national aspirations as is the case for instance with the Spanish-speaking Catholic Eurasians of the Phillipines where this class has been prominent in the National Movement against U.S. Imperialism.

The first Indonesian political society, organised in 1908, was called *Boedi Oetomo* (Beautiful Spring). Its founder was a pensioned Indonesian Government doctor. Upper-class Government officials and intellectuals formed the membership. Nevertheless by 1910 it had 10,000 members. Its main activity was furtherance of popular education. Its membership was largely confined to Java and the Javanese.

Russian Example.

About 1910 a more radical movement called *Sarekat Islam* was started in Central Java. The native batik industry was suffering from foreign competition. The leaders of this movement appealed to the masses for support through religious slogans. The first Congress in 1913 still pledged loyalty to Holland. The 1917 conference however declared independence the main

objective. This was to be attained if possible by parliamentary means, but Conference made clear that if the peaceful way proved impossible, the Party would know how to offer itself for land and people. Great emphasis was laid on the class struggle.

The Russian Revolution had a profound effect on the peoples of Indonesia, as on all Asia. The eyes of Indonesians looked more and more to the example of Soviet Russia as to a beacon light for their future.

Class Struggle

In 1919 a central Trade Union organisation was established. There followed a wave of strikes, of which the most important were the Semarang-Cheribon tramway strike, the Sumatra East Coast Railway Strike, the Soerabaya printing office strike, the tailors' strike, and finally a strike in that stronghold of European capital, the sugar industry.

In 1920 the Communist Party of Indonesia was formed.

1920-27 witnessed a very rapid growth of communist influence in the islands. Strikes continued, including a strike in the State pawnshops in 1922, and a transport strike in 1923. The Governor-General took drastic measures. He restricted the right of assembly and *made it an offence to incite to strike.* The main basis of the working-class movement at this time was railway workers and dockworkers, with some support from the plantation workers.

1927 Uprisings

By 1923 the majority of local branches of the Sarekat Islam had communists in the leadership. But in that year, the right-wing inner group on the central executive, the Old Guard, effected a purge. A new society was formed called the *Sarekat Rayat Merah* (Red Protestant League) with great popular support.

1925 saw a new wave of strikes and lockouts, particularly at Semarang and Soerabaya, and from November 1926 to January 1927 there were violent clashes between nationalist and Government forces in both Java and Sumatra. *The outbreak in Java lasted about 6*

weeks. Skirmishes and clashes with the police were frequent in early 1927. The last and most serious of these was at Siloenggang where 7 revolutionaries were killed and 2 policemen wounded.

Savage Counter-Measures

Then came the Government counter-offensive. 4,500 Indonesian communists were jailed, and a further 1,308 sent to a concentration camp about 500 miles up the Digoel River in Dutch New Guinea.

Tanah Merah, the name of this concentration camp, has a significance for Indonesians not unlike Oranienburg, Dachau and Buchenwald have for Europeans, or the Andomans for Indians. It was a strange land across the seas, far from their homes. The place was unhealthy. It was surrounded by mosquito-infested swamps and jungle-country inhabited by head-hunting savages. A few of the prisoners managed to escape in 1929, and after incredible trials landed in democratic Australia feeling certain they would find refuge here from their oppressors. But the Scullin Labour Government put them on a ship and packed them back to the Dutch concentration camp.

17 Years In Hell

In 1943, as the Japanese were advancing, the Dutch brought the inmates of this camp, the original number having been inbetweentimes added to by many more, to Australia, where they were again interned. It was only after Australian democratic bodies campaigned for their release that those of them who wished to play a part to win the war were released. Since when they have given of their best for the defeat of Japan, and the liberation of the Indonesian people. Some of these men I have met were shut up in this camp for 17 years before coming here. They don't want to be sent back again after victory is won. Many other Indonesians man the ships which play a big role in Pacific campaigns, and many *have given their lives in the war.*

Trail of Glory

1927 remains a year of glory in the history of Indonesia's struggle. History will show there were mis-

takes, an over-enthusiasm and too optimistic analysis on the part of the leaders, failure to see the main problem of Indonesian freedom as an agrarian one or to recognise the isolation of Indonesia at that time of temporary capitalist stabilisation, therefore wrong slogans. But these pioneers blazed a trail of glory that will not be forgotten. In the period of terror which followed 1927 the Communist Party was yet able to reorganise on a strictly illegal basis, and to learn from the mistakes of 1927.

The Dutch, after removing the leadership of the national movement in the form of the communists, suffered the existence for some time of a bourgeois nationalist party of a more or less reformist character called the "Partai Nasional Indonesia." *The patriotic song "Indonesia Raja," dates from this time.* In 1929 however the Dutch Government banned even this expression of Indonesian national feeling, arrested the leadership, and deported them too to Tanah Merah in New Guinea.

Couldn't Take His Seat

Meanwhile amongst important sections of the Dutch in the Indies there came into being a dangerous political trend. Fascist and semi-Fascist organisations found considerable support. *The Vaaderlandsche Club* was the strongest of these bodies. It had a European membership in Indonesia of many thousands, and defended the principle of inviolability of empire, while attacking the red danger. *Mussert*, Holland's National Socialist leader, also visited Indonesia and formed a branch of his organisation. There was however, for obvious reasons, not much support for his racial view among East Indies Europeans. Thus it will be seen that in pre-war Indonesia *fascists were allowed to organise freely, communists were sent to concentration camps.* This was how the Dutch East Indies prepared to defend themselves against Japanese aggression.

An Indonesian, *Roestem Effendi*, is a communist member of the 2nd chamber of the States General in Holland, elected by Dutch electors. *Sarejono*, another Indonesian, was elected on the communist ticket to a

seat in the Dutch parliament, also by Dutch electors, but he was in an Indonesian jail and has never been allowed to take his seat. *Sarejono* is now working for the war effort in Australia.

New Factors

And what is the picture to-day, as the day of Indonesia's freeing from the Japs draws nearer? To gauge likely future possibilities, some new factors must be taken into account. First, there have been *great shocks* in the course of the war *to Indonesian economy.* When the Germans overran Holland the old economic basis was undermined. Things were just beginning to get going again when the Japanese conquest came, and once again the country's economy suffered severe shocks. After the Japs have been driven out there will have to be a further re-orientation, and some confusion for the people. None of this makes for stability.

But that is not all. The defeat of Holland, and then in Indonesia, has not enhanced Dutch prestige among the people, while the Japanese policy of making the Dutch *burra sahibs wash latrines* in public, and utterly to discredit white rule in every way, has had its effect.

But not only white imperialism has been discredited. The *co-prosperity* talk of the Japanese has been *debunked.* The Japs found some Indonesian nationalists to co-operate with them at first. So bitter was the hatred of these people for the Dutch. But Japan proved incapable of bringing any prosperity to the people. On the contrary they were worse off under the Japanese even than before. Behind the honeyed words of co-prosperity, and Asia for the Asiatics, these new rulers soon showed the mailed fist of Japanese imperialist exploitation and Japanese Fascist brutality. It was clear that *when they said "Asia for the Asiatics" they meant "Asia for Japan."*

They Work for Liberation

"The natives are generally docile in nature," wrote a Japanese about Indonesians before the conquest ⁽⁵⁵⁾. As a "*master race*" the Jap Imperialists soon got busy in Indonesia, with face-slapping, and all the other delightful attributes of the Jap Fascist stormtrooper. They exploited

the country more savagely than ever, and ruled with an iron hand. Communist-led underground forces organised against the Jap Imperialists from the mountains.

Inside and outside their homeland, Indonesian patriots work for the liberation of their people. That is why Indonesians in Australia work so valorously with the allies to *win the war and return to their homeland*. Communists, nationalists, have not allowed any feelings of resentment to hinder co-operation for victory with the Dutch.

Other factors to be taken into account in estimating future possibilities, are, what is happening in Holland, and the general democratic temper of the people in all countries.

Australia's Duty

There are signs that the Dutch authorities are planning for greater participation by Indonesians in the administration of Indonesia after the war, but within the framework of colonial rule. There is *no sign of any fundamental change to date in official Dutch policy*.

But very different is the voice of the powerful resistance movement inside Holland which is led by the communists. *The Dutch resistance movement declares for Indonesian independence*. For the last 3 years Dutchmen have suffered a colonial status at home similar to that they have imposed on Indonesia for the last 300. What will determine the future for Indonesia is the unity and determination of her own people, in conjunction with the working-class and democratic movement of Holland, and aided and helped by her neighbours in the Pacific and democrats the world over.

We have had it expressly stated that when Japan is beaten Korea shall be free, China will have all territories including the International settlements, returned to her.

The unambiguous declaration of America speeding the final day for independence for the Phillipines undoubtedly did much to strengthen the peoples' resistance to Japanese fascism in these islands. France is also preparing for radical steps towards a freer Indo-China.

Australians, if they give *more than lip-service to democracy*, must help Indonesian friends to their freedom, too.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS

"If this war is in fact a war for the liberation of peoples, it must assure the sovereign equality of peoples throughout the world. . . The principles of the Atlantic Charter must be guaranteed to the world as a whole—in all oceans and in all continents." (Mr. Sumner Welles, then Assistant Secretary of State for the U.S.A., in a broadcast, March 30th, 1942.)

The question of Indonesian advance is not only an Indonesian question but *an Australian one*. Low wages and incomes, for colonial workers and farmers, threaten our standards here. The Australian Labour Movement has a very direct interest in Indonesia's struggle for freedom, and the right to organise in Trade Unions and political parties, and plan for a better life.

But it's not only the working-class that is interested in a higher standard for the peoples of the Pacific.

Our Vital Needs

Australia is dependent on Indonesian production for vital needs. *We get nearly all our tea, petrol, oils, kapok and quinine from Indonesia*. Also large supplies of rubber etc.

The trade of Indonesia with other Pacific countries, including Australia, tends to increase. In 1913, the percentage of her total imports which was from Pacific countries was 24.7%; in 1929, 37.4%; in 1934, 42.5% ⁽⁵⁶⁾. It would be to Australia's advantage if this healthy increase should continue.

Richer Indonesians, More Trade

In 1937, while Indonesian exports to Australia totalled 40,401,000 guilders, imports from Australia were only 15,396,000 guilders ⁽⁵⁷⁾. In order to fully

develop our exports to Indonesia, which can mean greater trade for our Australian manufacturing industry and create employment for our people, a sine qua non is a higher standard of living for the Indonesian people, a free Indonesia, able to decide her own economic life, and not subject to the dictates of European monopoly influences.

With the defeat of Japan, and her likely collapse as a major industrial power, Australia can also supply many needs of the Indonesian people formerly supplied by Japanese monopolists. Indonesia's imports from Japan before the war were worth 85,108,000 guilders, her exports to Japan 24,788,000 guilders⁽⁵⁸⁾.

There is a certain inconsistency when, while we are fighting a war for democracy, we have in our midst friends and neighbours living in Australia who enjoy no democracy even while they are here, who are man-powered and ordered around by a Government they have had no part in electing and in which they have no confidence.

Bluntness Suggested

So let's tell our Dutch allies frankly :—

"We don't like seeing people pushed around. *We sympathise with neighbours who are struggling for nationhood* in the same way we had to struggle for ours in Australia in the past. We don't like concentration camp methods, or deportation of patriots to far off lands. That is too much like the convict system we had to fight against so bitterly here.

"Australia, Mr. Dutch Ally," let us say, "wants to trade and have dealings with a free and democratic Indonesia and not with a colony. This concerns us, because it's a matter important to our defence, and to our own future,—as well as the future of the world."

Finis.

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