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***The Stakes of Democracy
in South-East Asia***

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The Netherlands Indies and Japan

The Stakes of Democracy in South-East Asia

By **H. J. van MOOK**

Former Lieutenant Governor-General of Indonesia

London

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TO THE MEMORY OF
C. VAN VOLLENHOVEN,
Professor at the University of Leyden

Yes, we shall one day lose the sovereignty over our colonies; but that day is still distant, and when it comes it will bring us a profit equal to that of our present ownership. Our descendants, grown wise by the experience of what is happening before our eyes, will no longer make war upon those overseas territories when they are prepared for independence, but will readily grant them their liberty and so enter into new relationships of friendship and commerce with them, which will fully outweigh the advantages that we now enjoy.

From a speech in 1819 of G. K. van Hogendorp, the man who headed the liberation movement in the Netherlands in 1813 at the close of the Napoleonic occupation.

Contents

Introduction	13

Book One The Foundations of Southeast Asia

1. The Origins of Southeast Asia	27
2. Invasion from the West	41
3. Imperialism at the Flood	59
4. The Birth of Nationalism in Southeast Asia	74
5. Two Colonial Cases	92

Book Two War and Revolution

6. Invasion from the North	123
7. Transient Empire	141
8. An Unforeseen Peace	162
9. The Nationalist Revolt	190

Book Three The Future of Southeast Asia

10. United Nations and Divided Counsels	229
11. The Bad Conscience of the West	244
12. The Economic Mainspring	264
13. Capitalist Adventurers and Communist Agitators	273
14. Voluntary Association in Southeast Asia	291
Index	301

*The Stakes of Democracy
in South-East Asia*

Introduction

WHEN THE floods of war and Japanese occupation receded from the once peaceful and prosperous countries of South-east Asia, what came to light looked like a landscape from which the topsoil had been washed away. Peace and prosperity were gone, and so were the institutions of government under which they had flourished. A major political and economic problem confronted the victorious Allies in this whole area, where the West had been the ruling power for more than a century. But the problem was as yet hardly recognized, because it concerned a part of the world that seemed far removed from the centre of gravity in the emerging world order and because, in former years, it had caused little trouble of international import.

But if the region had presented a quiet and unruffled aspect before World War II, the cover of Western domination had worn thin even in those years. The stirrings of political, racial, and cultural resistance against that domination gained strength among the populations of these dependent and semi-dependent areas as nationalism spread and became more defined with the progress of education and political consciousness.

In one case, that of the Philippines, the problem of the

great change from dependence to independence obtained a solution in principle by the Tydings-MacDuffie Act, promising independence by July 4, 1946. In one other case, that of Thailand, the problem was one of factual, not formal, dependence, because Thailand had never ceased to be an independent nation. Elsewhere, in Ceylon, Burma, French Indo-China, Malaya, and the Netherlands Indies (Indonesia), the nationalist struggle for self-government and independence had proceeded with varying intensity, yet without a serious threat of rebellion against the existing—and on the whole equitable—colonial governments. The entire region enjoyed a high standard of living on the Asiatic scale, with a strong infusion of Western investments and business management and of Chinese and Indian commercial activity. And as the inevitability of ultimate national independence for these countries became more widely recognized, it seemed probable that this process would be completed in a gradual way, without violent upheavals or bloodshed.

There were valid reasons for expecting continued and mutually profitable relations between East and West in this zone of Asia after its peoples acquired their nationhood. The general tendency of the Western governments concerned was towards a policy of evolution, which agreed with the aspirations, if not the impatience, of the nationalist leaders. Repression and delay, when they occurred, were of a temporary nature and were rarely prolonged to the bursting point. Political enfranchisement was broadened in successive stages, and the imperialist influence of economic interests was increasingly neutralized by a liberal and farseeing statesmanship.

The seeds of rebellion and revolution were, however, always present, as was the danger of a reversion to the more fundamentally anti-Western attitude and agitation that had characterized so many clashes between Asia and Europe. None of the Western powers, not even the United States, had

wholly and unreservedly directed their intentions and their resources towards an early creation of the necessary conditions for independence. There were always influential forces which wanted either to postpone liberation indefinitely or to withdraw the indispensable assistance prematurely. The educated nationalists remained suspicious, while the masses but slowly overcame an ingrained dislike of Western manners and methods. The mood and outlook of Southeast Asia had been deeply affected by Western civilization, but the undercurrent of Oriental aversion to that civilization was still there. In many sections the beginnings of a real synthesis could be observed; the bedrock of Asiatic life had been penetrated and modified, but certainly not completely transformed.

This promising yet labile situation was viciously disrupted by the attack of Japan. The one Asiatic nation that had used the lessons of Western science and technology to build up the armaments and the industrial equipment of a great power had at the same time failed to correct the distorted view of its relations with the world which an agelong seclusion had fostered. In arrogant pride it went forth to subject half a continent to its military rule and to found an empire that would provide it with the means for further conquest. To a certain extent its onslaught was a reaction against the measures of restriction by which the West had tried to moderate its expansionism and which were felt as an endeavour to strangle its economy. But it deliberately abandoned the methods of peaceful expansion, which would certainly have surmounted these temporary difficulties, because it had an exaggerated idea of its own strength and destiny and little or no comprehension of the character and the aspirations of other peoples, whether Asiatic or American or European.

The swiftness of the Japanese invasion demonstrated with harsh lucidity how defenceless the dependent peoples of Asia were against a resolute aggressor. They lacked not only the battalions and the guns, but also the rallying force of faith and

organization that made weak and badly armed nations stand up against the most powerful conquerors. The bitter discovery of this weakness could not but sharpen their aversion to the colonial system. And this aversion was intensified tenfold because the new Japanese rulers, who had stepped so easily into the place of the old, subjected them to the worst type of colonialism they had ever experienced.

The crust of Western management and guidance that had contained and shaped these communities was shattered at a blow, and even the ordinary administrative machinery came to a standstill. The protective covering that had seemed so strong was torn away overnight and they were left helpless in the hands of the enemy. It is true that many trusted the Allies to drive back the armies of the Mikado in the end. But even those felt the humiliation of having to wait passively for liberation and to endure the impositions and cruelties of the Japanese. So it is easy to understand the general determination of these peoples, when liberation came at last, that they must never again be condemned to submit to the outcome of other people's wars without their own concurrence and without the means and the morale to fight back.

The Japanese, as rulers, were feared and loathed. At the same time, however, they managed, as Asiatics and consummate experts in certain forms of propaganda, to incite against the West the same people whom they oppressed more cruelly than the West had ever done. They were abominable tyrants; but they were an Oriental nation, and they had twice defeated the Occidentals, who considered themselves the master race of the world. They promised the independence of Asia, albeit an independence cooped up within their Co-prosperity Sphere and under their pitiless leadership. They did not hesitate to inflame religious fanaticism and the obscure and brooding resentment against the unsettling intrusiveness of Western ideas. They did not care whether they provoked nationalist pride or superstitious fear or the sullen anger of an inferiority

complex, as long as they increased the animosity against the white race and its works. And when they knew that they had lost the war, they did all they could to leave their temporary dominions in as explosive and corrupted a condition as possible.

The victorious Allies met this situation without anything like an agreed policy. True, the Atlantic Charter had formulated certain broad principles, but their application to colonies and dependent areas was far from clear or universally accepted. The institution of an international trusteeship, written into the Charter of the United Nations at the San Francisco conference, was made obligatory only in its application to former mandated territories and enemy colonies, and even so it has remained almost stillborn unto the present day. Moreover, trusteeship would hardly be acceptable for people who wanted to rid themselves completely of foreign supervision.

The solution of the problems created by the Japanese occupation was initially left to the nations directly concerned; when and where the U.N. interfered, they did not present a unanimous front and could not take over the responsibility. All this was further complicated by the activities of world communism and the Russian bloc with their policy of infiltration and troublemaking, which excluded every possibility of a general international understanding.

In the main the nations having dependencies in Southeast Asia seemed to agree in principle on the necessity of granting them national independence. In the words of the third clause of the Atlantic Charter, they "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." But with regard to its practical implementation, to the intervening stages, and to the ultimate pattern, opinions differed and execution differed still more. The facts of each case, the interests involved, the political conditions both in the dependency and in the mother country, the international situation, and even the right of veto in the Security Council

tended to deflect and obscure the common direction of policy. So we find the democracies criticizing and even attacking each other instead of trying to agree. And yet it is of vital importance that the democracies come to an understanding with regard to Southeast Asia. For democracy itself is at stake in that part of the world.

It has been contended that "the colonizing powers or Europe have only in a few instances used their authority with any regard for the rights or interests of the people over whom they have ruled."¹ And again that "the nature of the defeats suffered by the Western nations in 1942 dealt a final blow to any concept of white superiority which still remained."¹ Acceptance of such sweeping and shallow statements, combined with the indubitable fact that Asiatic nationalism has penetrated everywhere and has activated a strong and growing resentment against alien domination, must obscure that other, equally indubitable fact that the present situation is the result of a historical development and that there is no reason for the colonial powers to feel morally guilty or abashed, nor for the colonial peoples to be ashamed of their past or to execrate their former rulers, as long as both parties recognize the present development and act accordingly. If we approach this difficult situation with a bad conscience or a troubled mind, we are sure to make mistakes to the detriment of large populations and of the peace of the world.

During the war years it had become abundantly clear that colonialism in Asia had reached a stage where it must prepare its own liquidation. But at the same time the grave problem had arisen, whether this should be done by a simple act of abnegation on the part of the colonial powers, or whether the transfer of sovereign authority should be preceded by a period of rehabilitation in order to repair the devastations of war and occupation and to provide a stable foundation for the new national governments. Could responsibility for such

¹ Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision*, p. 298.

a rehabilitation be lightly dismissed because the desire for immediate independence appeared so overwhelming as to brook no delay in its fulfilment? Are the leaders and parties that forced their way to the foreground in certain liberated areas entitled to seize that sovereignty as the true representatives of the people? Is a period of conflict, of armed struggle for power, of civil war, terrorism, and dictatorship inevitable in the process of nation-building? Or should we hold the colonial powers and their allies responsible for a restoration of order and decent conditions, where the present disorder has been caused by the depredations of the enemy?

It is not easy to answer those questions. Although the various cases show enough similar features to warrant concerted action, the differences are of such importance that they exclude the application of one identical solution to all of them. And to the innate complications of the transition from colonial status to independence are added all the dangers, errors, and misunderstandings of the postwar world and all the forces of irrationalism and unrealism into which a harassed humanity has tried to escape from the miseries and fears of the time.

The victors of World War II seem seriously divided. Democrats and totalitarians, liberals and communists hold diametrically opposite views on these problems as on others, and the democrats threaten to fall out among themselves in the way they usually do until they are confronted with an imminent peril. This peril is not yet fully realized with respect to the former dependencies in Southeast Asia, where great human and material values are threatened with destruction.

In 1943 I tried to formulate the problem in a speech for the Royal African Society in London, where I said:

We have to face the problem as history has put it before our eyes; eyes that may have become, perhaps, a little more discerning because of what we have suffered and gone through. We know—or at least we ought to know—that human history never allows a

complete break with the past. There may be times of rapid change, even of revolution on a large scale, but we shall always have to bear and carry forward the responsibility not only for what we have done ourselves, but also for what was done by those who went before us.

A weak and simple abdication of colonial trusteeship, as implied by some of the more extravagant blueprints for peace, would only mean the reintroduction of medieval lawlessness in a great part of the world, offering a standing invitation to gentlemen-adventurers of many races and nationalities to step in and re-enact the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the modern manner. On the other hand, the germs of nationalism and liberty have been so firmly planted in the minds of great colonial populations that their growth is inevitable and their suppression would only lead to that most horrible of wars, a racial world conflict. The only effective way through the difficult period of transition towards independence is a way of constant, deliberate, and purposeful action. It happens to be, at the same time, the only honourable way.

Subsequent events seem to have confirmed these sentiments, but it was not possible, at the time, to evaluate the radicalization of nationalism that was to emerge from the trials of war. People in Asia no longer stand in awe of the West; they no longer hesitate to translate their desires into revolutionary action. It is not so much that the West has lost its ascendancy of power and superior science: Japan was completely beaten in the end, and beaten by the atom bomb. Neither have the masses lost their preference for peace and quiet. But force and violence no longer possess their deterring qualities; people have endured so many atrocities and miseries that the base and cruel elements of revolutionary action no longer impress them, as long as they hope it will lead to a better future.

So we can hardly wonder at the desperate temper in which many people in Southeast Asia met the defeat of Japan, or at the difficulties experienced by the West in adjusting its views

to these changed conditions. Yet it has gradually dawned upon the consciousness of both parties that the risks and perplexities of these budding nations are greater than ever before. They are faced by more political, social, and economic puzzles, and threatened by subtler forms of aggression and exploitation, than those to which more experienced and resourceful governments and more strongly united peoples have succumbed. Idealism and enthusiasm alone may be strong enough to win independence by storm, but can they retain it in a hard and competitive world where no nation is any longer left alone? What harvest will national independence yield to the colonial and semicolonial peoples of Southeast Asia? Can liberty and democracy be established in those seagirt countries, where production and prosperity have increased more since the opening of the Suez Canal than anywhere else in Asia? Will they relapse into a condition of corrupt government, factional strife, and insolvency? Or must we accept their absorption by totalitarian communism, moving southward through the wreck of China and the weakness of Burma, Thailand, and Viet Nam?

The West cannot turn its back on them with indifference as these questions are being answered. It cannot even take the attitude of an attentive spectator, curious but unconcerned about the outcome. For Southeast Asia is one of the key zones of the world, politically, economically, and strategically. Its peoples are probably better conditioned for democracy and co-operation with the Occident than any other Asiatic race. They are intelligent, tolerant, and fundamentally peace-loving. Although they lack the commercial perseverance of the Chinese and the Indians, they are industrious and eager to learn. Since 1870 Southeast Asia has become a treasure-house of important raw materials and foodstuffs; its climate and its resources, combined with the skill and the inclination of its inhabitants, offer an opportunity for industrial development without the attendant evils of robot labour and crowded

slums. And it is situated across the main connections between the Indian and Pacific oceans; it dominates some of the most important sea and air routes of the world.

There has been, moreover, a much deeper penetration of Western influence in most of these countries than in the less accessible land mass of the Asiatic continent. Many elements of Western civilization have been absorbed into the daily life and thinking of the people. Even if all connections were severed, the West would still remain present, physically invisible but spiritually real. But the people in Southeast Asia do not particularly want such a severance. They only want their national freedom; most of them would prefer a continued co-operation and assistance, if they could be assured that it would not bring back domination under another guise. They want their white rulers to disappear, but they do not want their white friends to go. They realize the unsettled and dangerous condition of the neighbourhood where they live.

The facts in postwar Southeast Asia no longer allow that gradual schooling for nationhood which was the promise of the last half-century of the colonial era. The fulfilment of that promise was too often postponed, the resistance of vested interests has time and again caused too much delay, the suspicion of imperialism is too deep-seated. Sincerity of intentions no longer suffices; after having been the defenceless objective of the most grim colonial aggression, they demand the certainty of self-government. But those same facts force us to the conclusion that the assistance which the West can no longer give them in the form of colonial supervision or international trusteeship must be available and acceptable to them in voluntary association during the formative years of their independence, if they are to survive as free peoples and to be saved for the non-totalitarian, the democratic family of nations.

A new relationship, a new attitude are necessary. The nations of the democratic West, particularly those who hold

or held sovereign rights in Southeast Asia, will have to abandon their prerogatives, but not the people of their former trust. They must extend their co-operation to them in order to give them, as their friends and allies, the succour they can no longer provide for them as their governors. They must convince them that such aid does not imply subjection in any form or measure, even if there are conditions attached. The relationship must be one of mutual agreement; its advantages must be obvious and palpable for both parties. And it should not remain restricted to special alliances or treaties between the individual nations of Southeast Asia and their respective former mother countries. For both in Southeast Asia and among those mother countries there exists a wide community of interests that can be a base for regional agreements, including and embracing them all.

In the following pages an endeavour is made to analyze the present situation, as it grew out of a long and colourful history. It is impossible, of course, to trace that history for all these countries. Only the case of Indonesia is treated in greater detail. But Indonesia is by far the most populous and the richest of the Southeast Asiatic nations. It had, together with the Philippines, the longest and closest relations with the West. And if its case supports the thesis of this introduction, the parallel conditions of its neighbours will be shown to justify the conclusion that similar considerations apply to the whole of Southeast Asia.

BOOK ONE

The Foundations of Southeast Asia

CHAPTER ONE

The Origins of Southeast Asia

IF SUTODIKROMO, owner of a tiny farm in the village of Karangan, Central Java, had been able to keep a diary during the fateful years between 1939 and 1949, and had noted in it his thoughts and reactions on the storms of war, occupation, and revolution that blew over his fields and through his little bamboo house, we might acquire from its perusal a deeper understanding of Indonesia than from the most diligent study of newspapers, pamphlets, memoranda, and learned treatises. Could we collect similar simple memoirs from, say, a Filipino tenant in Pampanga, Luzon, an Annamite fisherman on the coast of Cochin China, a Thai woodcutter in an upriver district of Thailand, a small Chinese trader in Johore, Malaya, and a Karen hunter in Upper Burma, they might enable us to survey the whole of Southeast Asia from its stable and permanent foundation: the masses of its common people.

Most of us, travellers and adventurers from the West, whether we come with a spiritual message or for material gain, look down into that mass from a remote point. When we are humanly interested, we may come to know certain representatives of the higher classes somewhat more intimately; yet even of them we know only the face they turn towards our Western world, and not the roots they have among the com-

mon people. We may also get to know our servants and labourers, but only as men and women outside their community, as a kind of displaced persons. And if some of us, missionaries or doctors or just queer fellows, bury ourselves in such a community to live there, we are either too much filled with a special purpose, or we bury ourselves too deeply, to be able to observe more than our direct environment.

And yet it is impossible to discuss Southeast Asia comprehensively without at least a general understanding of the fundamental importance of these local communities of simple folk, these perennial villages and tribal wards and districts, bound to the soil or the wood or the sea, where human relations are at the same time direct and traditional, and where the need of man for a social existence finds its most constant and elementary realization.

This does not mean that there is no change at the base of the social structure. Changes there are, but they have a much slower and more ponderous rhythm, and they are therefore much more enduring than the landslides on the slopes and the volcanic convulsions at the top. These communities are like geological layers of rock and gravel and ore; they may be washed bare or covered with water or silt or lava; parts of them may be torn up by eruptions or dug away by man; but their main composition is altered only by the sluggish and tremendous movements of the earth itself.

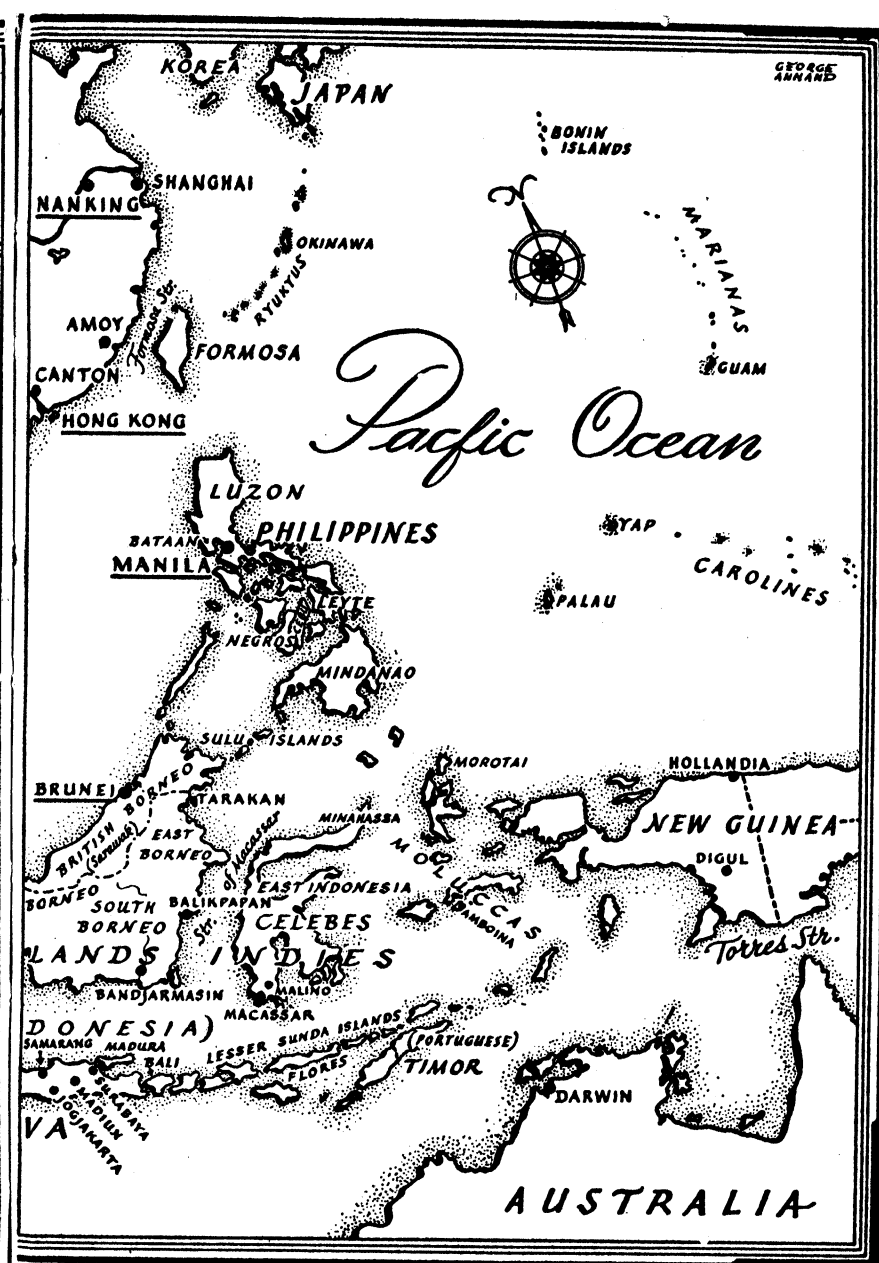
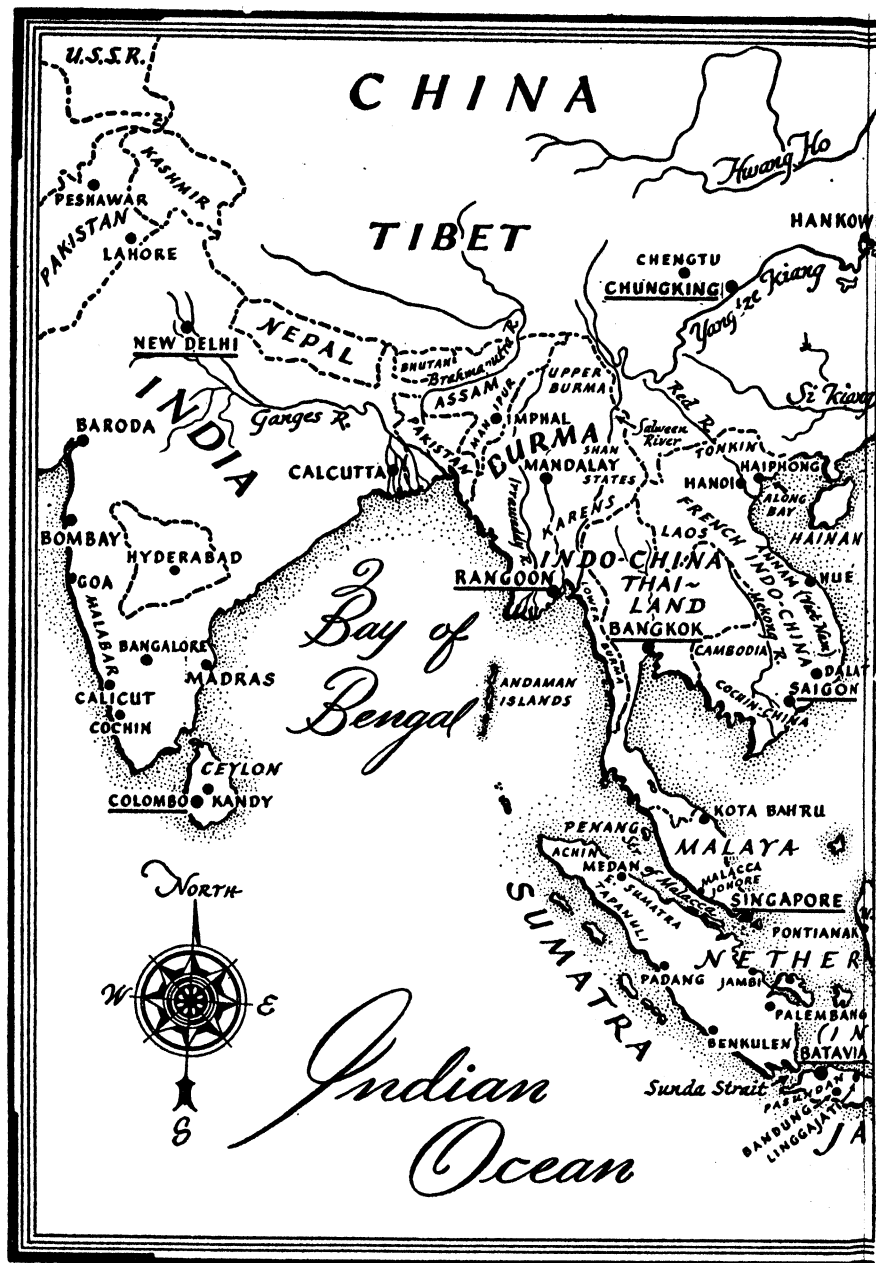
I saw this fact illustrated in the most convincing manner when we introduced certain very sweeping agrarian reforms in the Sultanate of Jogjakarta, Java, between 1920 and 1925. When in 1830 this sultanate was very much reduced in size after the last colonial war in Java, the tribute-hungry rulers and their dependents started to break up the villages by appointing a steadily increasing number of tax collector to levy ever larger sums from ever fewer peasants. They abolished the old village chiefs and split the villages into arbitrary wards and groups of disconnected farms and destroyed the

last vestiges of self-government. In many cases even the old boundaries were forgotten. But when the reforms unified taxation and reconstituted villages and village government, it took only a few months before these village communities were working again as if they had never ceased to function—as if they had merely suffered from a century of suspended animation. At the same time they evolved certain modern features, which could be introduced because they were in harmony with the spiritual development of the people and found no vested interests to bar their way.

Of course it would be an unwarranted generalization to pretend that history has not known, in this part of the world, the almost complete destruction of whole populations and their political structures that occurred elsewhere. The older of the succeeding waves of humanity that populated these countries and had their origin in the mysterious past of Indo-China¹ were largely exterminated or absorbed, or driven to distant islands and to the less accessible hill country of the interior. But most of this happened before history began to be recorded.

Although many questions concerning these early migrations are yet—and probably will remain—unsolved, it seems a fact that most of these wanderings were caused by the advance and thrust of ever more civilized races from the Asiatic mainland, who were themselves expelled by others, pressing on from behind, or by a dearth of sustenance in areas that overflowed with a growing population or deteriorated in fertility. So the earliest and most primitive tribes went farthest, if they were not extinguished like the negroid and pygmy Negritos. The Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians found a refuge in East Indonesia, New Guinea, and the Pacific islands; the Igorots, the Dyaks, the Bataks, the Laos and Shan tribes, and the Karens retired into the mountains and

¹ The term Indo-China is used for the peninsula containing Burma, Thailand, French Indo-China, and the sub-peninsula of Malaya.



jungles of Luzon, Borneo, Sumatra, and Indo-China. Those who came afterwards and had attained a much higher standard of civilization and social integration were apt to settle as soon as they reached a sufficiently fertile country and the pressure that had dislodged them was reduced.

This difference in civilization found a typical expression in the cultivation of rice, the staple food of almost the whole area. There are few fragmentary tribes left that still live exclusively by hunting and fishing and collecting products of wild growth. The great majority of the people learned some form of agriculture ages ago, with cattle breeding as an accessory to farming. But as long as rice and vegetables were planted on patches of cleared forest, shifted every few years, the tribal organization would persist and the forest would remain a valuable source of additional food and income.

But the people who had learned to cultivate rice on terraced and irrigated fields or in drained stretches of swamp-land needed closer settlements and wider co-operation. The village or district became, in most cases, their social and communal centre, and the collective interests of adjoining villages forced them to combine and made for an intercourse that broke through the tribal divisions and taboos. The territorial bond became stronger than the tribal ties; the village and the farmer's family replaced the tribe and the clan as fundamental units of the social structure. But at the same time their interdependence, their increased vulnerability, and a gradual specialization of production created the necessity of a larger and more powerful governmental superstructure.

When history began to be preserved in legends, inscriptions, and chronicles, these mass migrations had practically ceased. The Indonesians had spread over the Philippines, the major part of Indonesia, and Malaya; the Burmese, the Thais, the Khmers, and the Annamites populated Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Annam. On the outskirts of this region the

Indonesian wave may have reached Japan, to lose its identity in the Mongol torrent from East and Northeast Asia. In Formosa the Indonesians were gradually being isolated in the interior by invading Chinese. At the other extremity, in Madagascar, they imposed themselves as the ruling race of the Hovas on the African inhabitants. And on the northeastern fringe of Indo-China, particularly in Tonkin, constant infiltrations from the Chinese Empire created a mixed population with strong Chinese traits and characteristics.

In many ways Ceylon presented a similar picture. The Singhalese, it is true, came from the Indian mainland rather than Indo-China; but otherwise its history and its position are so much akin to those of the other Southeast Asiatic countries that it can be included in these considerations.

Even a cursory glance at a map of Southeast Asia, covering Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, French Indo-China, Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the smaller territories of British Borneo and Portuguese Timor, must impress us with the broken character of the country, as well as with its penetration by the sea. To begin with, more than half of its land surface consists of islands. In Indo-China and on the larger islands, including the Malay Peninsula, high longitudinal or radiating mountain ranges further subdivide the country. Swamps along the coast and tropical jungle in the interior bar the way; the valleys of the numerous rivers, which provide access to the higher levels, are often separated from each other by almost untraversable ridges. Stretches of extremely fertile volcanic or alluvial soil alternate with poor forest mould, spread thinly over loam, marl, gravel, and rock. The heavy monsoon rains, while supplying plenty of water, often flood the plains and cause rapid erosion wherever the mountain slopes are laid bare by primitive cultivation.

As a consequence the political units in this area remained, as a rule, comparatively small. When a monarch wished to extend his dominion beyond the island or the river valley

which hemmed in his principality, he needed sea power, and overwhelming sea power at that. A few empires, founded between the fifth and fifteenth centuries by Hindu colonists, achieved such supremacy: the empire of the Sailendras, based on Sumatra and Malaya; that of Cambodia in Indo-China; and that of Majapahit in eastern Java. But their outlying provinces were only loosely held, and they broke away when they had profited enough by the example and the teaching of their rulers. And Southeast Asia was too distant ever to be subjected to the great rulers of the continent—the Chinese and Manchu emperors, the Great Khan of the Mongols, the Shoguns of Japan, the Indian Moguls or the Arab Caliphs. The one big Chinese expedition, sent by Kublai Khan—the host of Marco Polo—to eastern Java in 1292–93, became involved in a local conflict and ended in disaster. And other Chinese attacks on the kingdoms of Indo-China resulted only in tributary relations of a loose and temporary character.

The spiritual penetration of the great Asiatic civilizations into Southeast Asia found other channels. For Southeast Asia, easily accessible from the sea, was rich in valuable products and attracted, from the dawn of history, the adventurous trader and warrior, who brought spiritual innovations and often acquired temporal power on the strength of his cultural and military superiority. There were colonies of Indians and Chinese and Arabs on all these coasts, and many of the more important dynasties had their origin in India, China, or Arabia. Their influence met with little resistance from the comparatively weak native rulers and communities, but the rural structure was not affected by these immigrants.

All these manifold kingdoms, rajahships, sultanates, and principalities can be reduced to a limited number of patterns, whether they were of native or foreign inception. In several cases their hold upon the country had its mainstay in the control of traffic on an arterial river. Their capital then was built astraddle of that river at a point that could be reached by the

seagoing vessels of those days and could not be by-passed along other waterways or land routes. Their direct rule would extend over the surrounding plains, and their strategic position would enable them to levy tribute from the villages and tribes upstream. Their governmental functions were limited to the administration of taxes, mainly paid in kind, the maintenance of a small armed force and fleet, the dispensation of justice in cases concerning the interests of the court or the peace of the realm, and the management of the capital with its harbour, its market, and its fortifications.

In other cases a coastal port might, for various reasons, become a trade emporium and develop as an independent state with little territory but great wealth. Although some ships made very long voyages, the ocean-going trade of Asia moved, as a rule, from port to port and needed centres where the products of the region were collected, transshipped, and exchanged for imported goods. The great trading communities in China, India, Persia, and the Arab countries took care of the long-distance transportation; the local princes and their merchants gathered the export goods and distributed the imports. But on those long routes around the coasts of Asia towards Mongolia and Japan at one end and towards the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf at the other, a favourably situated and safe harbour might offer, even to those big traders, much-needed facilities for storage, barter, transshipment, and shelter against the adverse monsoon. When the Portuguese came to the Indian Ocean they found cities like Calicut, Ormuz, and Malacca filling these needs, and incidentally indicating to them and their European rivals a method for establishing the trade monopolies which were the purpose of their colonial venture.

In some countries, however, the political growth had advanced beyond the stage of the tollgate or the godown state. Where fertile and accessible lands stretched farther into the interior, in Ceylon, in parts of Malaya, Sumatra, and Java,

in the broad valleys and coastal belts of Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Annam, the settled farming population spread over larger tracts and the government lost its primarily commercial or piratical character. The capital was often moved inland and became the centre of a more comprehensive administration. The military establishment increased: religious authority often added to the secular powers of the court; a civil service branched out over the country. Such a government might mean extra burdens for the population, but it also spread civilization. Some of these kingdoms extended their domains by conquest and subjection of adjoining or even comparatively distant territories. Many rose and fell in the course of time; of many capitals only scant ruins are left; some were completely swallowed by the jungle and can no longer be located with certainty.

In these states public works developed beyond the erection of palaces and temples and the construction of harbours. Roads were built, communications maintained, schools endowed. Arts and literature flourished, and a system of law might be superimposed on the ancient and ineradicable customs of the people. A kind of feudalism would grow out of the subdivision of rural income among the members of the dynasty and the holders of high office, although the monarch remained the ultimate source of nobility and power.

Yet even in these kingdoms trade continued to be one of the main functions of government. Taxes and tribute were collected in kind; important and valuable products were monopolized by the prince or his noble relatives and servants. The merchants crowded around the storehouses of commodities and the licensed bazaars added to the regular income of the court. And trade in the end attracted all those foreigners who have so profoundly influenced the civilization, the political history, and the economy of Southeast Asia. Trade and the saving of souls.

So we must figure this rich and varied realm of Southeast

Asia at the beginning of the sixteenth century, covered by a patchwork quilt of kingdoms, principalities, tribal chieftainships, independent cities, and local or regional confederations. Most of their rulers were, in Western eyes, absolute monarchs or "kings," but their power depended to a great extent on the loyalty of noble or prominent subjects and even on the tolerance, if not the affection, of the people. Religion and law could never be ignored, and constant rivalries exposed almost every court and country to possible attack and overthrow.

As a result there was a continual shifting of the pattern and every new force entering the arena could be certain of both exciting resistance and obtaining allies. Ships from many directions entered these sheltered seas; the riches of all those courts aroused the greed of neighbours and of intruders from distant lands; the abundance of valuable agricultural and mineral products like rice, spices, pepper and cinnamon, gold and precious stones, silk and cotton textiles drew the ambitions and the imagination of the whole civilized world to the legendary coasts of Taprobane (Ceylon), Java Major and Minor (Java and Sumatra), the Moluccas, Siam (Thailand), Cambodia, and Quinam (Annam).

The bigger empires in that part of Asia had vanished by that time. The men from India who founded them had no regular support from their country of origin, and their descendants merged, after a few generations, with the local population. Their empires disintegrated with the ruling clans, and India itself, although just beginning a new development as a continental empire under the Moguls, was past its high noon of sea-borne adventure and trade.

But the influence of conquerors and merchants lived on. Hinduism and Buddhism spread across Ceylon, Indo-China, and Indonesia, transforming the original animistic beliefs. The wonderful ruins of Angkor Vat in Cambodia and of Prambanan and Borobudur in Java still bear witness to the magnificence of the rulers that built them in the heyday of

Indian ascendancy; the temples of today in Ceylon, in Burma, in Thailand, in Cambodia, and in Bali prove that Indian civilization did not disappear with the Indian potentates.

In other parts, particularly in Malaya, Indonesia, and the southern Philippines, Islam superseded the religions of India or converted the heathen. As Islam gained ground in India, Moslem traders followed the trail of their Hindu precursors and penetrated into Southeast Asia from the thirteenth century onward. Every Moslem trader spread the worship of Allah and his Prophet wherever he settled on those endless coasts and married the daughters of the country. The Moslem faith soon gained popularity among the Indonesians, for whom Hindu philosophy and the Hindu caste system had remained alien elements. It agreed with their more individualistic and matter-of-fact, if sometimes volatile, character. It had an essential simplicity, which appealed to a rural population and facilitated the conversion of Hinduist and pagan. It harmonized with village democracy, because it knew no priests and no classification of the faithful, and at the same time it had a place for the absolute ruler in its monotheistic system. To those who were of a more contemplative mind, it offered a well-developed mysticism. And as it was brought by later converts, many centuries after the Hegira and many thousand miles from its Arabic fountainhead, it had lost much of its fanaticism, so that it could absorb and tolerate both animistic and Hinduistic survivals. Religious conflicts like those in India and the Middle East would have been incompatible with the easygoing nature of the island dwellers.

As a result of this political and religious penetration and of a continuous commercial intercourse, the influence of India, Arabia, and—to a more limited extent—China has been profound and lasting. We meet it everywhere: in the languages, the literature, the alphabets of Southeast Asia. The arts and sciences derive their colourful variety from these rich sources. The products of Indian and Chinese handicrafts and

industries can be found in the most remote parts of the interior; they were imitated and developed by the native artisans at court and in the villages. Famous epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* acquired popular local versions. Numerous schools of religious philosophy have their disciples in these countries. Important parts of the law are based on the canons of the great Asiatic creeds. In the customs of trade and the ways of government Chinese and Indian examples have been extensively followed.

Roughly speaking, a Buddhist culture of Indian origin covers Ceylon, lower Burma, Thailand, and most of French Indo-China. Islam dominates Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, southern Celebes, the northern Moluccas, and Mindanao; in Java and elsewhere the fact that it was superimposed on Hinduism is still clearly discernible. The zeal of many of these Moslems for the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca maintains continuous contacts with the Arab world. Hinduism itself survived in several regions of Indo-China and in a special and lovely form on the island of Bali. Chinese influence, both Buddhist and Confucian, prevails in Tonkin and the northern borders of Burma; and commercially it was felt throughout the whole area.

But underneath it all the original animistic civilization of the inhabitants was—and is—but slowly changing. The tribes in the hills of the interior, the people of outlying territories, like central Indo-China, the central and northern Philippines, and the eastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago, had been touched by, but not converted to, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam. Many of the laws governing daily life and relations were—and are—the old customary laws of the period preceding the introduction of those world religions or the development of monarchies and feudalism with their decrees and ordinances. And much of the civilization continued the achievements of an ancestry that knew the woodcraft of the hunter, the arduous seamanship of the fisherman and the

sailor, and the delicate and complicated skill of the rice farmer and the village artisan.

The new civilization gave the common people the idea of belonging to larger corporations than their village—the idea of obedience to a higher authority and of peaceful co-operation with their neighbours. But their organization in tribes and villages persisted as the ultimate and stable foundation of every government, easy to rule and to tax, easily cowed by a few men-at-arms or a band of brigands, but indestructible through its capacity of yielding and resurgence. Only when political and economic catastrophes destroyed all the means of livelihood, when the people were driven to despair and frenzy, did these peaceful communities fall to pieces and either perish in apathy or rise in a cruel destructiveness that might well cause the downfall of their masters.

CHAPTER TWO

Invasion from the West

WHEN ON May 20, 1498, Vasco da Gama made his landfall at Calicut, India, with his three travel-worn Portuguese ships, the curtain rose on a new and portentous change of the Asiatic scene. People from the extreme western seaboard of Europe, itself but a peninsula of the vast mass of Asia, had found a sea route to empires and civilizations a thousand years older than the dawn of Grecian culture. The journey had taken almost a year, and the return trip was to last far into 1499. Scrimmages, brawls, and scurvy had depleted the small crews and were to diminish them still further on the way back. The commercial gains of the expedition were limited. It had not found in East Africa that legendary Christian potentate, Prester John, who was one of the objectives of its quest. The propagation of the Catholic faith had everywhere met with resistance and hostility. The Moslem barrier surrounding the eastern Mediterranean, which had gradually driven Christian kings, merchants, and adventurers of western Europe to look for ways around, appeared to extend through most of the ports of East Africa and India. It was evident too that the Italian city-republics, which held the monopoly of Asiatic trade, and their Arab and Indian purveyors would not relinquish their privilege without a sharp struggle. Nobody could

foresee the formidable revolution of which this tiny and wandering squadron was the vanguard.

And yet within seven years Francisco de Almeida was installed at Cochin on the Malabar coast with the extravagant title of Viceroy of the Indies. In 1509 Diogo Lopez de Sequeira first entered the Strait of Malacca between Sumatra and Malaya. In 1510 Affonso de Albuquerque, only slightly less ambitiously called "Captain-General and Governor of India," with 1,500 men finally stormed Goa, where he made his capital and wheré the Portuguese remain today. In 1511 he conquered Malacca and dispatched Antonio de Abreu on the first voyage to the Moluccas. And on April 27, 1521, Fernando Magellan, sailing in the service of Spain, was killed on the island of Mactan, near Cebu in the Philippines, which he had reached six weeks before from the other side of the world. The European had come to stay.

Until near the end of the sixteenth century the Portuguese and the Spaniards held the field, extending their explorations even to China and Japan. Then the English, the Dutch, and later the French joined the competition for the eastern trade and ousted their predecessors from the most promising fields of enterprise. The Portuguese empire in Asia dwindled to a few insignificant ports; the Spaniards held out in the Philippines, from where their trade route led, across the Pacific, to their viceroyalty of New Spain in Mexico. The British and Dutch chartered companies, focussed on India and Indonesia respectively, captured the bulk of the traffic in Asiatic goods, with the French as indifferently successful interlopers.

The wars in Europe always meant fighting among Europeans in Asia; competition in Asia often prolonged those conflicts after peace in the home continent had been restored. The connection between the overseas sphere of action and headquarters in Lisbon, Seville, Amsterdam, or London depended on one fleet a year, consisting at most of a couple of dozen ships, crossing and recrossing the Indian Ocean with

each favourable monsoon. Until well into the eighteenth century the colonial establishments were generally restricted to a number of coastal towns and forts and trading-post compounds; only the Spaniards in the Philippines and the Dutch in West Java and the Moluccas acquired more extensive territorial rights at an early date. Local fleets of smaller vessels maintained the communications between the several ports, guarded the monopolies, and captured the intermediate trade, gradually crowding out Asiatic shipping and commerce. The strength in soldiers and sailors, always restricted by parsimonious governments or managing boards, could be counted in hundreds or at most in thousands. The ravages of disease further slashed the effectives. Among these small groups of men with their inadequate equipment the quarrels were continuous after Almeida imprisoned his unwanted successor Albuquerque. And yet they obtained an ascendancy over potentates who counted their subjects by the million, who commanded tens of thousands of soldiers, and whose riches far surpassed those of the most wealthy courts of Europe.

This phenomenon, comparable only with the exploits of the Greek phalanx in Persia or the Roman legion all over the Old World, but far surpassing them in proportion, distance, and endurance, was not primarily the result of any great technical superiority in ships and armaments. Such a superiority existed, without doubt, but it was immeasurably strengthened by the skill with which these ships and armaments were handled, and above all by the discipline, the strength, and the continuity of purpose and effort which distinguished the rising national states of the West.

The Renaissance had unleashed new interests and directed an increasing attention to the world at large, while at the same time the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation engendered a missionary zeal that had an important share in the urge to visit and discover foreign countries. In the national states these energies were concentrated and backed by gov-

ernments, which obtained a permanence and an immunity from internal strife hitherto unknown. The ships that sailed from the Tagus and the Thames, from Cadiz and Amsterdam, on distant and perilous journeys, were sent forth by authorities and organizations whose aims went far beyond an incidental adventure or a buccaneering raid. They were followed by other ships, and the results of these voyages were carefully registered, compared, analyzed, and consolidated. For certain countries overseas exploration and expansion became policies accepted by the nation as a whole, independent of faction or political change.

So the small advance parties installed in places where the commercial prospects looked promising showed an almost incomprehensible daring and fortitude, left amidst thousands of strange and potentially hostile people. For they felt certain that the familiar rigging of their ships would be seen climbing above the horizon with the next monsoon, or the next, or the next. Many did not survive the climate, the whirlpools of Asiatic politics, or the consequences of their own stupidity and blackguardism. But the ships would come, eventually, and others would carry on.

In a world where political instability, intrigue, and conflict ruled supreme, this almost ferocious tenacity was something new and overpowering. The European colonizers were organized in a way unknown to Asia. Individually they certainly were not less selfish and greedy than their opponents; their courage had its counterpart in many an Indian or Indonesian or Chinese hero; their fighting qualities were not in a class apart above those of the more martial races of Asia. But their individual characteristics, good and bad, were enveloped and absorbed by a national spirit that was alien to the Asiatic world. Enterprise for most of them meant teamwork, long-term aims, a systematic build-up of knowledge and relations and a method of consolidating positions and results that

contrasted utterly with the often feckless ways of the princes and parties and pirates of the East.

The objectives of these Western powers and companies were mainly materialistic; they were out for profit and plunder. But there was always an accompanying spiritual strain, mostly taking the shape of propagation of the Christian faith, but in other cases developing an active humanitarian or scientific interest in those strange countries and their inhabitants. Some great figures stand out in those centuries of brutal adventure, like St. Francis Xavier, who preached in India, Indonesia, and Japan. But if the moral standards of the invaders were generally rather low, they differed little from the standards of those with whom they contended. There was an almost universal decay in the Asiatic world. The days of cultural and religious ascendancy were long past; politically everyone was out for himself. The growing strength of the West found a decadent and riven society that facilitated its intrusion.

The West brought little of value to Asia in those days; on the contrary, it further damaged what was already rickety and weakening. But one evil remained as yet conspicuously absent. The incursions of the Europeans did not impress Asia with any general feeling of impotence or inferiority as long as they remained, from a continental point of view, local and incidental. The Asiatics may have considered the newcomers with irritation and disgust when they made a nuisance of themselves, but in many of the communications of Asiatic authorities we read a certain condescending and amused curiosity. They generally underrated the European pioneers, as Peter Schlemihl underrated his shadow when it started on its independent career.

And neither did the visitors from the West see themselves as the predestined rulers; the daily dangers were too great and unpredictable, the daily discoveries too frequent and

startling. In the numerous journals, reports, and descriptions left by these merchants, soldiers, and sailors we find a refreshing directness of approach, an absence of those feelings of racial superiority that were to mar the relations of a later period. Only where religious fanaticism looked down on pagans and heretics, or where slavery reduced certain humans to the level of domestic animals, did those contrasts arise which constitute the most serious breach in human solidarity. The European might complain about the hostility or the treacherousness of the Asiatic; he might see him mainly as an adversary; he might wonder at his curious habits and beliefs; he might realize the advantages of his own discipline; but he did not yet consider the brown or yellow man as his inferior, intellectually or socially or even morally, *because* he was brown or yellow.

In those first two centuries the influence of the West in Asia had two main aspects. The Europeans were a new element in the never-ending contests between kings and chieftains and war lords, concluding alliances, offering assistance and protection, demanding submission as the exigencies of commerce and monopoly directed them. Their stability and continuity of purpose, the wide sweep of their activities, were imposing. They were valuable friends in an armed conflict. As they were indifferent to the ambitions which divided the Asiatics, they introduced a new phenomenon: the ally who could be bought or enticed with the promise of profit, not of power. From motives foreign to the Asiatic way of life they upset the existing equilibrium in many places. And their influence could not be annihilated, because their strength fed on external resources that seemed inexhaustible.

With the exception of certain cities and a few fields of missionary activity they did not interfere with the daily life and government of the peoples and tribes of Asia, and where they clashed with particular authorities or interests the conflict generally was a straight fight for the possession of certain

markets or commodities and not for the power of government or the imposition of an alien civilization. But in one respect their influence was more comprehensive.

It had been clear from the first voyage around the Cape of Good Hope that trade with Asia could not be a simple barter of commodities, nor a straight purchase for money. This was particularly true for a comparatively poor country like Portugal in 1500. As Vasco da Gama progressed up the east coast of Africa he found that the goods he carried were less and less appreciated. Simple things might delight the Negroes and the Hottentots, but the Arabs and Indians were accustomed to a rich variety of products from the highly developed handicrafts and industries of Asia.

So the European trade with that continent soon became a three- and even four-cornered affair; it appeared quite as important to seize the traffic between the Asiatic ports as to monopolize the shipping to and from Europe. Textiles from Persia and India, rice from Java, earthenware from China were exchanged for those spices and silks and sandalwoods and other luxuries that were the staples of the European trade. Certain kinds of manufactures, like scarlet cloth, and certain amounts of specie could be profitably imported from Europe, but much space in the outgoing vessels was taken up by provisions and equipment needed for an ever-widening circle of establishments and trading posts. Thus local trade became ever more essential to maintain and feed the trade with the West.

The chartered companies soon took this trade in their own hands. Their command of the sea enabled them to disrupt and to kill Asiatic commerce and shipping. Their monopolies, ever more rigidly enforced, laid a blight on the lively exchange that existed between the several regions and markets of Asia, and progressively restricted the intercourse of travel. Many seafaring Asiatics lost a large part of their ocean-going fleets and of their skill in navigation; many Asiatic merchants saw

their business dwindle and their political importance fade.

Although it cannot be said that Asia as a whole was pushed into a defensive position, it is a fact that some of the most plentiful sources of political and social change began to dry up. The warrior or statesman, who tried to remodel the political shape of his country, would often find his opponents in league with the Europeans; the travelling trader, who had been such a vital element in the dissemination of knowledge and culture, would see his way blocked or his movements restricted by the chartered companies. Asia began to decline when the Europeans appeared; but now the forces of initiative and invention that might have revived her were gradually weakened or chained by the hardy adventurers from the West.

As time went on and the network spread, the interests of the West multiplied and inevitably led to the conclusion that a dominance of trade alone was not enough. Trade depended on production and could be fully assured only by gaining control of its means and channels. And there were other potent reasons that drove the Europeans after the end of the seventeenth century to reinforce their commercial sway by the acquisition of political authority.

Repeated attacks on their establishments and a succession of wars and treaties to insure the observance of their monopolies raised the question whether it was not at once safer and more profitable to possess such authority over the key areas. Moreover, the only conclusive way of keeping competition out of one's own preserves seemed to be the subjection of those preserves to one's own forces. An independent prince might always change his allegiance; only direct rule or at least a suzerain control could prevent such defection. It also could abolish all those tiresome dealings and tributes necessary to keep the doubtful friends in line.

So several considerations combined to push the overseas representatives of the colonial powers in the direction of territorial expansion. The mission-minded Spaniards had from

the beginning annexed their discoveries to the Crown of Castile and León. The consent of the directors of the chartered companies was less easily obtained; their purpose was commerce, not conquest and conversion. But the development seemed inevitable. And once the initial steps were taken, the consequence was a continuous growth and extension of governmental functions. For the new governments had to pay their own expenses and to guard their own security; taxation, defence, and the administration of justice demanded supervision as well as shipping, commerce, and production.

In this way Great Britain and the Netherlands became, through their chartered companies, ruling powers in Asia. It is an exaggeration to say that they acquired their Asiatic empires in a fit of absence of mind. But it is true that in all those years until the nineteenth century they never waged a war for the direct purpose of territorial conquest, as such wars were waged in the temperate zones for the extension of white settlements. Colonial expansion and government over these well-populated lands of Asia were mere accessories to a vast commercial enterprise, and territorial authority was accepted only after considerable hesitation. In the end the duties of authority crushed the chartered companies with their burden, while their servants prospered on its multiple spoils.

The new British and Dutch governors were little concerned about the condition of their subjects. Indirect government, whether through native chieftains appointed and recognized as civil servants, or through native princes, who acknowledged the suzerainty or accepted the protection of the foreigner, remained the rule, real direct government the exception. As a result Western influence was limited to the enforcement of tribute and the maintenance of peace, and interfered little with the daily life and habits of the people. It enfeebled the native rulers because it preferred subservient vassals to sturdy allies, and reduced the correcting influence of popular

discontent. On the other hand it suppressed violence and internecine quarrels; a new security brought an increase of population. The rationalism of the West very, very slowly crept into the processes of administration. But a deep and direct penetration of Western culture remained absent both in intention and in fact until the nineteenth century was well advanced.

The regime of Spain in the Philippines was an exception. A royal trade monopoly existed, but the products of these islands were neither very abundant nor very valuable. The contact with the mother country, via Mexico, was made every year by what was significantly called "the ship"; the really profitable trade was a restricted trade in products from China. But the expansion of direct rule had a very different impulse there: the conversion of the Filipinos to the Roman Catholic faith was the principal aim of the Spanish Crown. Notwithstanding the incompetence and corruption of its servants, the Spanish influence was much greater than the British and Dutch. The parish priest and the friar penetrated everywhere; they carried their intervention into the villages and a considerable amount of Spanish-Catholic civilization into the customs and minds of their flocks.

Concurrently a system of general education was evolved under religious control, culminating in the College of St. Thomas, which was founded in 1619 and obtained the status of a university as early as 1645. This inculcation of Spanish culture and Catholic doctrine created a much more intimate relationship between Spaniard and Filipino, however often the recurrent haughtiness of the *peninsulares* (Spaniards born in Spain) might offend their overseas brethren. And having the advantage of a long start, even the slovenly ways of the succeeding Spanish administrations could not prevent the growth of an establishment of which an expert has said: ". . . it is clear that by the end of the nineteenth century the Philippines were far ahead of any country in the Tropical Far East in respect of educational facilities. They stood alone also

in female education. Nor was there any dependency where so many natives had been to Europe for their studies.”¹

Yet we must observe that Spanish cultural influence did not create a new civilization. It did not merge very well with the existing Indonesian culture, which had been but little fructified in the past by the few and superficial contacts with India and China. This lack of integration had its dangers for the future vitality of the Filipino nation. Western conceptions were grafted on a native plant of which the roots were not sufficiently nourished. The original social structure withered, and its place was taken by one in which materialistic forces dominated. A ruling class of economically privileged *caciques* and of *ilustrados* with an alien education was superimposed on a population of poor villagers deficient in indigenous tradition and social vigour. For its spiritual needs, the development of arts and sciences, the Filipino community had to rely almost exclusively on outside sources.

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia—and in India, for that matter—the consequences of the gradual extension of Western territorial power were less revolutionary, until a fundamental series of changes occurred in the relations between Europe and Asia. They were caused by the Industrial Revolution and the tremendous development of technology on one hand, and on the other by the liberal and humanitarian ideas which became current at the end of the eighteenth century.

Expansion of the industries originating in England, which was at the same time the cause and the result of an ever more rapid succession of technological inventions and improvements, gave a new importance to the colonies as markets for exports. Though these exports were first of all directed to the colonies of settlement and their protection was among the major origins of the American Revolution, it soon became apparent that their diminishing costs made it possible to sell them in Asiatic countries, where up to that time competition

¹ J. S. Furnivall, *Educational Progress in Southeast Asia*, p. 44.

with local manufactures had been difficult, if not completely out of the question. This meant a constant growth of the value of subject and dependent peoples as consumers of surplus production. Territorial expansion became an objective in itself, because it meant expansion of controlled markets.

This sales pressure induced an appetite for tropical products that corresponded with the increasing needs of Europe. Until then the goods brought to the West had been luxuries, goods with a definite scarcity value. In certain cases production had even been forcibly restricted, like that of cloves and nutmeg in the Moluccas by the Dutch. But now the growing demand pressed for increased production and the multiplying industries began to explore for various supplies of new raw materials. This again induced a desire for territorial expansion and control.

For a long time, however, trade remained the principal business. It is easily understood that the systematic advancement of colonial production started in those territories which had been longest under European control: in West Java, the Moluccas, and the Philippines. Supervised cultivation of sugar cane, coffee, indigo, and spices in Indonesia, of tobacco and hemp in Luzon, dates back to the eighteenth century. But the development of these resources on a grand scale began only with the introduction of the famous—some say the infamous—Culture System by the Dutch in Java in 1830.²

About this system, which has been as extravagantly praised as it was unduly decried in later years, an Englishman with the apposite name of J. W. B. Money wrote a book in 1861, entitled *Java; or How to Manage a Colony*. Both its subject and the book itself are typical of the mid-Victorian phi-

² In a way the slave colonies of the Americas preceded Southeast Asia in the production of tropical staple crops (sugar, cotton, tobacco). But they were a special case of colonies of settlement, where the settlers used not only domesticated animals, but domesticated Negroes, as auxiliary power in agriculture.

losophy, and it may contribute to our understanding to say a few words about them.

The Culture System was the first extensive endeavour to increase the production of tropical commodities for export and so increase government revenues and raise the general level of prosperity. It was based on the conversion of a land tax, demanding one- or two-fifths of the harvest of the native farmer, to the compulsory cultivation by that farmer on one-fifth of his land of export products, which he had to deliver at fixed prices. It was managed by the native chiefs under the supervision of a considerable number of Dutch civil servants. It included coffee, sugar cane, indigo, tobacco, pepper, and cinnamon and led to the introduction of tea and cinchona. It also led to a number of abuses which ultimately killed the system, because its success could last only as long as its lead in the still undeveloped field of tropical production compensated for the economic inefficiency of its methods.

Mr. Money, writing in the culminating years of its success, was greatly impressed by the economic and financial results, which were impressive indeed and which made Java by far the leading country in per capita exports and imports in the whole Far East. His rational mind was struck by the attendant growth of the population (it more than doubled in thirty years), by the quadrupling of revenue in a quarter of a century, and most of all by the absence of friction in a community, where the functions of brown and white people were strictly separated and a daily intercourse of the Dutch with the Indonesians, both chieftains and peasants, hardly seemed to interfere with native customs and civilization.

It is a fact that the system laid the foundations for a pre-eminence of Indonesia in tropical agriculture which was to last, under changing conditions, for nearly a hundred years.³ It is another fact that notwithstanding the black spot of a

³ Scientific biological research began in 1817, when the first botanical garden was laid out in Buitenzorg.

yearly tribute to the Netherlands treasury, lasting until 1873, the system brought a measure of prosperity wherever its application did not overshoot the mark by too great a restriction of native agriculture or by the imposition of excessive burdens through the corruption or the mistaken zeal of its executors. It is a further fact that it encouraged the construction of roads and irrigation works. And finally it forced the administration to acquire an intimate acquaintance with village life and with the hardships and iniquities that beset the peasant and the artisan in their daily toil.

But the bureaucracy of those days could not compete with the rationalism and the economic ardour of free enterprise. And the inevitable harshness of forced and indentured labour could not survive its exposure to a public opinion in the mother countries that directed its humanitarian interest to the colonial world. The Culture System and similar institutions elsewhere were superseded by the private planter and the modern business corporation.

At the same time the colonial governments abandoned their purely negative social policy, which aimed to conserve the indigenous institutions and to limit interference with local customs or even vices. Economic development, beyond a certain point, meant the introduction of modern processes and the need for schooled personnel. Technical inventions and improvements could not be ignored; neither could they be utilized without the assistance of skilled operatives. The majority of these people had to be drawn from the almost inexhaustible reservoir of the native population, which made a certain training indispensable. And as modern economy penetrated those countries, the administration and the financial policy had to be modernized in their turn. The Asiatic colonies could not be isolated as a kind of natural parks or game preserves, once the industrial and commercial expansionism saw their value as markets and as storehouses where it could find the necessary food for its giant appetite.

This new development had a paralyzing effect on Asiatic industry and handicraft similar to that which the Western trade monopolies had on Asiatic commerce. It is of course uncertain what growth those industries and handicrafts would have shown if they had been left to themselves. But it is a fact that much of this native industrial production was killed by the competition of cheap European and American manufactures. On the other hand, the new production of raw materials and foodstuffs, introduced by the West, gave rise in later years to important extensions of native agriculture, and during the twentieth century several Asiatic countries began to build modern industries of their own or to practise the old industrial arts with modern machines and tools.

Two parallel series of conflicts are discernible in the colonial history of the nineteenth century. They are connected with the statics and dynamics of the situation.

To the first group belong all those colonial wars, rebellions, and mutinies where the old order clashed with the progress of Western influence and supremacy. The Europeans of the period grew less patient with Asiatic tradition and prejudice. They would maintain indirect rule as long as it enabled them to trade in peace and safety and to keep down the expenses of government. But when its inefficiency blocked the way to economic development, or when its conservatism impeded progress in the liberal sense, or when its venality hampered the improvement of public finance, it was brushed aside or put under a more exacting supervision and reduced to impotence. Resistance sometimes flared up terribly, as it did in the Java rebellion of 1825-30 and the Indian Mutiny of 1857. But it was the resistance of an *ancien régime*, of a deposed ruling class, or of a disturbed religious community. In a number of cases it was popular and supported by widespread agitation; in others the common people viewed it with apathy or even took the side of the colonial government against feudal oppression. As yet there was no

general conflict between Europeans and Asiatics, and certainly nothing like a national uprising against colonial rule. As a matter of fact, all these rebellions were suppressed with the aid of native soldiers, who almost invariably remained loyal to their white commanders.

The second category of dissensions occurred among the Europeans themselves. Throughout the revolutions and reactions of the end of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century the social consciousness of the ruling classes in western Europe became ever more sensitive to the rights of their less fortunate fellow-men. Colonial grievances found a hearing in the parliaments at home, and an almost religious belief in "progress" linked the elevation of the depressed classes to the rationalism of a new and liberal political economy. This new viewpoint, which particularly pervaded the Anglo-Saxon world, found perhaps its most popular expression in the works of Dickens and its most typical realization in the fusion of business talent and humanitarian ideals among the Quakers.

This sentiment, which led to the trials of Clive and Warren Hastings and was formulated in Burke's famous phrase that "all political power, which is set over men, ought to be in some way or other exercised ultimately for their benefit," obtained a classic expression, well in advance of its time, in the Queen's proclamation at the formal taking over of the Company's authority in India by the British Crown in 1858, which said:

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

It is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service the duties of which they be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.

We know and respect the feelings of attachment with which natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India.

At the same time the action against the slave trade and slavery, under the leadership of Wilberforce, set the care for subject peoples, for the so-called "backward races," against the policy of ruthless exploitation. It is the great merit of England that it brought forth this new spirit in a period when its power was supreme and when it had to fear neither white competition nor coloured resistance.

But this humanitarian view was, nevertheless, based on the conviction of what Shaw makes one of his characters call "England's peculiar fitness to rule over less civilized races for their own good." India might stand out among the dependencies in Asia because of her age-old civilization; the belief in the superiority of Western progress prevailed at every turn, however sincere the intention to pay "due regard to the ancient rights, usages and customs." In the organization of government, finance, economy, justice, education, and social institutions the examples of the mother country were the model and the common denominator of improvement. We find this to be the case in almost every colony during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; we almost unconsciously expect a British mould in India, Ceylon, Burma, and Malaya, a Dutch cast in the Netherlands Indies, a French structure in Indo-China and an American stamp superimposed on a Spanish one in the Philippines.

As the territorial subjection to Western rule spread and the demands and discomforts of Western standards were imposed upon ever greater populations, the reaction became more general in character. And when the era of modern imperialism dawned with its overwhelming power of ad-

ministration and technology and its ruthless stirring of the placidity and the isolation of the masses, the defence of ancient customs and privileges remained no longer the only or the most important motive for resistance. While security, production, and sanitation were ever more enhanced and populations augmented by leaps and bounds, the inherent antagonism between Asia and the West acquired a wholly new and profound impulse of what is called Asiatic nationalism.

That era began when the formation of powerful national states in Europe was concluded and when the military and industrial and technological development of the West raced ahead of the rest of the world at a pace never witnessed before. It looked as if the white race were destined to dominate over all mankind with an irresistible material power. The facts seemed to confirm the theory of white superiority and of a division of functions, whereby the coloured races would be permanently subservient, providing the Western economy with raw materials and markets for its continuous expansion. And yet within half a century the forces conjured up by this outburst of overconfident ambition were to spell the doom of colonialism itself, and to prove once more that the spirit is mightier than the sword.

CHAPTER THREE

Imperialism at the Flood

IN 1842 Sinibaldo de Mas put the colonial problem squarely before his Spanish masters. Spain would have to decide whether it wanted to retain the Philippines in permanent subjection, or whether it was willing to prepare them for independence. If the first policy was chosen, the number of Spaniards in the islands should be reduced to a minimum. They must be kept apart from and above the natives. Education of natives would have to be limited to primary schooling with no Spanish taught. Differences between the Filipinos and the Chinese should be cultivated and military power securely kept in Spanish hands, the press censored and licensed and slave labour maintained or reintroduced.

If, however, Spain decided for Filipino independence, everything should be done to further education, to bring the two races together, to promote equality and co-operation, and to give the Filipinos an ever bigger share in the business of government, until sovereignty could be transferred under a new constitution. He advocated the second policy, because the Philippines were a liability and might in this way become an asset, as only in this way could Spain hope to win and hold the affection of the people. Instead of letting the natives gain their liberty by rebellion and force, which would inevitably follow if things were allowed to drift along with-

out any clear purpose, it should be said of the Spaniards: "They found anarchy and despotism there and established order and justice; they destroyed slavery and established political equality; ruled the natives with just laws; Christianized and civilized them; defended them from the Chinese, from Moro pirates, and European aggressors. They spent much gold on them and then gave them their liberty." Only thus could the lasting friendship and gratitude of the Filipinos be won.

De Mas wrote under the vivid impression of the fall of the Spanish Empire in South and Central America. But whatever his background and motives, history would prove him fundamentally right. However, these truths were not recognized at the time—not even in weak and declining Spain. The other colonial nations were only just entering upon a period of expansion, and new national states were soon to join the scramble for colonial empires. The whole West felt the vigour and the daring of a new youth; the rest of the world was its oyster. Certainly nobody, not even the socialists, apprehended that the West would not always be free to determine the fate of that world. Steam, machinery, rifles, and organization gave it a giddy material advantage that seemed to make world domination its manifest destiny. And nowhere did the prizes to be won look so alluring as in Southeast Asia.

True, it had seemed for a while, in the middle of the nineteenth century, as if there were to be a limit to colonial expansion. Only the Russians were quietly extending their domain in northern and central Asia; the other colonial powers seemed satisfied with what they had and loath to undertake new responsibilities. Until 1870 the situation in Southeast Asia altered but slowly.

Ceylon had passed in 1796 from the hands of the Dutch into those of the British when Holland joined the French bloc during the Wars of the Revolution. In Burma the British

Company had obtained a foothold in the south in 1826 and annexed the whole of Lower Burma with its essential rice-producing plains in 1852. Upper Burma with the Karen and Shan country still enjoyed a precarious independence between this Western advance and the kingdom of Siam. In Malaya the Straits Settlements had been founded (Penang and Singapore) or taken over from the Dutch (Malacca) between 1786 and 1824; the Malay States on the peninsula had remained free or were subject to Siamese power in the north. The Netherlands Indies were recognized as the domain of the Dutch, but in many parts of Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, and the Lesser Sunda Islands even their suzerainty was hardly acknowledged; Achin in northern Sumatra remained a sovereign state. The French in 1858-67 obtained direct control of Saigon and Cochin China and acceded to the request of the King of Cambodia for a protectorate; the Annamite empire and Laos had preserved their independence thus far; the indeterminate character of the claims of Siam in Cambodia and Laos, and of China in Tonkin contained elements of conflict only in the Asiatic sphere. The Spanish pursued their spineless rule in the Philippines under continuous quarrels between the secular and the religious authorities. The Moslem (Moro) population in the south (Mindanao and Sulu) and the pagans in the hills of Mindanao and Luzon were never really subdued. The romantic rajahship of James Brooke in Sarawak and the British settlement in Labuan, both founded between 1841 and 1847, were to be the beginnings of British Borneo, but an extension was not yet contemplated.

In the centre of Indo-China the kingdom of Siam stood out as the strongest state in Southeast Asia, which was not even included in the spheres of influence that were recognized among the Western powers. It maintained a balance between the British advance from the west and the south, and the French penetration from the east. Many of its pre-

tensions to sovereignty were dubious, and many of its border subjects disloyal to the court of Bangkok. But its independence was to be saved ultimately by the rivalry of the United Kingdom and France and by the wise and long reign of its modernizing monarch, Chulalongkorn (1868–1910).

The expansion of trade from Europe and the United States went ahead; Japan, the only really close-knit national state in Asia, was wrenched out of two and a half centuries of complete seclusion by Perry's American squadron and by a naval action of the united Western nations in the Straits of Shimonoseki. Predatory assaults had battered breaches in the walls surrounding China, but the rival powers did not proceed beyond the opened gates and the occupied tollhouses. Trade could be forced upon reluctant Asiatics by the command of the sea and the acquisition of extraterritorial rights in certain ports. The commercial nations of the West still hesitated to assume the burdens of government where no direct profit was to be expected. Neither economic competition nor the prestige of colonial possessions was as yet a sufficient inducement to make the extension of colonial empires an aim in itself.

But then arose those fateful and fearful forces that were to push imperialism to its extreme: the domination of the world. The new nations forged in Europe, Germany in particular, and an old nation in Asia that learned the game of power politics with astonishing rapidity, Japan, entered into a violent rivalry with the senior empires. Their territorial greed, not mellowed by centuries of responsibility for dependent peoples, was first directed towards those parts of the globe where primitive tribes and defenceless, ancient monarchies had been left alone by the colonial powers. The blank spaces on the commercial map of the world were filled in within a few decades; where there had appeared to be room for indefinite expansion in 1870, mighty nations were jostling and crowding each other out by the end of the century. The general scramble for empire and trade privileges

and concessions was on, growing in intensity until well into the present century and receiving additional vigour from the discovery of mineral resources in many parts of the earth.

This terrible competition swept along all the nations of the West, however rich they might already be in colonial possessions. It nearly precipitated an armed conflict between England and France in 1898.¹ It caused the Sino-Japanese War, the Boer War, the Spanish-American War, and the Russo-Japanese War in the ten years between 1895 and 1905. It heightened the imperialist spirit everywhere in the Western world and intensified the economic development and exploitation of colonial areas a hundredfold.

In those same years the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) and the soaring increase of mechanical power and technological contrivance covered the earth with ever swifter communications and ever more profitable means and systems of production. The voice of human concern, though never silent, was smothered by the din of machinery; the spirit of equality and fraternity was darkened by the haughty pride of power that obsessed the white race.

In Southeast Asia the days of leisurely development and incidental, unsystematic extension of territorial sway were definitely past. The interested nations were in a hurry to round off their possessions and to prevent the intrusion of newcomers. The whole of Burma was annexed as a British colony in 1886. The Malay States became a British protectorate between 1874 and 1889 and in 1909, when those under Siamese suzerainty cut loose from their old allegiance. Achin was occupied by the Dutch between 1873 and 1899, and all the islands of the Indonesian archipelago were under direct and regular control of the Netherlands Indies government by 1910. France occupied Tonkin in 1884 and brought Annam under its protection in the same year; in 1893 Laos was ceded by Siam; and in 1907 the last two provinces of Cam-

¹ The Fashoda Incident.

bodia were pried loose from that kingdom. British Borneo, partly under the antiquated regime of a chartered company, was consolidated by 1888. In the Philippines the situation remained practically unchanged until, after an abortive Filipino revolution in 1896, the United States found itself the successor of Spain as a result of the battle of Manila Bay in 1898. Only Siam was left as an independent state with its integrity guaranteed in 1896 by the contending imperialisms of Great Britain and France.

All of these countries were preponderantly agricultural. Though their original products had brought world trade to their doorstep and though they had always provided the adjoining empires of India and China with rice and lumber, it now became apparent that their fertile soil and their abundant labour could be the instruments for a much more extensive creation of wealth and prosperity. Plant introduction, beginning as early as the last quarter of the eighteenth century with the cultivation of Mexican tobacco in Luzon, added immeasurably to the variety and the importance of export crops. The range covered by the Culture System in Java has been told in the preceding chapter. Native products like copra, considered valueless in the centuries of luxury trade, acquired their place on the world market when the shortening of distances by steam and the Suez Canal made their exportation profitable. The requirements of industry gave birth to the systematic production of rubber, tapioca, sisal, and palm oil, all introduced from abroad.

In mineral exploitation, too, Southeast Asia led the way. Tin had been mined in Indonesia, Malaya, and Siam for ages. Gold and diamonds had been important in the past, but the great new discoveries of these minerals were located outside the tropics. Oil, however, was found in appreciable quantities in Indonesia, British Borneo, and Burma, coal in Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines, iron ore in Malaya and the Philippines, manganese in Indonesia and the Philip-

pinus, nickel and bauxite in Indonesia. In the mineral field Southeast Asia was not the treasure-trove it had turned out to be agriculturally, but the variety of its mineral wealth made up for what it might lack in quantity.

So colonial rule and Western capital built an astounding edifice of order, wealth, and sanitation in these countries. They saw the necessity of healthy and abundant labour and of sanitary conditions for their own people, who had died like flies in the past. Scientific research discovered the origins of scourges like malaria, bubonic plague, cholera, dysentery, and hookworm. Hygienic measures were introduced, swamps drained, water supplies purified, medical services instituted, hospitals and polyclinics built, quarantine regulations issued. Food production was progressively increased and stabilized by modern techniques. Vast irrigation projects were executed, richer crops and selected seeds popularized or forced upon the peasants, methods of cultivation improved. The jungle that had resisted the crowding manpower of Asia was conquered and cleared by the organization, the tools, and the mechanical horsepower of Europe and the United States.

Populations multiplied with dizzying speed as the natural fecundity of the people was less and less checked by war, pillage, famine, and disease. The number of inhabitants in Java, with an area of 50,000 square miles, jumped from 10 million in 1870 to 48 million in 1940, and yet it kept producing enough food for everybody. Roads and railroads penetrated the interior of many lands and opened up wide tracts, both in the plains and in the mountains. Hundreds of steamers and motorboats plied between the islands, along the coasts, and on the bigger rivers; thousands of motorcars provided transportation for passengers and freight. Cities expanded, harbours were built and equipped, modern buildings arose. Power plants, caloric and hydroelectric, brought light and energy to towns and villages. Communications were accelerated: cables and radio connected Southeast Asia with every part

of the globe, and aircraft began to wing their way to its most distant spots. But the most astounding achievement was the expansion of production and exports. Out of their proceeds all these modernizations were paid for.

When we consider the example of the Netherlands Indies (Indonesia), we find that, whereas its exports before the introduction of the Culture System in 1830 did not exceed an annual value of 20 million guilders, they rose to 100 million guilders in 1860, to reach a level of 1,000 million—with some very much higher peaks during the boom years following World War I—in the years preceding the Japanese invasion. Indonesia and Malaya showed the greatest development, but all the countries of Southeast Asia were important suppliers of the world.

It is interesting to compare their productivity with the aggregate exports of India (including Pakistan) and China. Such comparisons are not facilitated by the erratic courses of the rates of exchange in several of these countries, but by reducing the export values roughly to U.S. dollars, we find the following figures for 1937:

COUNTRY	POPULATION IN MILLIONS	EXPORTS IN MILLION \$	EXPORTS PER INHABITANT IN \$
Burma	16	114	7.13
Thailand	16	43	2.69
French Indo-China	22	63	2.86
Malaya	6	307	51.16
Neth. Indies (Indonesia)	67	323	4.82
Ceylon	6	68	11.33
Philippines	16	89	5.56
Total	149	1,007	6.76 °
India	389	417	1.07
China	400	147	0.37
Total	789	564	0.71

The figures are not wholly comparable: in the exports of Malaya is included a considerable amount of goods in transit, collected in Singapore and Penang from the surrounding countries; the figures for China do not cover the value of commodities smuggled past the customs, and they were already seriously influenced by the "incident" with Japan. The export values of certain Philippine products were raised by the protection they enjoyed in the American market. Nevertheless it can be said that the general ratio of exports per capita between Southeast Asia on one hand and India plus China on the other, was something like six or seven to one before the war.

The economic importance of Southeast Asia becomes yet more impressive when we consider the diversity and the vital nature of its products. Before the war it supplied 95 per cent of the world's natural rubber, 70 per cent of the tin, 65 per cent of the copra, and 40 per cent of the palm oil. It provided the hungry millions of Asia with rice and produced large quantities of sugar, tea, and tobacco. It was the biggest source of hard fibres (Manila hemp or abaca and sisal) and still held an unassailable top position in spices (85 per cent of the pepper), cinchona or quinine (90 per cent), and kapok (70 per cent). It owns a potential stock of woods (teak, hard and soft timber, pulpwood) that has as yet hardly been brought into exploitation.

But it is not merely an exporting area of great achievement and high promise. The industrial development of these countries lagged as long as the export trade grew more quickly than the population, and the industrialized West deliberately checked its growth because it feared the competition of its cheap labour. The possibilities and prospects, however, are certainly not less favourable than they were proved to be in Japan, India, and China; the available raw materials are in many respects more diversified and abundant. There is iron ore, coal, bauxite, nickel, and manganese. There

are oil-producing fields in Indonesia, British Borneo, and Burma, which today take care of a large part of the needs of the Far East and Australia. There are many untapped sources of hydroelectric power. And the industrial skill of the people has been amply tested both in the past and in recent years.

Even though a tolerable slice of this cake had to go to the foreign investors and another slice was remitted to the home countries of the ubiquitous Chinese and—to a lesser extent—of the Indian traders, moneylenders, and labourers, the resulting prosperity was a striking feature of the whole of Southeast Asia. There were hardly any instances of that abject poverty which prevails in large parts of India and China. The felicitous climate that knows neither the fell droughts of India and the Middle East, nor “churlish winter’s tyranny,” together with an often fantastically fertile soil, undoubtedly predestined an easy life for its inhabitants. But only the technical and scientific revolution wrought by the West could enable them to live in comparative abundance where the density of population rose above a thousand to the square mile. And neither a modern government nor modern conveniences of living and travel would have been possible without its quickening of the economic circulation.

Under the double spur of economic expansion and competitive imperialism Western domination became the prime mover of events in Asia. From the Persian Gulf to the coasts of Japan the white people and their activities focussed the fears and the speculations of the Asiatics and filled their thoughts and fantasies, whenever they were not engrossed by the daily cares of existence. At first the men from the West excited curiosity, as a passing circus will divert the attention of a class. But soon they began to interfere with the daily routine, to order about the masters and pupils, and finally to introduce their own teaching. They absorbed nearly all the

energies of those who, left to themselves, might have made a new departure in Asiatic history.

As this domination spread over large territories, it brought security and order to millions of people—conditions of well-being that they had not known for centuries. At the same time it cut deeper into the ancient customs, uprooted and changed more of the ancient institutions. Even village life, prospering under its unwonted protection, was affected and began to feel both the boons and the rigours of modern government. Distant supervision and indirect rule, which left native society almost untouched, gradually changed to an interference in almost every field of human endeavour and brought every political, social, economic, and cultural activity under an alien administration or influence.

The history of these years, as it is written today, generally stresses the enlightened and liberal policy of the colonial powers. It can point to an impressive succession of statements and measures, outlining and implementing a progressive granting of self-government and public control to the inhabitants of those countries. Representative institutions, both local and central, were formed; elections organized on an increasingly popular basis; native civil servants and public figures educated and admitted to the higher ranks of the administration. But the spirit of the rulers and especially of the white man on the spot was only very reluctantly considering the eventual liquidation of colonialism, if such a liquidation was considered at all. It would mean abandoning profit and power and transferring all this great and creative work to weaker and much less able successors.

For modern colonial government and modern colonial exploitation, whatever the humanitarians at home or in the colonies might wish, became ever more intricate and demanded ever higher qualifications of administrative and economic efficiency. The number of white civil servants,

planters, merchants, bankers, and technicians in the overseas territories grew rapidly. And if some of them could see the independence of certain colonial peoples in the dim and distant future, the issue did not present itself as a practical proposition during their tenure of office as long as the claims of modernization continued to outgrow the slow spread of native education and experience.

The leading governments and individuals, with hardly an exception, were convinced of Western superiority and of the justification, on that ground, of their sway over the coloured races. In their eyes the increasing prosperity in the colonies, the hitherto unaccustomed law and order, the betterment of health, and the rapid growth of populations completely vindicated their right to farm the world and to keep the ultimate decisions and the ultimate control in their hands, for the benefit of the colonial peoples themselves. This division of labour between the managing white and the coloured worker or assistant wholly conformed to an economic theory of free competition and free trade. Theories about the supreme qualities of the "Nordics" were popular and much more generally accepted than most people dared admit. This factual precedence of the West found its expression not only in claims to a share in the division of the African and Oriental countries, but also in such policies as that of the "open door," resorted to as a compromise whenever two or more powerful nations saw a promising possibility of colonial expansion somewhere and neither of them could get in first and slam down the portcullis behind. It was applied only to colonial and semicolonial areas, for the open door is decidedly not of the swinging type; it opens only one way.

When the executives of imperialism—as often happened—got in the grip of a genuine affection for the country and the people they helped to manage, in eight out of ten cases that affection was tinged with the conception of the "white man's burden," the dismal romanticism of a business age in which

lack of efficiency was deemed identical with deficient humanity. And they never realized that their "new-caught, sullen peoples" would be all the more sullen for being called "half devil and half child"; that they violently resented this patronizing attitude as a young adult resents the inhibitions of his parents when they interfere for his own good.

It was characteristic of the age, too, that the missionary spirit no longer motivated the colonial authorities; missionary work was left to the churches and to private organizations. There came a time when nineteenth-century rationalism made a British Government state that "the hope of the conversion of a people to Christianity, however specious, must not be made a reason for increasing the British dominions." In those years it sometimes seemed that such a reason was rather found in the murder of a missionary than in the success of his mission.

Yet missionary activity never ceased, and it remained a powerful influence in the cultural life, education, and medical care in these countries. In all of them Christian communities developed—mostly among the pagan tribes, but not only there. They made for tolerance in the religious spirit of these peoples wherever nationalism united Christians and non-Christians, and it speaks for the depth of religious feeling that even the systematic persecution of Christians by the Japanese caused hardly any apostasy among them, even in preponderantly Moslem areas.

As layer upon layer of Western management and authority was built over these countries, yet another development threatened to widen the gulf between the white and coloured races, particularly in those colonies where the government was most efficient and the old abuses of exploitation and venality had been most successfully combatted. The numerous white communities in those countries found in their very modernization a possibility of living as they were used to living at home. They no longer had to conform to the cus-

toms and the food of the country; they no longer depended for their comfort and their company on at least a minimum of native resources and native friends. Particularly in the cities this segregation became ever more evident, and many a civil servant or planter up-country could seek his relaxation in town after the advent of the automobile. The necessity of learning the language of the people diminished with the spread of education, which taught even the servants to speak the language of their mistress, and with the gradual closure of white society as a self-sufficient circle. Not only did standards of living rise, but the motorcar, the refrigerator, the radio, the speed of communications with the mother country, all combined to give a sojourn in the tropics the character of a temporary visit that begot no special ties and relations with the country or its people. And so the curious result was that a man like Peter William Hofland, who lorded it over the Pamanukan and Chiasem estate in the sixties, with his despotism and his concubines and his two panthers beside him as he drove his buggy, is still held in affectionate and respectful remembrance by the people he lived and sinned among and that any modern planter, of strict respectability and impeccable behaviour, will be forgotten before the people are dead from whom he coldly kept aloof.

Of course there were always exceptions; there were always men and women who took a personal interest in their coloured neighbours. But even of those only relatively few avoided the mistake of thinking and speaking about these people as "backward races," "natives," or "aborigines" and thus tainting their good will towards them with the "pity that is pitiful, but not respectful." And as the national fervour rose in the hearts and minds of Asia, this pity was indeed felt to be as "cold and repugnant" as the pretension of white superiority in intelligence, power, and politics—and perhaps even more so.

The preponderant accent in the years of imperialism was

on good government, on strict justice tempered with strict mercy, on economic efficiency, and on practical education. All the unquestionable virtues of modern colonialism were practised from way above. But such is the queer and inquisitive character of Western, democratic civilization that there were always other white people for whom this rational righteousness was not enough; who wanted to penetrate into the mind and heart of these subject folks, to understand their way of thinking, their habits, and above all their desires and their resentments. History has given prominence—and rightly—to the great imperialists and administrators of the period; to Sir Frank Swettenham of Malaya, Governors-General Van Heutsz of the Netherlands Indies, Taft and Wood of the Philippines, Pasquier of Indo-China. But it will remember longer those among them who saw—as some of them did—that the future must belong to the people of Southeast Asia themselves and that their ultimate duty was to prepare the abolition of colonial rule. And neither will it forget all those scientists, missionaries, teachers, civil servants, and ordinary human beings who by their unselfish work and sympathy discovered the achievements, the potentialities, and the qualities of the Asiatics themselves and pointed their way to the future. Their efforts will be an even better and probably more lasting vindication of the colonial period than the peace and prosperity it wrought.

We must now turn from the awesome contemplation of imperialism at its height, of the impressive structures it built, and of the strong and serene appearance it presented right up to the day of Pearl Harbor, to the force that overturned it within a few years and that was largely of its own creation.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Birth of Nationalism in Southeast Asia

IN THE history of mankind we may observe one common feature at the bottom of every genuine revolution. It is always directed against the power and privilege of an exclusive group. Even the most submissive people cannot stand, in the long run, the rule of others with whom they have no community of counsel or spirit, into whose ranks they cannot be admitted. They can be temporarily kept in check by force and diplomacy, but such a subjection can never be indefinitely maintained, even through the most ruthless forms of slavery.

The Asiatic despot knew this. On his throne he might be as far above the common crowd as heaven is above the earth, but in undress he could be familiar with every class. His favourite wife might be a woman of the people; his most trusted counsellor an ex-peon. His motives and reactions were easily understood by his subjects, and his overthrow could be encompassed by any determined or popular party. Real revolutions seldom occurred in ancient Asia; what we have sometimes taken for them were nothing but palace coups and the affrays of faction.

The early governors from the West were hardly different, particularly as long as their territory was restricted. They practised of necessity a policy of *divide et impera*; of bal-

ancing between contending interests; of attracting one group to despoil the other. In the Asiatic legends and chronicles of the time the European is treated as a somewhat quaint and rather boorish and mercenary human being, about whom there is nothing mysterious and with whom one can treat on the assumption that his motives are comprehensible and that his objective is profit. The only thing that struck the Asiatic as really new and uncommon was his persistence, the continuity of his effort.

The sentiments of the people of Southeast Asia with regard to "king and country" were akin to those of the medieval European. He was attached to his local community and he might harbour feelings of loyalty to individual authorities above him. But above all he honoured his customs and worshipped his gods, who were the guardians and the originators of his way of life. He understood the necessity or the inevitability of some form of government above his village, but wanted to be left alone as much as possible within the accustomed circle of his village community.

For him, as for most of the various princes and chieftains, the men from the West were just one more conquering tribe with whom they had to contend or to compromise. Only rarely did neighbouring potentates form a coalition against the European invader; and if they did, it had nothing to do with nationalism or "Asia for the Asiatics," but was generally based on an accidental similarity of interests that might change overnight.

The advent of modern colonial government revolutionized this situation. Its fabulous power did not derive from any popular consent; it was neither for the people, nor by the people, nor of the people. Its deliberations and its aims were a deep mystery; its plans were hatched in seclusion; its hand struck out of the blue. It might be true that in many cases the colonial officials and officers "could make loyal followers or friends of the simple folk among whom their duties took

them," as Lord Elton writes of the British in India.¹ But the colonial government in the heyday of imperialism never descended from its seat of power to take counsel with its subjects. This remained so even after representative bodies were instituted and Asiatics were admitted to high office. Western initiative continued to flow from Western considerations, although there was more consultation about its effect and more opportunity to voice objections and criticism.

Indirect rule at first somewhat mitigated the direct impact. But it tended, at the same time, to freeze class rule and class consciousness to much more rigid distinctions than there had been in the past. It also led either to a loss of vitality in the native rulers, to whom it offered extraneous protection and who no longer felt the need to make good in the appreciation of their subjects, or else alienated the group of native chieftains and civil servants from the mass of their compatriots by making them the agents of policies imposed from above that found no ready favour or understanding.

Whatever the system, it remained an incontrovertible fact that governmental and economic policy was made and changed by foreigners to whose thoughts and conclaves the Asiatic had no access. And the ultimate directors did not even reside in the countries they ruled; their majority did not even know them. They sat in distant capitals and based many of their decisions on political considerations, which had little or nothing to do with the conditions of the community concerned. Measures of vital importance might be reversed because a potato crop failed ten thousand miles away, greatly needed expenditures withheld because an armed conflict threatened in another continent. Colonial rule, even in its most successful form, suffered from all the evils of absentee landlordism; its best intentions often remained beyond the comprehension of the beneficiaries.

As parliaments and parties in the mother country took a

¹ Lord Elton, *Imperial Commonwealth*, p. 461.

hand in shaping the destiny of colonies such changes became, in certain ways, more frequent and—for the colonial peoples—more unpredictable, although the general inclination now was in the direction of greater liberality towards the inhabitants of dependent areas. These bodies brought colonial policy under the control of public opinion, which was a great improvement; but it was the public opinion of the mother country.

This impalpability, from the Asiatic point of view, was even more typical of the management of economic affairs, especially when the big corporations superseded the individual pioneers. There not only the directors but practically all the staff were white and acted without reference to any native opinion or desire. When certain stresses among the labourers made life on the estates uncomfortable and threatened to impair production, social conditions were improved; housing, medical care, working hours and wages, education all got increased attention. A government labour inspection might be instituted, contract or indentured labour abolished. But everything was thought out and organized by the white employers, according to their standards and what they deemed best for the native worker.

As the system progressed, this direction from above and from without penetrated everywhere; every year saw some new Western initiative, some further extension of Western influence, some additional adaptation of native customs and institutions to Western standards. In practically every phase of life this trend appeared, introducing new conceptions, erasing traditions, letting light and air into dark and stuffy chambers, but nearly always hurting somebody in his interests or feelings. It could happen that a modern system of taxation, while alleviating the burden on the peasant, destroyed a whole class of feudal nobles and petty officials, without giving them new functions. It could also happen that a foolish speculation in pepper of a firm of London

brokers reduced an entire district to poverty for years. And every time the origin of these boons and evils lay wholly outside the perception of the people concerned.

The essence of dependency was brought home to the subject races in yet more drastic ways by the almost continual quarrels between the white community in the colonies and the home governments and by the conflicts among the colonial powers themselves. The best intentions of parliaments in the home country were sometimes frustrated by the conservatism of civil servants and the selfishness of business people overseas. On the other hand home politics or home interests often delayed or perverted measures and reforms on the need of which colonial opinion was united. The planter, the trader, the official in the colony resented the power of aged directors or inexperienced politicians at home; the radicals at home scoffed at the short-sighted paternalism of their colonial compatriots. And again all these controversies were conducted behind doors through which those who were most vitally concerned in their outcome could not enter.

The international conflicts were still farther outside their orbit. England and France compromised after years of rivalry in Indo-China on the appropriation of several bits of the kingdom of Siam and the conservation of the remainder as an independent state, as if it were a piece of cloth; neither the Siamese nor the inhabitants of the cut-off areas could do anything about it. Great Britain and the Netherlands traded Benkulen on Sumatra against Malacca on the Malay Peninsula, and free trade against a free hand in Achin, without a by-your-leave or a consultation of the people concerned. And when the Americans defeated the Spaniards they took over the sovereignty of the Philippines without reference to the Filipino leaders, who had rebelled against Spain. The time when Asiatic princes and peoples could still have a share in deciding their allegiance was past; their military strength

had dwindled to insignificance in comparison with the armed forces of the West.

When we try to imagine the impression this all-embracing domination made on the Asiatic mind, we begin to understand the origins and the reactive force of Asiatic nationalism. The mass of the people, for many years, were but dimly aware of the situation, but every Singhalese, Burmese, Indonesian, Malay, Annamite, and Filipino who stood or rose above this mass, found himself in a corridor of which the exit was blocked by a European or American boss and realized that in the last resort he would always have to obey an alien command. Their first resistance was ignorant and reactionary, a mere desire to eliminate the foreign intruder. It had little organization and only appealed to negative instincts. But when imperialism itself brought education and ever-widening contacts, a fundamental change developed.

Education tore the veils of mysticism from the power of the West. It gave the Asiatic access to a vast literature, which seemed to explain this power in terms of nationalism and science. He might understand little of the spirit of European and American civilization, but he found himself able to learn its language and to absorb its knowledge. When the white man stood in his way he no longer wanted to drive him forth and return to the customs and traditions of his forebears, but to step into his place and to exert his power himself.

Moreover, this access to the storehouse of Western history and science revealed to him that nationalism was the concentrated force behind the exploits of Europe and the United States. He learnt that it was possible for a people to act as a permanent corporation which presented a united front to the world, whatever internal dissensions might trouble the political scene at home. And so the opposition to foreign rule and interference induced the desire for a national life of their own among the politically active and restless people,

who had absorbed—if not yet digested—a Western education. It bred nationalists where no nations yet existed in Southeast Asia.

This change, of course, took time. Education, especially higher education, spread but slowly. During the transitional period, when the Westernized Asiatics were few in number, they looked for allies in two directions.

Those who by temperament most deeply and violently resented the subjection to another race or who were moved by serious grievances sought and found support in the latent xenophobia and the superstitions of the uneducated masses. When in 1841 Apolinario, a Filipino Roman Catholic priest, was denied permission to establish a native brotherhood, he founded his own church militant with himself as the Supreme Pontiff, if not the Messiah. In the same way Tilak, the first revolutionary leader in India—which often set the pace for Southeast Asia—recruited his followers among the discontented Mahrattas, who had seen their ambitions of dominance in Central India thwarted by the British, and appealed to Hindu orthodoxy and medieval violence alike. All through the last era of colonialism in Southeast Asia we shall find such movements, combining the lessons in power politics from the West with the reactionary, the retrogressive, and the bigoted sentiments of the people.

This type of revolt, however, had a chance of popularity only when conditions were bad enough to engender a mood of desperation. Those in better circumstances and with a more balanced judgment found their ideal in the creation of a modern Asiatic state in their country. They were impressed by the achievements of Japan under the Mikado Mutsuhito, of Siam under King Chulalongkorn and, later, of Turkey under the dictatorship of Kemal Atatürk. Or if they saw no chances within their community for such absolutist leadership, the example of Sun Yat-sen and the Kuomintang seemed to point the way.

Many of the first generation of nationalist leaders were inclined to look almost exclusively to the West for guidance. Repelled by the dull and uncomprehending multitudes and the narrow-minded feudal autocrats of Asia, they were powerfully attracted by the free and enlightened society of their European friends. They could see an escape out of their servitude only by emulating their rulers and thereby acquiring the ability to become their equals in administrative and technical efficiency.

By their education and their study of the ways of the West they had been filled with admiration for a system that showed a strength and a unity of purpose which were sadly lacking among their own race. As they were few in number and generally belonged to the better families, they easily made friends among the more liberal-minded Europeans. As yet they constituted no threat to Western supremacy, and they were disposed to recognize the advantages that Western rule had brought to their country. Their courteous and charming ways made them attractive to well-meaning and interested white contemporaries, who could not but feel a certain pride in the fact that a beneficent colonial rule had produced such fine and patriotic characters. And the idea of a peaceful evolution that would bring together the best representatives of East and West, without challenging for the moment the predominance of the West, had a wide and soothing appeal for the humanitarian white. It flattered the self-respect to be the teachers of such eager and admiring pupils.

We find this type of pioneer of the nationalist movement in figures like Gokhale in India, Rizal in the Philippines, and the founders of the first political society, Budi Utomo, in Indonesia. They were all convinced that they still had much to learn from their European tutors and they objected to violence, because they knew how easily a violent action might unleash the wildest instincts of the mob and thus destroy the chances of a steady advance towards their goal.

And they expected that a reformist method would commend itself to democratic colonial governments, which were themselves experimenting with the application of their political principles in the colonial sphere.

But it was not to be as easy as that. For it was one thing to cast a friendly eye on individual natives or even small groups of intellectuals, endeavouring to obtain political and social advancement in the Western upper sphere; it was a quite different thing to recognize independent Asiatic nations as the legitimate and inevitable destination of the colonial journey. And in contemplating such an outcome, much graver objections arose. For national independence presupposed the propagation of a national spirit, which could only mean an appeal to the masses.

Practically all these colonies had been built up out of a number of political units of different types. Many of those units, however, had lost their identity and in those which still survived, the Asiatic executive, generally feudal in character, had been weakened by colonial rule. Many of them were too small to carry the burdens of a national existence, and although a certain consciousness of belonging to these communities had endured among their members, even where the outward organization was destroyed, it was seldom strong enough to become the foundation of modern nationalism. The political centre, the governmental authority, reposed in the colonial capital and the nation every nationalist had in mind was to be coextensive with the colony as it had emerged from the accidents of imperial history. And although each of the colonies of Southeast Asia showed a certain ethnological homogeneousness in the origins of its population,² it was still a far cry to the realization of national citizenship and to the creation of a respected and consolidated central national authority. The consciousness of nationalism

² Leaving out of account large bodies of immigrants like the Chinese in Malaya.

could be brought home to the people only by widespread and continuous education and propaganda.

When it became evident that the nationalist movement could never achieve its aims without popular organization and support, it was equally evident that it would imply a choice between co-operation and conflict with the colonial governments.

In every colony, however well administered, there were always a number of grievances quite apart from any general feeling against a permanent and in fact racial subservience. The machinery for redress of those grievances was, as a rule, bureaucratic—which means that it depended on the powers and the perception of civil servants, and that it worked slowly in any case. Deliberations and decisions took place behind closed doors; there was no public discussion and little publicity of a critical or controversial nature anyway. The nationalists, however compliant, needed discussion and publicity. They had to communicate their ideas to others, to hold meetings and to found societies. They wanted to know the most pressing desires of the people in order to formulate their programs and to shape their policy. They became quite naturally and even unintentionally the address for complaints that had found no hearing or insufficient sympathy. All this amounted almost to a revolution, even when nationalism was still in its purely reformist stage and when genuine nationalist ideals still were confined to a small group of intellectuals.

Obviously the impact of this development on the colonial government differed according to the stage of political thinking such a government and particularly its rulers at home had reached by the time the implications of this budding nationalism began to be evident. In democratic countries it was difficult to deny the people in the colonies the rights that were cherished as the foundations of democracy. But it required imagination and daring to apply democratic principles under very different circumstances. Gradually representative in-

stitutions were granted to most of the Southeast Asiatic colonies and a right of free assembly was conceded, but there were constant hesitations, restrictions, and delays. There was also a regrettable lack of imagination, which led both the governments and the nationalists to imitate Western models without giving much thought to their suitability for the colony. The people as a whole were certainly not ready to practise democracy as it was practised—with many imperfections—in the West, and their obvious shortcomings, together with their administrative and economic inexperience and their general lack of public spirit, were so many arguments of the conservatives against experimenting in progressive self-government at all. After the first hopeful beginnings the going became rough for the nationalists in nearly all these countries.

In no case, not even in the Philippines, where education for self-government was the declared intention of the United States from the beginning of its rule, did the representatives of the colonial power and of the nationalists work together with the express and only purpose of building a nation in the best way and the shortest time. There were always cross-currents, changes of policy, arguments about immaturity, objections of vested interests. The nationalists could never be perfectly certain of the realization of their ideals and desires; they had to go on fighting and arguing. Certain prerequisites for future independence were neglected, like economic self-sufficiency in the Philippines or the acquisition of higher political and administrative experience in Indonesia. A change of government in the mother country might always cause a retardation, if not a reversal of policy. The relative backwardness of certain sections of the population, like the pagan hill tribes, was more often seen as a reason to postpone the extension of self-government than as a condition to be ameliorated as quickly as possible.

As a result of these circumstances nationalism became more

radical as time passed, and political agitation began to take precedence over constructive endeavour. The nationalists tried to cover up their obvious weaknesses under a constant flow of propaganda and became increasingly inclined to reject co-operation with their white rulers out of fear for unkind and sometimes destructive criticism. On the other hand, the colonial officials and business leaders were genuinely concerned about the fate of their great work when authority would be handed over to their less capable and often rashly ambitious Asiatic friends. They forgot that every man and nation has to learn by making his or its own mistakes. The freedom to make such mistakes was Gandhi's addition to the four freedoms of President Roosevelt.

As certain nationalists became convinced that no real progress was to be expected unless independence were granted first, a part of the movement turned more and more to agitation and violence. Certain groups embraced the more extreme ideologies, like communism; others traded on religious fanaticism or aversion to foreigners in general. Rebels from the distant past were exalted as national heroes and the kingdoms of still more ancient times idealized as examples of the great nations that could be established if the Asiatics were only left to themselves. The more conservative section viewed this development with anxiety but was often hampered in combatting it because their more cautious method lacked spectacular results. They could easily be branded as traitors and lickspittles and accused of preferring their honorarium to their honour. And they could but very seldom count on the unconditional and whole-hearted support of the whites.

But until World War II these tensions and disturbances very seldom came to the surface. The colonies of Southeast Asia were generally prospering and had overcome the difficulties of the economic depressions between the two wars without too serious hurt. The colonial authorities were gradually being transformed into representative and even partially

responsible governments; every time a thread threatened to snap there was a timely slackening of the tension. The temper of the more active nationalist parties remained dangerous, but it was not easy to evaluate their strength, as it is always difficult to estimate "the unexpressed half-conscious mood of numbers." Even those numbers were uncertain. It was a fact that active nationalism was spreading downward to the semi-intellectual groups, the petty officials, the clerks, the schoolteachers, the mechanics, the foremen, and the artisans. It was also a fact that the rapid growth of education during recent decades had given a preponderance to youth. There was a relatively large proportion of young people in subordinate positions, straining for advancement, and an increasing number of students, always violently political in an adolescent nation.

But their very impatience, their overstressing of politics and independence, worked as a deterrent on their elders, who realized that precipitate changes would cause serious damage and perhaps even find the new nations without the means to defend their independence. They had to think of their own position and the future of their children. So it might be hoped that even without a clear-cut, conscious, and determined policy these complicated and contradictory communities might blunder towards nationhood, without disastrous explosions and without irreparably damaging the relations between the white and coloured races. If only Asiatic initiative could be freed from the obsession of inferiority and dependence, and if the Western democracies could find their way to give sympathetic assistance without unduly prolonging a domination that was becoming obsolete, there seemed no reason why Asia, having been capable of creating its own civilizations in the past, should not succeed in building its own national habitations in the modern world.

But what about the common people, the mass of farmers

and labourers and fishermen in the villages? Had the nationalist movement touched them, and were they prepared to become the free citizens and soldiers of states instead of remaining just villagers, subject to whatever power destiny put over them?

We have seen them in the past as members of these rather isolated, quiet communities, where the peasants who owned a share in the arable land constituted the privileged class, and where the ideal of every mere labourer and of every youth was to acquire such a share in his own right. They were largely self-contained and self-supporting, choosing their own leaders, plodding industriously, suffering the hardships of adverse seasons or floods with great patience and sobriety, politically indifferent and respectful of authority, very steady but very vulnerable too, because they were almost defenceless against organized violence.

It was evident from many signs that these people, too, had been touched—at least those among them who lived near the cities, the inland towns, the railroads, and the highways. Outwardly the changes were small. Agriculture was practised in the old way, though with newer tools, better seed, and steadier irrigation. Market crops had increased, houses and clothes improved. Sewing machines, bicycles, patent lamps could be found even in remote villages. But the general aspect of the villages had not altered.

Much more important, however, was a certain loosening of the mind, particularly in the younger generation. When the world conflicts began, there was that inexplicable stirring of the time that reached the spirit wherever rumours penetrated and tales were told. The schools contributed, though very slowly; so did the greatly increased possibility of travel and the drift of village boys into the mechanical trades. It was no longer an unquestionable fact that the son would labour as his father did; there was adventure in the air and that

sudden consciousness of possibilities of movement and change that has had such a tremendous influence in estranging the sons of mujiks from their fathers in Bolshevik Russia.

All this, to be sure, was not nationalism. It directed the mind to a larger area and a wider range of knowledge. But the concept of a nation was still far away. And as long as the conditions of living remained stable and satisfactory there was no real urge to acquire political power outside the village. The situation had become more unsteady with the weakening of tradition and the ferment of new ideas; but only if security was undermined and people became aware of impending calamities might an active resistance break loose where formerly the village would have cowered and suffered in silence. It would certainly not direct itself towards a national ideal, but would rather attack some age-old nuisance: the moneylender, the tax collector, an oppressive headman or landlord or estate manager. But once on the move this violence could easily be swayed towards other objectives by the promise of a redress of wrongs and a more happy future.

The village is extremely vulnerable. The villagers have no arms except their knives and pointed bamboos; their houses are mostly built of inflammable materials; their neighbours are anxious to avoid getting mixed up in their quarrels with the powerful and the violent. Being the main producers of wealth, they are an easy prey for every kind of bully. They are very appreciative of good and equitable government and will show a touching attachment to a strong and just protector, but they will offer little active assistance if such a government or protector is set upon by enemies or rebellious subjects.³

When the situation becomes seriously unsettled, the only outlet for their rage or their despair—and at the same time

³ The "just prince" is a widely cherished ideal of these rural people, often assuming the form of a mystic messianism, of which advantage can be taken by any plausible and ambitious rogue.

their greatest scourge—is the particular form of gangsterism (for want of a better word) that is endemic in these countries. A few words must be said about this if we are to understand the events of the past and of today.

Of course Southeast Asia has its complement of criminals, like every other section of humanity. The gangs, however, have a peculiar background and disposition that belongs especially to Southeast Asia and, in certain respects, to India. With the possible exception of the Black Flags of Tonkin, they are not clannish like the Chinese tongs; they group themselves and fluctuate around one or more individual leaders. Although they sometimes merge with countrywide political organizations, they hardly ever form large, closely knit brotherhoods. They operate locally in familiar surroundings, unless they are forced by their pursuers to change their base.

The bad man in Southeast Asia seldom acts as a lone operator. The communal spirit of the people, which shirks individual responsibility, affects him just as much as his law-abiding brethren. Moreover, the single thief is easily spotted, except in towns, where people live together without knowing each other. But towns are rare and comparatively small; the bigger cities are of recent growth, and even here the suburbs consist largely of villages joined together. Nor can one man alone have those terrifying qualities which are half the security of the gang. Unless he has great magic, of course. But then, if he has, he will soon have many followers and he will be alone no longer.

It must not be supposed that gangs of robbers frequently occur in normal times or that they generally go unpunished. But the phenomenon has persisted through the centuries in many forms. There are those whose members have the appearance of quiet citizens in the daytime and who practise dacoity at night. There are others who live in notoriously “bad,” out-of-the-way villages. And when there is widespread trouble or misery, there are groups that take to the mountains and

forests and operate from temporary quarters in clearings or on hilltops. They may specialize in cattle stealing, or in hold-ups, or in plain robbery, or in extortion. But they all live on the land and keep the neighbourhood in check by threats of violence and arson. They are generally well known, but to round them up takes a great deal of spying and patrolling, because it is easy to hide in the thickly grown tropics or to merge into the crowd of scared villagers, who prefer a known amount of extortion to the unknown fate that will overtake the unprotected informer and his family.

But only part of these gangs consist of what we would call thoroughly bad characters and professional criminals. For the life of the gentleman of the forest or of the nightly marauder attracts others than the ordinary thug or dacoit. The youngster who shrinks from joining in the drudgery of his parents, the peasant whose debts and troubles have reached a point beyond his endurance, the man who has made a mistake and wants to hide his "lost face"—they all may take to gangsterism as a temporary release from unbearable worries. They do not become social outcasts. They are feared and may be considered a terrible nuisance by those whom they despoil, but their dangerous and romantic trade has certain magic qualities in the eyes of their relatives and acquaintances, who will therefore look upon them with a certain sneaking pride and affection.

Of course their occupation carries grave and often extreme risks, and the level-headed, the timid, or the cowardly will hardly ever choose it under any kind of pressure or provocation. But for people of a more reckless or indifferent nature it has compensations of a more complicated sort than the mere unfettering of animalism. It may mean the only way to taste freedom and power in an existence otherwise bound by tradition and by a perpetual subordination. It may provide an outlet to romantic spirits. It is often curiously bound up with the animistic beliefs in amulets and the magic powers of a

successful leader, who can bestow invulnerability by a few passes and incantations and formulas scratched on a piece of paper or *pandan* leaf. And, after all, it is generally possible to leave the gang and return to ordinary civic life, provided one chooses one's new surroundings and employment carefully, and does not turn informer.

So this gangsterism, shrinking to mere brigandage in times of prosperity and good, strong government, provides a framework for revolt and mystical exaltation in times of oppression and for escape from overburdening cares in times of distress. It also gives a chance to "popes" and "mahdis" to trade on mysticism and superstition and to dispense salvation on earth. And wherever a rebellious movement tries to grab the reins of government itself, gangsterism will thrive on its broad fringes and prolong its evils during the aftermath, whether the rebellion is successful or not.

Such were the elements of the political situation in Southeast Asia when the cataclysm of war and occupation burst over its lovely fields and seas and mountains. But there were important differences in disposition and achievement between the several colonies and it will sharpen our appreciation of recent events if we briefly survey the conditions in the two oldest colonies, the Philippines and the Netherlands Indies, before we treat of the Second World War and its consequences.

CHAPTER FIVE

Two Colonial Cases

IN THE Spanish Philippines the haughty and languid officials viewed the nationalist movement with a mixture of horror and contempt. These feelings were not mitigated by the fact that the focus of discontent was the conditions of tenants on the "friar lands," large ecclesiastical estates that had been granted in the past to several religious orders. The leaders of the church and the secular authorities might have their differences, but against this new phenomenon, which they recognized as a common danger, they presented a common front.

In Spain recurring periods of liberalism and even radicalism had offered several Filipinos, who visited the country or studied there and elsewhere in Europe, the opportunity to organize and to obtain Spanish support. The general nature of their action was reformist rather than revolutionary. Their Catholicism and the comparatively early spread of education in the Philippines should have facilitated co-operation and mutual understanding with the Spaniards. But the Spanish colonial régime was backward; corruption and economic stagnation went hand in hand with an exaggerated and almost morbid concern for prestige; every suggestion of reform was rejected and every sign of dissatisfaction was violently suppressed. Execution and banishment were the answers to what

was as yet but a legally conducted campaign for reform and the abolition of abuses. The rather conservative *Liga Filipina*, organized in 1891 with a membership of intellectuals and people of good family, achieved no results. Even kind-hearted and literary Dr. José Rizal was shot after a farcical trial.

The sequel showed a pattern that was to become familiar in many colonies. A popular and mainly secret organization grew up behind the moderates, who remained convinced that armed rebellion would be premature. A different type of leader, ruthless and militant, like Emilio Aguinaldo, or fanatical and full of half-digested socialist theories, like Bonifacio, came to the forefront. Their following in this society, the *Katipunan*, consisted of young, hot-headed semi-intellectuals and artisans and the downtrodden Tagalog of Central Luzon. The obvious decrepitude of Spain and the state of peonage in which the tenants were living on the large holdings, both of the Church and of individual Spanish and Filipino landowners, combined to remove the restraining influence of colonial power, of which they no longer stood in awe and which they could neither trust nor admire. A weird romanticism, composed of local superstitions, revolutionary literature, Masonic rites, and a kind of Wild West dramatization, pervaded their pamphlets and orders and the preparation of their rebellion. A scramble for titles and ranks characterized their eager and breathless ascent of the strongholds of authority; a fondness for elaborate paper plans and constitutions expressed their burning desire to emerge from the troubled waters of revolt as a fully equipped, adult, and modern nation.

But behind all these sometimes rather childish alarms and excursions was a nucleus of ardent patriotism, still in search of a nationality, of a fatherland; still largely fed by disgust of foreign rule and race hatred; yet strong enough to hazard an attack on forces which, however weakened Spain might be, were infinitely better armed and disciplined; en-

during enough to continue the struggle when it had definitely become hopeless.

The Spanish reaction also was characteristic of many similar reactions in corresponding cases. As the temper and the insistence of the nationalists rose, their teachers, instead of recognizing the effect of their lessons, began to disparage their pupils in an ever more contemptuous way. They called them first "freemasons" and "traitors," then *chongos* (monkeys). And when they realized the necessity of certain reforms, they turned to the peaceable, law-abiding common man as the objective of their new-born care and recommended his separation "from modern currents and principles which, if they are the essential life of European societies, are the virus that is inoculated in colonies for the growth of ideas of separatism and ambition from which revolutions originate."

The revolt of 1896 was indeed premature and abortive, and as the first exaltation subsided the leaders escaped into completely unrealistic fantasies until they sold out in December, 1897, to Governor-General Primo de Rivera for a considerable payment. But the spirit of nationalism did not die; both the moderates and the fanatics continued to prepare for a more favourable occasion and the feeling of personal and national pride spread farther among the people.

That occasion came with unexpected rapidity. In April, 1898, war broke out between the United States and Spain; on the first of May the Spanish fleet was destroyed in Manila Bay; on the thirteenth of August Manila was surrendered to an American force. Aguinaldo was brought back from his exile in Hong Kong and again organized a revolt, which, this time, succeeded in practically ousting the demoralized Spaniards from all the islands.

Again the quick spreading of the insurrection, communications being what they were at the time, indicated a much wider appeal of this early and still crude nationalism than was currently supposed to be possible. Again the moderates

in Manila were doubtful about the capacity of their compatriots to establish a full-fledged national government, and when the United States evinced quite different ideas about the future of colonial peoples than were held by the Spaniards, an increasing number of them became inclined to accept American tutelage as a transitional phase towards independence. But again the fanatics, among whom Mabini was now the leading *politico*, wanted to go the whole way at once and denied the right of Washington to assume a sovereignty that belonged naturally, if not legitimately, to the Filipino people. The Philippine Republic was proclaimed and an armed struggle began, of which the last convulsions were not to die out until 1905.

We shall see history in Southeast Asia repeat these occurrences, though with significant variations. Some features of this revolution should therefore claim our attention.

Much of the constitution of the republic was nothing but the fantasy of its designers. But a few traits are typical. First, the predilection for a presidential and even dictatorial conception of government, explainable by the need of centralized leadership in a revolutionary period and in a country which was not yet a nation and in which people were inclined to attach their cause and their loyalty to an individual or a name—in this case to Aguinaldo. Second, the emphasis on local government in Aguinaldo's proclamation of June 18, 1898, calling for the creation in each township of "a solid and robust organization, the strongest bulwark of public security and the sole means of securing that union and discipline, which are indispensable for the establishment of the republic." And third, the urge to become a modern, civilized nation like "our neighbour, Japan, which in the short space of twenty years has reached a point where she has no reason to envy any one, her strength and ascendancy being shown in the last war with China." ¹

¹ Aguinaldo's proclamation of May 24, 1898.

More interesting, however, than this preliminary paper work was the republic in practice. The attack upon the crumbling Spanish power soon became general; the end of the year found the republicans in control throughout the islands, with few exceptions. It was accompanied by the usual sideswipes against the Chinese, hated for their economic predominance and their habit of changing their allegiance as the interests of business required. In many places there was, at first, some hesitation, and several educated local conservatives frankly doubted the possibility of assuming full responsibility while handicapped by the lack of experienced administrators and the confused condition of the country. But as the victorious Americans waited patiently for the ratification of the peace treaty with Spain and kept hoping for a peaceful arrangement, the radicals and the ambitious youngsters completely dominated the movement; their success soon converted the local men of importance and the masses.

When the fighting broke out between the Americans and the republic, in February, 1899, it was soon evident that militarily the followers of Aguinaldo had no chance. The moderate section of the nationalists in the capital began to urge the cessation of hostilities as early as May and June, when they were convinced of the benevolent intentions of the United States. And yet the fighting continued. The revolutionaries and the greatly swollen gangs of outlaws resorted to guerilla tactics. The Filipino generals and governors did not want to abandon their newly acquired authority; they fed their morale on the most fantastic rumours of American defeats and foreign interference. The marauding soldiers of the republic viewed with disgust the return to a normal and humdrum existence. Civil government had been restored for years before gangs like those of *Papa Isio* in Negros could be destroyed.

It is impossible to ascribe this fact exclusively to the insane

ambition of a few hundred political leaders and the terrorism of professional bandits. The ideal of nationalism had penetrated many hearts, and only the sophisticated few realized the difficulties of self-government in the modern world. In the simple minds of the rebels a plan was as good as an organization, intentions were as effective as deeds, and one had but to imagine himself a leader of government or business to be one. It took a lot of hard knocks and misery to expose and to crush these illusions.

The United States government did everything in its power to convince the Filipinos of its firm resolve to govern the islands solely for the benefit of their inhabitants; to grant them as great a say in their own affairs as was deemed compatible with the insurance of individual liberty and governmental efficiency; to respect their customs and their sensitiveness: yet it could not eradicate their suspicion. Of course their experience with the Spaniards made it almost impossible for them to believe that a colonial power could have any but self-seeking intentions. The political opposition in the United States roundly accused the government of such intentions, and certain supporters of the government openly sang the praises of imperialism and the white man's burden. Only patience and a persevering execution of the new policy could expel these doubts and convert suspicion into trust.

From the very first the United States government took the attitude that America had come to the Philippines not to exploit them, but to assist the people and to train them for self-government. In his instructions to the Philippine Commission, which was to introduce civil government in the islands under the chairmanship of William H. Taft, President McKinley wrote that "the commission should bear in mind that the government which they are establishing is designed not for our satisfaction, or for the expression of our theoretical views, but for the happiness, peace, and prosperity of the people of the Philippine Islands, and the measures adopted should be made

to conform to their customs, their habits, and even their prejudices, to the fullest extent consistent with the accomplishment of the indispensable requisites of just and effective government." He furthermore enjoined them to give preference to natives in appointments to civil office, provided that natives could be found who were competent and willing to perform the duties. The document was in many ways admirable and undoubtedly of a very advanced character for the time when it was written.

As early as 1916 this was followed by the first fully elaborated constitution of the Philippines, the Jones Law, which said in its preamble: "Whereas it is, as it has always been, the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize their independence as soon as a stable government can be established therein. . . ." Finally the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 raised the Philippines to the status of a self-governing commonwealth under American suzerainty and promised complete independence after a period of ten years, a promise which was fulfilled by the transfer of sovereignty on July 4, 1946. Why, then, has there remained throughout this history of almost continuous emancipation a certain dissatisfaction and antagonism? Why is there a residuum of uncertainty, even now, as to whether the prediction in McKinley's instructions—that all the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands might "come to look back with gratitude to the day when God gave victory to American arms at Manila and set their land under the sovereignty and the protection of the people of the United States"—has fully come true?

Whatever the purpose might be, the United States could not escape the hallmark of colonial rule, of being responsible for the fate of another and different people from a distance of ten thousand miles. It was an unimpeachable principle that Philippine institutions should be shaped in conformity with the desires and prejudices of the Filipinos, but nevertheless a

frequent application of the American point of view could not be avoided. The structure of government, the system of elections, the political organizations all came to bear a resemblance to American models. Even the language of the mother country was imposed, displacing the rather popular Spanish, because "it is especially important to the prosperity of the islands that a common medium of communication may be established, and it is obviously desirable that this medium should be the English language." There could be no certainty that such decisions would fit in with the needs of a future Filipino nation, but then matters had to be decided to get the work going. The strong preference of Americans for their own way of life, combined with their lack of experience in the Orient and the hybrid character of Filipino civilization, caused an emphasis on American models and standards without sufficient observance of their fitness for the country and the people.

It should not be imagined that such imitation was wholly coercive, nor that the adoption of American institutions came about without considerable and even fundamental changes. But colonial status meant for the Philippines, as for every colony, a deterioration of initiative and the establishment of public life in forms that were not always freely chosen. As these traits were engraved over a deeply etched Spanish pattern, little was left of the original civilization of the islands. Anyone who has an opportunity to compare the situation in the Philippines with that in Indonesia or Burma must be struck by the lack of cultural depth, the quaintly chequered character of a civilization that has been twice deliberately and thoroughly remodelled by alien architects.

American rule brought undeniable advantages, of both a material and a spiritual nature. In its administration, its dispensation of justice, its public works, its sanitary measures, and its economic expansion, the country obtained the apparatus of a modern state. The system of education made its peo-

ple the most literate of the Orient. Those were great achievements, the work of a succession of governors among whom Taft, Cameron Forbes, and Wood stood out. But the rapid introduction of all these good things caused an uncomfortable disparity between outward form and content. There was not time enough for assimilation, nor sufficient opportunity for learning by making mistakes. As the people were hurried along towards their desired independence, an ever more complicated machinery seemed to elude their grasp. So they had to play a game of make-believe; to pretend abilities and to cover up failures for fear their exposition would postpone independence indefinitely.

The first crisis came after the victory of the Democrats in the United States had brought a sudden acceleration of the emancipating process, with Governor-General Harrison in office for eight years (1913-21). He almost completely let go the reins. This period coincided with World War I and the postwar boom; a number of measures taken by the now virtually independent Filipino majority in government to take the instruments of economic development out of private and mostly foreign hands² resulted in a welter of confusion and corruption that threatened to lead to bankruptcy. The Republican administration in Washington, coming into power in 1921, partially reversed this policy and appointed General Leonard Wood as Harrison's successor with instructions to put the accent on housecleaning and efficiency. Independence, which had seemed within reach, receded, and the more deeply the Filipinos realized their shortcomings, the more bitter was their resentment that Washington had played fast and loose with them. Wood had to expose incompetence, though ever so gently, and so provided arguments for the conservatives at home, who did not see Philippine independence as a practical proposition. Vitriolic books like Katherine

² The Philippine National Bank, the National Development Company, and the National Coal Company.

Mayo's *The Isles of Fear* increased the tension and the humiliation of the Filipino leaders.

There followed a period of stress, coinciding with the first Communist moves in China and the Netherlands Indies. Independence became an issue which absorbed almost the whole energy of those who should have been industriously building their nation, and gave "politics" an unhealthy precedence over every other public duty.³ At the same time another aspect of the problem of colonial emancipation began to draw increasing attention.

It is an indisputable fact that the grant of independence to Asiatic colonies must bring hardship, sometimes even cruel hardship, to the common man in those countries. The security and prosperity brought by Western government and by an organization conforming to Western standards are, in a way, artificial. They look beautiful and impressive and they are undoubtedly appreciated by the beneficiaries, but they are hothouse plants as long as they lack deep roots in the native community itself and can thrive only under the protection of foreigners. But it was difficult for the colonial white to appreciate this and to see why that protection should be withdrawn when a number of conceited nationalists started throwing stones through the panes. Colonial civil servants felt that their Asiatic colleagues, if left to themselves, would be less efficient and that the common people would suffer. They could even point to instances where those common people themselves agreed with this point of view.

These dangers of regression were yet graver for the "backward" tribes that live in the interior of nearly all these South-east Asiatic countries. They had always been at war with their more civilized brethren in the plains and had often been unmercifully fleeced by them. As nationalism restricted the

³ This was the period when Mr. Manuel L. Quezon said that he preferred a government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by Americans.

untrammelled powers of colonial governments, these people often became the pet subjects of these governments and reciprocally showed a marked reluctance to have themselves committed to the care of nationalist authorities. To deliver them to an inexperienced and careless Asiatic rule seemed a breach of trust; to prepare them by education for their own share in self-government was a long and difficult process and was often felt as an arbitrary perversion of their arcadian and contented way of life.

We find this mood in the instructions of President McKinley, where they prescribe that "in dealing with the uncivilized tribes of the islands the commission should adopt the same course followed by Congress in permitting the tribes of our North American Indians to maintain their tribal organization and government, and under which many of those tribes are now living in peace and contentment, surrounded by a civilization to which they are unable or unwilling to conform." A civil servant like Dean C. Worcester, who as Secretary of the Interior in the Philippines (1901-13) earned the honorary epithet of "Non-Christian Tribes Worcester" for his splendid work among the pagan hill people of Luzon, could not think of an abdication of power, which would bring them under the authority of their hereditary foes, the Christian Filipinos. And as late as 1932 Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley stated at a congressional hearing on Philippine independence in Washington that under existing conditions the United States could not, "in fairness and justice, take action which would turn over to the unsupervised control of an independent Filipino government, dominated by Christian Filipinos, the non-Christian elements" of the population. For this reason, among others, he refused to commit himself as to a possible date for granting independence.

So notwithstanding the fact that the United States consistently aimed at the ultimate withdrawal of its sovereignty from the Philippines—and it was the only country stating

such an aim before World War II—its practical policy was full of vacillations. Periods of laxity were followed by periods of stern correction; changes of government at Washington meant changes of prospects for the Filipinos; objections from business groups against the tariff privileges accorded to the Philippines might advance the date of independence (when those privileges would cease) as much as the accession to power of a more liberal administration.

As long as a colonial power maintains ultimate responsibility for the colony and no date is set for its transfer, these changes and uncertainties resulting from the internal politics of the mother country and their interplay with the opinions of its representatives in the colony seem unavoidable. And as long as the final preparation for independence within a determined period has not begun, it seems equally unavoidable that in the course of day-to-day administration measures are taken on short-term considerations which in a later stage may prove detrimental to a national development of the country. In this respect, too, Philippine history offers some striking examples.

The general political organization was based without much thought or discussion on the assumption that adult suffrage and a parliamentary system, being good for Western democracies, should be equally advantageous for the Philippines. There was, perhaps, some reason to make the assumption in this case, because the Spanish regime had left little of the ancient institutions. The original structure of autonomous villages and minor chieftainships had been replaced by an economic oligarchy of land-owning or moneyed families, balanced in part by the religious and paternalistic authority of the friars. The eclipse of Spanish sovereignty put an end to the secular power of the religious orders, but the American system of elective office continued the petty despotism of these *caciques*, who managed the elections and from whose class the professional civil servants were recruited. It could be over-

thrown only by educating the electorate. But the *caciques* were well entrenched and the imitation of the American party system gave the party in power, the *Nacionalistas*, a patronage that made it almost impossible to break its rule. As the number of impartial American officers diminished, the oppressed tenants and farmers found less and less opportunity to vent their grievances and to obtain redress of their wrongs.

At the same time the gradual formation of a Filipino central authority threatened to unleash a violent struggle for power between the leading personalities—a conflict that was only temporarily driven underground by the need for a common effort to obtain independence or for a common front against rebellious underdogs like the *Sakdalistas* in 1935.

A second problem of the growing nation that was not solved was the problem of a common language. Apart from a considerable number of less important languages and dialects, there were some seven or eight native tongues, none of which were spoken by a majority or even a large minority of the people. Spanish had been fairly widely taught before the accession of the United States and seems to have been rather well adapted to the Filipino disposition. It was replaced by English after 1898, but obviously this language could never supersede the native languages of Malay origin. Its purity tended to deteriorate as the number of American teachers dwindled, and it must inevitably become a sort of pidgin if the endeavour to maintain it as the vehicle of common speech is to be continued. But the great and persevering effort to convert one of the local languages, like Tagalog, into a full-grown, modern medium of expression was never made during the colonial period. Only after independence was obtained did the government attack this vital problem.

Thirdly, the American connection profoundly affected the economic and financial situation. Production in the Philippines had remained rather archaic in the Spanish era. The period of trouble and revolt following the Spanish-American

War had still further impaired their economy and shaken their finance. It can be easily understood that in this emergency people turned to the lucrative possibilities of the American market and pressed for a reduction or abolition of the high United States tariff on imports from the Philippines. In 1909-13 free trade between the two countries was granted, notwithstanding serious objections on the part of American sugar and tobacco interests. It brought great relief, and when at a later stage duties were again levied on certain Philippine products, the amounts were returned to the Philippine government. As a result of these privileges trade was almost wholly directed towards the United States, and an economic dependence was established, which was further increased by the fact that the costs of defence of the islands were mainly borne by the United States budget. When the ten-year period of preparation for independence began in 1936, the Commonwealth government was faced by a terrific struggle for economic and financial self-sufficiency, which the progressive loss of these privileges would entail.

In many other ways, however, the American regime furthered the growth of the Filipino nation. American regard for local government helped to devise practical methods for combining latitude of local autonomy with constructive supervision. The principle of equal citizenship facilitated the merger of the Spanish and Chinese mestizos with the purely Indonesian Filipinos. The application of the United States immigration laws prevented the entrance of large numbers of Chinese labourers, which has made the problem of citizenship in Malaya almost insoluble. But the greatest achievement was the consolidation of nationalism and the collective experience of national government, even if that experience remained as yet limited to a rather oligarchical upper class.

So World War II found the Philippines preparing themselves for full nationhood within seven years. Many people in other colonial countries—and not a few in the United

States—considered the experiment premature and gravely doubted its success. Others saw it as a brilliant example of statesmanship and deplored the hesitation of the European colonial powers in following it. It is true that the Philippines, though not a democracy in our sense by far, were more firmly committed to a development towards such democracy than any other Asiatic nation. Their national spirit made them preponderantly anti-totalitarian when totalitarianism threatened their independence. They naturally sought the support of the United States and the Western democracies. But their internal structure was weak and lacking in originality, and yet the impatience with patronizing interference which is the heritage of every colonial people made it difficult to see how Western democracy would be able to come effectively to their assistance in combatting those difficulties, without hurting the susceptibility and arousing the suspicion of so young a nation.

We must now turn to the recent history of another colonial empire, inhabited by people of the same race as the Philippines: the Netherlands Indies, now renamed Indonesia.

At the turn of the century there was as yet hardly any base for an Indonesian nationalism. Important parts of the Netherlands Indies had only just been brought under the direct control of the government at Batavia. In Sumatra, Borneo, and the eastern archipelago several rajahships and tribes only very vaguely recognized Dutch sovereignty, and the idea that all those different peoples might one day constitute a united nation only lived in the fantasies of a few educated Indonesians and of one or two far-sighted Dutchmen. One of them was the man who, more than anybody else, contributed to the consolidation of Dutch authority over the whole of the Netherlands Indies and who, certainly at that time, was regarded as the embodiment of militant imperialism: General

J. B. van Heutsz, Governor-General from 1904 till 1909. He recognized that the era of exploitation was past and that his very work of unification and pacification would and should lead to "the full development of national consciousness" in Indonesia.

But in 1901 the beginnings of this process were not visible, although the first stirrings of desire for self-government could be discerned among the better-educated Indonesians in Java. The Netherlands government had only just passed the stage where economic expansion and efficiency of the public services were the only ideals of colonial rule. In 1901 young Queen Wilhelmina declared, at the opening of the session of the States General, that "the Netherlands, being a Christian nation, have the duty to permeate their policy with the conviction that they have a moral obligation towards the people of these territories (the Netherlands Indies)." This was a new accent, but for the Dutchmen in the Indies the interests of the colony had already been paramount for many years in a very special way.

The Netherlands Indies differed from other Asiatic colonies in that, although they were what the French call a *colonie d'encadrement*, they had the appeal of a colony of settlement for many of the Dutch who came to work there. These men and women identified themselves much more with the country and its people than the British ever did in India or Malaya, the French in Indo-China or the Americans in the Philippines. Until World War I a term of service in the Netherlands Indies meant ten years; with their first home leave so far distant the young civil officers took root very quickly and soon found a second fatherland in this attractive country. They had no strong racial feelings and often married Indonesian or Eurasian women without going native. Eurasians were accepted as Netherlandsers and often held the highest posts. The majority of Dutch children born in the Indies returned there after finishing their studies in Holland; many

families had lived there for several generations. Most of the Dutch spoke one or more native languages.

As a result of these conditions the administration was often inclined to think and act as if the Netherlands Indies were a separate country, which they were indeed in many respects. After the extinction of the Culture System and the yearly tribute, trade with the Netherlands became relatively less important until it fell to a level of about 15 to 20 per cent of the total imports and exports. The Indies had their own legislation, their own treasury and public debt, their own monetary system, their own tariff, and their own army. No preferential rights for Dutch immigrants or Dutch goods remained. Of course the government at The Hague possessed supreme authority, but 90 per cent of the governmental business never reached The Hague.

As, moreover, the system of government was largely a system of indirect rule, Indonesian customs and civilization were generally well preserved. The protection of the village and the small, independent farmer was one of its principles; customary law was generally maintained, and since 1870 no non-Indonesian has been allowed to acquire a title on Indonesian-owned land; the absence of large estates worked by tenant farmers was a result of this policy. The native civil service and the organization of the native states were objects of constant care; the supervision of the elections of village headmen laid its stress on character and capability. In the course of this century the administration was thoroughly modernized; land registration, customs, sanitary services, the bureaus of agriculture, veterinary service, fisheries, and forestry conformed to Western standards and used all the resources of technology and research.

The pride these administrators took in "their" government and a certain tendency to protect the inhabitants against private exploitation led to an extensive public ownership of means of production and communication, and to meticulously

controlled social regulations. The postal service, all telegraph, telephone, and radio communications, and most of the railroads were government property, as were also the harbours, the hydroelectric power stations, most of the coal and tin mines, a considerable share in the oil production, the teak woods and other forests, and quite a number of rubber, tea, cinchona, and other estates. Well-metalled roads and large irrigation projects were built and maintained by public services. Sea and air transport were provided by private companies under government contract and supervision. The circulation bank, although a private company, operated under a strict government charter. A government bank dispensed agricultural and other small credits through more than fifty agencies. A labour inspection service watched over conditions in estate agriculture, industry, and mines; careful research determined the standards of nutrition and health among the common people.

In this way a foundation was constructed on which the community could build with confidence. Its efficiency and adaptability were a joy and a pride to those who handled it. The effects of the world depression of 1930, of the outbreak of World War II, of the German invasion of the Netherlands in 1940—all were counteracted without outside assistance and without confusion or mishaps. The country could borrow in its own name at 3 to 3½ per cent; its statistics were never challenged; its commitments were credited without questioning.

As an international unit it lacked only a foreign service; and even in this field it had begun to send its own trade commissioners to the trade capitals of the world. The body of an Indonesian state was there; the period between May, 1940, when the Netherlands was occupied by the Germans and cut off, and March, 1942, when Japan occupied the Indies, provided ample proof of its self-sustaining capacity. But how about the spirit?

Here again the vital interest taken by many Dutchmen in the affairs and the destiny of the Netherlands Indies had done much to preserve and develop the original civilization. Of course there were periods of indifference and neglect, but by and large the arts, the languages, the religions, and the customary law of Indonesia were well explored and cultivated by able scientists, by government agencies, and by private societies. Malay was gradually becoming the common medium for all the islands, being spoken and understood by almost every person of a certain education or experience. It was the official language, together with Dutch. Several ancient arts not only had been preserved, but had shown a vigorous and promising revival. The native crafts never completely disappeared, and in later years resumption of production with modern appliances was successfully encouraged. The cultivation of newly introduced agricultural products like sugar cane, coffee, rubber, and tea and the expansion of the indigenous export production of pepper, kapok, and copra were undertaken by the Indonesian farmers with increasing skill and success. Religious life and thought, though hardly ever very deep or very fanatical, obtained impulses from many directions and showed an increasing tendency to shake off the fetters of hidebound tradition. Customary law was applicable to a great variety of legal disputes, and out of it was being developed a carefully composed jurisprudence.

In the field of modern education, progress was in certain respects much less satisfactory. The great attention given to administrative and technical efficiency created a demand for vocational training; in this field the number and the quality of the educational institutions was above average. But general education lagged behind, particularly in the higher grades. The schooling provided in high schools and in the university was up to Western standards, but the number of schools remained too restricted. Even the most elementary

primary education did not offer sufficient room for the many millions of children of school age.

For the budding nationalist it was particularly galling that every white child could get a full primary schooling of seven grades and that for a long time the textbooks, even in the vernacular schools, were written from a typically colonial point of view. The Indonesian student had to reach the University by a long, arduous, and expensive route, and only the incredible sacrifices his parents were willing to make to procure a university degree for him made it possible for him to reach it at all.

The system produced excellent craftsmen, capable but subordinate civil servants, and a limited number of highly educated lawyers, physicians, and engineers, but it put a premium on diplomas, even on primary school certificates, and it was inadequate to combat illiteracy. An excuse for its deficiency and for the slow rate of improvement was the lack of enthusiasm among the parents in the rural districts for sending their children to school, but little inducement was offered to change that attitude. The original native education, which had never flourished, became almost extinct until the national movement started to found its own schools outside government control and without subsidies from public funds. Only a few of these schools made a real contribution to the education of the people.

The gravest discrepancies between desire and fulfilment, however, developed in the political and social fields. The pride mentioned above was mainly felt by the Dutch and Eurasian executives; as the Indonesians had only a minor share in the direction, they could not appreciate the results, however beneficial, as their own work. The number of Europeans grew rapidly during the first thirty years of this century; and if that growth brought expanding production, greater prosperity, and a rapid advance of modernization,

it made it more difficult for the rising generation of Indonesians to win through to the higher rungs of the ladder. It also caused an increasing segregation of the races, not because of any inherent racial feeling, but because the European community became sufficiently numerous to be more or less self-contained. This was the more deplorable because individual relations between the Dutch and the Indonesians proved to be, now as before, of an exceptionally friendly and intimate nature wherever such relations developed. The common love of the country and the absence of racial and religious intolerance made it easy for the two groups to understand each other, and this real contact was still further facilitated by the linguistic proficiency of both races. But the social necessity for such contact diminished, especially in the larger cities. The large influx of Dutch women, however desirable in itself, cut off another avenue of approach.

Political institutions grew slowly. This was partly the result of the vastness of the country and the variety of its inhabitants, which made nationalism in the beginning more a local and regional than a general Indonesian phenomenon. Much experimental work was done in local and regional councils, although it was typical of the situation that the first institutions of modern democracy came into existence as a result of pressure from the European community, dissatisfied with the exclusive rule of bureaucracy in local affairs. In 1903 the first of 56 municipal and district councils was created for the capital, Batavia. The membership was until many years later preponderantly Dutch; Indonesian and Chinese members were for a long time only appointed and generally belonged to the official class. But there never was anything like the "government bloc" of the Indian councils in Indonesia; every member, whether appointed and a civil servant or not, was free to speak and vote as he wanted.

This rather cautious approach to the problem of self-

government, combined with a generally prevalent system in which the chief executive in every local subdivision belonged to the civil service, had decided advantages. Political and administrative corruption, which generally accompany the rash introduction of mainly elected authorities in Asiatic countries, remained strikingly absent. The influence of public councils in local affairs offered practical and comprehensible training in public duty to many people who could not yet grasp the implications of nationwide government and responsibility. It was possible to try out different electoral systems, particularly a system of stepped elections, in which the simple citizens chose their local councils or their trustees and these, in their turn, chose the representative bodies for larger units or for the whole. Moreover the experimental nature of the policy, the avoidance of preconceived, hard and fast rules, made it possible to adapt the system to the peculiarities of the existing Indonesian territorial subdivisions, which again made it easier for the people to understand this new development. So modern, representative democracy was often grafted on the ancient, communal democracy of the village meeting. And through all these changes and developments a well-disciplined, trustworthy civil service remained the backbone of the body politic.

But this use and cultivation of autochthonous materials, however useful and necessary, could never be rapid and comprehensive enough to satisfy the rising spirit of nationalism; on the contrary, it created an impression of procrastination and could indeed easily be used by conservative elements as a pretext for postponement of reform in the centre. There was always the danger of too much insistence on local differences, which ran counter to the unifying forces of nationalism itself.

The Indonesian nationalist movement began to take shape in 1908. Its development presents a rather confused picture if viewed from near by and in detail, but it reveals a number

of significant traits when we make a more global survey.

The diversity of the Indonesian population gave birth to a great number of local parties and organizations, often further multiplied by purely local schisms and differences. Predominant in the general political evolution, however, were the Javanese, who had both the most ancient cultural background and—with the exception of small groups in the Moluccas—the longest colonial history. They are probably the most astute politicians, but apt to be rather mystical and irrational in their thinking and sentiment. As counterpoint in the final harmony of nationalism we must observe, however, the influence of several Central and North Sumatran groups, representing a younger and more vigorous, individualistic, and rational civilization. Strong and emotional undertones are provided by the Amboinese and the Minahassans from the Moluccas and northern Celebes, partly Melanesian in race and both preponderantly Christian and as such occupying a privileged position in the civil service and the army; whereas other groups were either more indifferent, like the commercial-minded South Sumatrans, easygoing, like the cheerful Sundanese of western Java, isolationist, like the poor and frugal Madurese, or still rather backward, like the Melanesians in Timor and the neighbouring islands or the Indonesians in the interior of Borneo and Central Celebes.

The nationalist movement spread rapidly and, after being restricted during the initial years to the educated minority, began to look for a more popular appeal and a more general scope with the organization of the Sarikat Islam (the Moslem Union) in 1911. This meant a radicalization, which soon found a new impulse in the political and economic disturbances caused by World War I. A sharp divergence in rate of rise between prices and wages in 1919–21 and a general economic confusion during the following years gave a first opportunity to communism. Here, too, the large land holdings, with their tenants and their antiquated seigniorial rights,

surviving in West Java from the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, were the centre of the disturbances that broke out in 1926-27.⁴

Meanwhile there had been created at the end of World War I, in 1918, a chamber of representatives with advisory powers for the whole of the Netherlands Indies, the *Volksraad* (people's council). Although its authority was but very gradually extended and although until 1927 it had a Dutch majority and a majority of appointed members, its influence was considerable from the beginning. Its sessions were public, and as its advice was soon made mandatory both for the budget and for all legislation, government business was thenceforward conducted in public. And if the Dutch were extremely cautious in introducing real representative government, they were at the same time very honest in discussing their measures and very liberal in conceding the right of free speech to every elected and appointed member. The *Volksraad* offered a timely safety valve to the rising temper of public and nationalist opinion. But this again was not enough in the long run.

The communist uprising of 1926-27, though limited in extent and violence and easily suppressed, had most unfortunate consequences. For the first time the Dutch community realized how delicate were the construction and the stability of their rule and how much of them rested on an ingenious system of checks and balances and on a general but vulnerable prosperity. There were in those years never more than 10,000 white troops in a country where the population was passing the 60 million mark. The scare resulting from this sudden mob violence, such as had not occurred for over fifty years, did not have the healthy effect of an increased constructive attention for the nationalist movement. On the contrary, many people—especially those who had little con-

⁴ These holdings were gradually bought back by the government and divided among the tenants.

tact with the Indonesian world—began to see in every nationalist a revolutionary. This reaction, coinciding with a run of conservative governments in the Netherlands, influenced the government, although it did not wholly dominate it. Internment of the more militant political leaders was resorted to on an unprecedented scale, many of them and of their followers in the ill-reputed Digul camp in New Guinea. The advances towards self-government became yet more reluctant, to be further retarded by the world depression of the thirties.

This was the more regrettable because in the nationalist movement an active middle-class section gained the upper hand after the communist outburst. The example of the National Congress in India made a deep impression; certain sections were driven to non-co-operation by the unsympathetic attitude of Batavia and The Hague.

Local organizations continued to multiply, however, as did a number of trade unions and societies with a more special purpose. There was a constant shifting of the centre of gravity, but also a constant urge to federate or to form coalitions for combined action. There was, of course, the appeal and rivalry of particularly strong or popular leaders. But in the main this diversity was a healthy symptom; it fostered discussion and political consciousness and obviated the supremacy and tyranny of one party, which might lead to totalitarianism. There were safeguards against dictatorial tendencies in the Indonesian character, which combines an aversion to individual responsibility with a liking for patient deliberation until a general agreement is reached.

The government had great difficulty in fighting off the depression. The Netherlands Indies nowhere enjoyed protection for their products. Rising tariffs in the United States, imperial preference under the Ottawa Agreement in the British Commonwealth and Empire, autarchy in Europe, India, and Japan tended to build ever higher walls against the

imports from the Indies. Their agrarian and mineral production suffered much more serious price reductions than the manufactured goods they needed in return. Reluctantly they joined the British in schemes for the regulation of the production of rubber, tea, and tin and instituted an autonomous regulation for cinchona. They saw their sugar production, the cheapest in the world, halved in spite of the Chadbourne Agreement for the orderly apportionment of the shrunken world market. Their interest undoubtedly lay in the direction of free trade, but free trade seemed a thing of the past. They were to be singled out, in a later period, for violent accusations of monopoly by the same groups that had constructed the partitionings and shut out many of their best and most important products. The slogan of free access to raw materials was directed against them at a time when there was a clear overproduction in every tropical commodity and when free access to markets was progressively denied them.

Yet by judicious measures of trade regulation they won through. At the same time they had to counteract a systematic dumping of cheap Japanese manufactures, which threatened to crowd out the imports from Europe and America. Although these cheap goods were a boon in themselves, Japan was an indifferent buyer of Netherlands Indies products; other and better customers had to be accommodated for a reasonable share in the imports in a world where bilateralism gained ground every year.

All these unavoidable manoeuvrings roused an understandable opposition among many groups. The Indonesians, of course, objected to the imposition of a quota system on cheap imports and to the restriction of native production for the world market. But there again it was typical of the general attitude of Dutch government in the Indies that it soon succeeded in turning these measures to the benefit of the country and its population. After two years of adaptation the native rubber producers became the most prosperous

section of the people; the quota system was modified to protect native crafts and became an incentive for new and important industries. Measures against Japanese and Chinese penetration, though instituted for commercial and economic reasons and to the advantage of Netherlands or Western trade and industry, were equally necessary for the social stability of the future Indonesian state.

The balance held. People felt that the government, with all its conservatism and lack of imagination, continued to act in their best interests. It still had their trust and even their admiration. There were many Dutch who were on their side in their nationalist aspirations and who began to voice the conviction that modern colonialism could justify itself only if it aimed at ultimate independence in a not too distant and vague future. Personal relations in many cases mitigated the rebuffs of official inaction. The existing dualism between Dutch and Indonesian spheres of government, of education, of economy and business, became less absolute as elements from one sphere penetrated the other. The share of native production in agricultural exports rose to 40 per cent. Certain Indonesians began to take part in the direction of public affairs. It seemed that, however slowly, the grassroots would move the elephant.

But the period of political stagnation dragged on too long. Even in the simple matter of the name of the country and of its citizens the government showed a dearth of psychological sensibility. The official name of the country, the Netherlands Indies, was unfit as a base for the denomination of its citizens; moreover, it smacked of colonialism, as did the term "native" or "Netherlands subject" for its inhabitants. And yet to change those names, to use "Indonesia" and "Indonesians," which came into political use about the time of World War I, seemed too great a step to be considered safe.

When World War II broke out, the nationalist movement evinced a growing impatience and disillusionment. As late

as 1938 a petition, accepted by the *Volksraad*, to convoke a round-table conference for the drafting of a ten-year plan, aiming at a transition towards dominion status, was rejected at The Hague. There was an increasing feeling of political tension that might lead to open conflict.

So the war found in the Netherlands Indies a framework and conditions of security and prosperity on which a flourishing nation might well be built. But at the same time it found a political backwardness and lack of experience among the Indonesians that could not be compensated by the devotion of many Dutchmen to the interests of the country. A shock could easily destroy the precarious political equilibrium, however strong the administrative and economic structure might be.

The war found Ceylon well on the way towards responsible government along the lines developed in the British Empire; prosperous and peaceful, but with the ever-present sense of living in the shadow of its colossal neighbour, India. It found Burma with its nationalism grafted on the memory of an idealized past; commercially dominated by the Indians, who had captured the rice trade, obtained considerable land holdings, and filled many government posts; not yet very well organized, with a damaged structure of indigenous, local authority, and with sharp cleavages between the Buddhist Burmese and the Christian and pagan Karens and other tribes of the hills. It found Malaya with a torpid Malay population, organized in debilitated sultanates and overwhelmed by immigrant Chinese and Indians, who had a majority in the country; with the most typical colonial community in Singapore, where the many-tentacled commerce of a free port drew most of the people away from politics. It found Thailand, precariously balancing its independence between imperialist forces; filled with antagonism towards its neighbours, par-

ticularly towards the French, who had, as early as 1907, annexed territories considered a part of Thailand; afraid of Chinese immigration and slowly falling under the spell of Japan. And it found French Indo-China divided between Tonkinese, Annamites, Cambodians, and Laos tribes in the hills; unruly and administered by materialist French officials with a mixture of neglect and keenness and an almost continuous disregard of the political and constitutional theories of Paris, and yet with that curious attraction which French civilization and French ease of intercourse with coloured people exerts on Orientals everywhere.

Upon this scene the new imperialists of Asia descended from the north.

BOOK TWO

War and Revolution

CHAPTER SIX

Invasion from the North

IT WILL be of interest, both for history and for the future, to analyze in what measure the militaristic imperialism of Japan was induced by the acts and the example of the West, and in what measure it was a natural outcome of the spirit of the Japanese people. The question cannot be answered here, if at all; the further reactions of those people to the crushing defeat they suffered for the first time in their national history may be extremely revealing.

Whatever the answer, there is no other example in human history of a nation which, less than a hundred years after its emergence from two and a half centuries of almost complete medieval and feudal seclusion, became one of the most aggressive and powerful military empires. Neither are there many examples of the self-delusion which made it take on half the world at one time to satisfy its greed.

It was as if all the national energy had been bottled up for centuries to explode in a raging expansionism once a crack was made in the containing walls. There can be no doubt that the humiliation of those first decades of contact with the Western world, with its high-handed demands of access and trade and extraterritorial privileges, gave a resentful temper to Japanese policy and provoked the Japanese to great efforts

for military organization; but it is also significant that they embarked on their first imperialist adventure in 1894 against another Asiatic country, China, as soon as they had freed themselves of foreign tutelage. This war was followed by a whole series of aggressions: against Russia in 1904, against Korea in 1910, participation in World War I against Germany in 1914, against Manchuria in 1931, against China for the second time in 1937, and finally against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and—in a way—France in 1941. Seen in this foreshortening of historical perspective it seems an almost unbelievable record. But we shall never understand the Japanese if we fail to imagine how a people of 80 million can be conditioned to obey blindly not only in action but also in belief; to fight literally to the last man one day and meekly to lay down its arms the next; not so much to lose as to lack all sense of proportion in its relations to the rest of the world.

The leaders of Japan became convinced at an early date that their country was destined to rule others, once it entered the family of nations. Its strategic situation was exceptionally favourable in more than one respect. The length of the biggest continent separated it from its rivals in Europe; the width of the largest ocean protected it against North America. It was the only great power that one would meet in travelling half the circumference of the earth. It was an island empire, and the history of Britain could teach it the defensive strength of a sheet of water. But it was not interested in defence; the feebly protected and rich domains to the west and the south invited attack and spoliation.

Not only strategically, but also economically, the position was advantageous. The rapidly growing industries of Japan found only white competitors with relatively high wages in the markets of the world. If a modern industry, in which the labourer finds his productivity multiplied by so many horse-power, grows up in a country with a low standard of living,

i.e. a low average of productivity, it creates an additional margin either for the workman, the employer, or the price of the manufactured goods. Japan soon gained enough experience and efficiency to outsell her Western rivals. She specialized in the cheap commodities needed by the poor millions in Asia. She gradually began to drive the better but much more expensive products of Europe and America from the colonial bazaars. And as the world depression of the 1930's seriously affected the purchasing capacity of those colonies and all the Western nations suffered from shrinking business and increasing unemployment, Japan was the only gainer and her industries worked to capacity.

This manifold ascendancy of an Asiatic nation could not fail to impress the dependent peoples of that continent. Here was a coloured people that challenged, and successfully challenged, the white race in its own preserves. Asiatic nationalism got a tremendous fillip out of the defeat, in 1905, of Russia, which was seen as a purely Western nation in those years. There was a particular affinity between the nationalism of Japan and that of the colonial areas. For as Japan expanded her empire or her exports she always found the white man in her way.

At the end of every victorious war Japan had to relinquish part of her spoils under Western pressure. Russia, Germany, the United States, forced her every time to mitigate territorial, economic, and political demands; in one case Russia herself took Port Arthur, which Japan had captured from China. The British might conclude a treaty with this Far Eastern sea power in the hope of maintaining an equilibrium in East Asia, but they looked down upon her in a patronizing way and were sometimes shocked by the tactics of their protégé. After World War I she was forced out of Shantung and eastern Siberia by the collective pressure of her white allies. The Japanese shared with other people of colour the disdain in which they were held by the whites, suffered under

exclusion from countries and clubs, found their products barred by quota and tariffs, and felt the ridicule with which less delicate Nordics considered their features and their posturings.

So Japan might in her own experience have found the spiritual impulse to become the leader of Asiatic emancipation. But the Japanese themselves felt little love or esteem for their co-Asiatics. The only strong and belligerent nation among disunited peoples and amorphous populations, the only military power among defenceless masses, the only "progressive" state among backward or inert races, they acted like wolves among herds of sheep. The sheep reacted accordingly. They might stand in awe of Japan when she taught the West a lesson, they might understand and share her racial reactions, but her domineering spirit filled them with apprehension and hostility. And as long as the West seemed wiser and stronger, they felt no urge to follow a banner of revolt if that banner was clasped in a Japanese fist.

And then the moment seemed to come when the insatiable appetite of Japan, whetted to madness by continuous obstructions and rebuffs, could be fully satisfied. World War I had offered little chance, but the white nations remained divided into hostile camps. They were not inclined, unless directly attacked, to risk an armed conflict in the Far East, as long as war might explode any day in Europe. Russia was only very slowly recovering from the wounds of defeat, revolution, and civil war and had been ostracized by the West. Whatever the future possibilities might be in the colonial areas of Southeast Asia, the riches and the vast labour reserves of China seemed already at the mercy of a determined neighbour.

The Japanese army with its impersonal nerve centre, the Imperial General Staff, subordinated to the Emperor but not to the cabinet, now began to stage that series of "incidents," *coups de théâtre*, blackmailing moves and political assassina-

tions that committed the Mikado's empire to ever wider imperialist aims.¹ It culminated in the synchronized thunderbolt attacks on Pearl Harbor, Manila, and Singapore.

It is not within the purpose of this book to describe the successive phases of the war with Japan or the military events that led to her unconditional surrender. Others have done that and will do it with much greater authority and expert knowledge. The effects of that war and of the Japanese occupation, however, determined the further developments in Southeast Asia.

Long before Pearl Harbor it was a well-established fact that Japan's expansionist ambitions had two objectives: control of the mainland of Asia to the west, and possession of the rich and populous islands to the south. They have been identified respectively with a continental army and an overseas navy policy, but in the Japanese mind they were not alternatives; *both* had to be achieved. It could only be a matter of timing and order of execution. The "new order" in eastern Asia, publicly announced in July, 1937, and later dubbed the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, left no doubt about these intentions. The first economic negotiations in the Netherlands Indies in 1934 were conducted by the Japanese in a way that barely veiled their conviction that they ought to supersede the Netherlands as the paramount power and their impatience at finding such a dense incomprehension of this necessity.

For the realization of her desires Japan counted first and last on her military power. There could be no doubt about this either. The political, economic, and commercial agencies of her expansionism were shot through with military and naval elements. Certain of her statesmen and diplomats and business leaders might fear the recklessness of the military and so create the impression that there was an important

¹ See Joseph W. Ballantine, "Mukden to Pearl Harbor," *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1949.

peace party which objected to Japanese imperialism, but in reality they were in full agreement with the imperialistic aims and differed only about the ways and means of their fulfilment.

The military point of view was not as absurdly conceived as it may seem to us now. Japan had an army of over 150 divisions and the third most powerful fleet of the world. Her possible opponents were almost continuously at each other's throats. She had built up a tactical position that seemed almost unassailable in those years when it was still extremely difficult to imagine amphibious attacks on an army or an army-group scale across the expanse of an ocean. What she saw arrayed against her was unimpressive, with two exceptions: the United States Navy and the Russian Army in eastern Siberia. If these could be neutralized or eliminated she could go ahead.

This concentration on military power as the means to effectuate her intentions did not make her neglect the machinery of political propaganda. But it was developed as an accessory to armed intervention, not as an autonomous weapon in the manner of world communism. Japan wanted supremacy and held her co-Asiatics in contempt for their lack of martial spirit and efficiency. A too aggressive nationalism of others would hinder her plans. Conquest had to come first; after that the slogan of "Asia for the Asiatics" could be useful in obtaining support from the conquered against the West. Conversely, the colonial peoples of Southeast Asia generally took a dim view of Pan-Asianism made in Japan. Experience in Formosa, Korea, Manchuria, and China taught them that liberation by Japan meant only a change of rulers, and not a change for the better. The Japanese could share and interpret the feelings of people who wanted to rid themselves of Western domination, but they could never understand the psychology of people who did not believe in the ordained leadership of Japan. A really independent national-

ism outside Japan bordered on "dangerous thoughts," and Japan had no other ideal to offer than that the Mikado should be a god on earth for everybody and the emperor of the world.

Therefore, in preparation for her career of conquest, spying and blackmail were much more important than the formation of fifth columns. There was, at times, a great to-do in some colonies about treacherous contacts with the Japanese, but the war did not reveal any very convincing results of such activities. One of the leading nationalists in Indonesia, the late Mohammed Husni Thamrin, who was often wrongly suspected of pro-Japanese leanings, once told me quite frankly that he would use Japanese propaganda for all it was worth to further his nationalist aims, but that he thought a Japanese attack was about the worst thing that could befall his country. Japan never attracted any important number of revolutionaries from Southeast Asia. If they looked towards outside sources of inspiration, they looked to the India of Gandhi and Nehru and the Indian National Congress, or to Moscow and the Comintern and their agents in China. There they felt treated as friends and equals; there they learned the techniques of non-co-operation and rebellion based on a common ideology or common ideals.

The defence that the Western world put up in Southeast Asia against the threatening aggression of Japan was pitifully weak behind a façade of supercilious appeasement. There was no co-ordination worth mentioning. The Washington treaties of 1922 purported to ensure the maintenance of peace and the *status quo* in the Pacific, but in reality they gave Japan the green light. The four great powers would build no new fortified places in the Pacific. The Treaty of Versailles expressly forbade the construction of military establishments in the mandated islands. But Japan was no longer a nation which scrupulously observed its international obligations in order to prove that it had become a full-grown state in inter-

national law. The naval and military agreements of 1922 gave her a good start to begin with, and then she improved upon it at leisure by ignoring them.

Although all this became obvious enough as time went on, it seems that the probability of a military southward aggression by the Japanese was never seriously considered by the West before World War II—at least not seriously enough to lead to concerted action. True, the British completed their great naval base at Singapore and the others fitfully modernized part of their colonial forces. General Douglas MacArthur began in 1936, as a Philippine marshal, to raise a national army for the Philippine Commonwealth. But all this was extremely inadequate compared with the might Japan could bring to bear. In the last resort the safety of Southeast Asia was seen in the conviction that “the Japanese did not want to fight the United States and the British Empire together,”² a conviction that was magnified in the isolationist section of American public opinion to the certainty that they would not dare to attack the United States, unless they were unbearably provoked by United States policy. The West continued to put its trust in the deterring qualities of its *potential* power.

When I visited Tokyo in 1936 my impression of the Japanese point of view, as aired at long-drawn and slightly alcoholic dinner parties by so-called “liberal” civilians and foreign-office people, was different. There seemed to be a tendency to underrate the fighting power and particularly the fighting stamina of the United States still more than the Americans underrated the aggressive intentions of Japan. The British Empire was, in their opinion, a spent force. The only enemy they really feared was Russia which had next door an army and an air force of which they had felt the combat qualities in numerous bloody “incidents” on the Manchurian border. Of course a military expedition to the south was not actually

² Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 316.

contemplated at that time, but the attack on China was brewing and a new war in Europe looked sufficiently probable and promising for the near future.

The confident and careless attitude of the white communities in Southeast Asia vis-à-vis the Japanese threat tended to communicate itself to the people at large. After all, the Europeans and Americans had ruled the world for ages and had always proved to be dominant and clever and farseeing; could there be any real danger as long as they were not disturbed and took no special measures? They seemed much more concerned about the political and economic influence of Japan than about her plans for conquest. Moreover, she was presently bogged down in an apparently interminable struggle against nationalist China and would not find her second wind before that adventure was liquidated. The rape of China was even viewed with a certain satisfaction because the Chinese are not popular in these countries; it seemed appropriate that Japan should exhaust her evil ambitions in that country.

And then the Western world renewed its suicidal quarrels. This time Japan did not side with the Allies. In 1914-18 there had been an opportunity to eliminate Germany from the Far East and to acquire some of its footholds there without any excessive war effort. This time there was no such inducement; Japan could bide her time. She was not particularly attracted by the Nazi or Fascist ideologies, apart from the fact that both were anti-communist and therefore anti-“dangerous thoughts” and anti-Russian. What the Japanese could admire was the military efficiency of the Third Reich, its concentration of power, and the bold and resolute use thereof. But it is a mistake to put Japan in the same ideological category with the Germany and Italy of 1939. Japan was ruled by military people, devoid of political fanaticism, and only filled with an unshakable belief in her imperial destiny. The *Führerprinzip* is alien to “that strange ant-society,” where

individual responsibility is shunned and where the divine emperor, in whose name everything happens, is rather a disembodied force than an acting personality. If we observe this last distinction, the Japan of 1941 is a much closer parallel to the German Reich of 1914 than to the dictatorship of Hitler.⁸

A chance to grab at the wealth of Southeast Asia presented itself at last. Obviously the opponents would be the British, the French, the Dutch, and the Americans. Those were the known quantities in the equation; whatever uncertainties might still exist in Washington concerning American participation in a Pacific war if Japan only attacked Malaya or the Netherlands Indies, Tokyo felt that it could take no chances. During the second round of economic negotiations in Batavia in 1940-41, when the Japanese tried—after the occupation of the Netherlands by Germany—to blackmail the “orphaned Netherlands Indies” into quiet surrender to the “new order” and to obtain a lion’s share in Indonesian oil, the fact that they were thwarted was always ascribed to the sinister influence of London *and* Washington.

One unknown factor remained: Russia. After joining the Axis by concluding a Tripartite Alliance with Germany and Italy in September, 1940, Foreign Minister Matsuoka went on a junket to Berlin and Moscow and brought back a non-aggression pact with the Soviets in March, 1941. But what would be its value when Japan was committed to an all-out struggle in the Pacific?

Then Hitler’s attack on Russia (June 22, 1941) changed everything. The Japanese seem to have had no previous knowledge of its approach; so mental adjustment—always a slow affair with the Nipponese—took a few weeks. They may have considered an attack on eastern Siberia that would

⁸ This was one of the reasons why it was plausible to expect Japan to surrender before she had been completely destroyed and occupied. Military men stop fighting when nothing more can be gained by continuing; a dictator and his party, who know that defeat means extinction, fight on till the bitter end.

once and for all eliminate the Russian nightmare and assist Germany in beating the Soviets to their knees. But it looked as if the Germans needed no assistance, and the glittering prizes in the Nanyo (southlands) looked too tantalizing. Moreover, a Russian war could deplete the stocks of oil to such an extent that a southward expedition would become unsustainable. And oil could only be obtained in the South.

So the war machine began to move in that direction. On July 26 Japanese troops "peacefully" occupied the southern half of French Indo-China; they had already entered the northern half in 1940 after the fall of France, the Vichy government acquiescing in both cases under German pressure. The United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands reacted promptly by freezing Japanese assets and practically stopping trade with that country. But even then they acted individually; there was no real combined preparation for resistance. Certain tentative staff talks achieved but very little; the United States government could undertake no commitments for fear of being accused of forcing the country into war. Even the co-ordination of the armed services in Singapore and Malaya with those in the Netherlands Indies remained sketchy, notwithstanding the endeavours of Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham ("Pop-off" to his critics), the British co-ordinator.

French Indo-China had become a Japanese springboard; Thailand was unreliable. The great world of islands, stretching from Luzon to Java for over 2,000 miles and approachable only by sea and air, would have offered a great chance for defence in depth, given an adequate combined and mobile air force and a sufficient number of bases.⁴ But the system of

⁴ In his report on the activities of the combined allied (ABDA = American-British-Dutch-Australian) command, instituted as the first of its kind—but too late and without preparation—on January 13, 1942, and dissolved on February 25, its Commander in Chief, General Sir Archibald Wavell, whose temper could hardly be optimistic after he had had to fight several hopeless campaigns, maintains that given the promised 1,000 combat aircraft and suf-

defence in each of these countries was static and bore no relation to that of the others. It was based on the fortified positions of Bataan—Corregidor (battered and starved into surrender after a heroic defence of nearly four months), Singapore (taken through its postern gate in a few days), and the Bandung plateau in West Java (forced to surrender in a week by the hopelessness of the position and the threat of an air bombardment on the populous city in its centre). The weak and scattered air and sea forces achieved a last-minute co-operation but were overwhelmed and annihilated after giving an excellent account of themselves.

The most shattering blow occurred thousands of miles away, at Pearl Harbor. It will probably always remain a moot point whether the main cause of this catastrophic surprise was that, although alerted, the command was not keyed up to the hourly expectation of a sudden attack in the well-established Japanese manner, or simply that the scouting facilities were insufficient to give timely warning. Whatever the answer, the temporary paralysis of the American navy gave the Japanese a freedom of movement that decided the loss of those vast territories. The Japanese navy and air force were free to blanket the whole area; at one moment they had five invasions moving at the same time, each under a protection stronger than the combined fleets and combat planes available to the Allies. The defence was so feeble and fragmentary that millions of people did not notice that they were defended at all.

In order to describe the effect of this typhoon of violence on Southeast Asia I can do no better than narrate its impact on the Netherlands Indies and try to estimate the damage it left in its track.

We were, perhaps, as a community more genuinely and

sufficient time to create favourable conditions for them to operate, all would have been well. I think that, but for the disaster of the Pacific fleet, he was right.

thoroughly convinced of the imminence of Japanese aggression than the others. Although we too underestimated Japanese military power—exerted at such a distance—and overrated our own hastily patched-up defences, we had no illusions that Japan would give up her plans, or that she would prefer another objective. During the long-drawn-out economic negotiations in 1940–41 we had witnessed at Batavia the crowd of assistants, military and otherwise, licking their chops at the riches that might—and in their opinion should—be theirs. There were indications of what was preparing in the reports we sometimes intercepted, in which minutely detailed information was sent to Japanese headquarters about the cloudiness above Malaya in different seasons or the incidence of malaria on various parts of the north coast—the invasion coast—of Java.⁵ But most significant was a weekly list of the whereabouts of Japanese merchant ships which I used to receive as Director of Economic Affairs; even before the freezing of Japanese assets they were being gradually withdrawn from the high seas, the rapid passenger steamers (auxiliary cruisers and transports) first. The list never showed an increase.

So we were quite prepared for the shock when it came. We could do little to strengthen our defences; armaments were almost unobtainable against the priorities of the European theatre and the rearming of the United States. We knew that the British could spare little; the mere arrival in Singapore of the new battleship *Prince of Wales* and the old battle cruiser *Repulse* gave us a thrill of renewed confidence. But our main trust was in the United States; and although it was sometimes doubted whether they would declare war *immediately* when the British or we should be attacked, practically everybody expected them to come to our assistance

⁵ The fact that similarly captured reports about Australia were of the most crude and elementary nature gave us the conviction that an invasion of that country was *not* planned.

in a very short time. Their armed forces were far away, but the threat of their power was tremendous and would compel the Japanese to keep a major part of their sea and air forces near home. We expected a bitter fight; but we saw Australia and the Netherlands Indies as the indispensable bases for a counterattack that would inevitably come. The production of important war materials like rubber, tin,⁶ and high-octane gasoline⁷ seemed an additional guarantee that we would not be left to face the enemy alone.

This attitude of confidence was not confined to the Dutch community. When we staved off the Japanese endeavour to gain economic mastery by persuasion and threat, there was general satisfaction; the government earned even the unaccustomed plaudits of extreme nationalists. We all felt sure of at least a possibility of successful resistance. We fostered a grave and childish optimism. And then the blow fell, shatteringly and benumbingly.

The attack was so much expected that when the Governor General rang me up at 4:30 A.M. on the eighth of December,⁸ I knew when I awoke that it meant war. It was the news about Pearl Harbor; that about Manila and Singapore came an hour later. But Pearl Harbor! My first reaction was that "the Japanese had made the decision" about peace or war for the United States⁹—a sense of relief that there would be no period of anxious waiting for such a decision. We joined our allies immediately.

For a long time nobody knew what had really happened to the Pacific Fleet, its base, and the air force at that base. But there was an ominous silence while radio Tokyo yelled the first of its many messages that the Pacific Fleet had ceased to exist—the only time it was a near-truth. Nobody believed

⁶ Stepped up to all-time records of 645,000 and 52,500 tons respectively in 1941.

⁷ Production started in April, 1940.

⁸ The seventh in Hawaii.

⁹ *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 431.

it, but what were the facts? The news nearer home was certainly bad and rapidly became worse.

The nearest invasion, at Kota Bahru in northern Malaya, seemed to proceed without much opposition. Then, on December 11, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* were sunk, the only two Allied capital ships in these waters. The Japanese army kept advancing relentlessly down the peninsula towards Singapore. We heard of their sly and rapid tactics, their continuous forward movement through jungle and swamps between, around, and behind our lines, until the word "infiltration" became an obsession in itself and sapped every offensive spirit on our side. Their planes swept our poor Brewster Buffaloes from the skies; the "Zero" easily matched the "infiltration tactics" in horrifying portent. MacArthur was besieged in Bataan, Manila was occupied, Hong Kong was invaded. And then a few of us were told what had happened at Pearl Harbor by Admiral Thomas C. Hart when he came down to Java on December 23 with the U.S. Asiatic Fleet.

We now understood the reasons for secrecy, although the Japanese must have had a fairly accurate idea about the results of their onslaught. And we knew—though we were loath to admit it—that the position was hopeless.

Yet we had to maintain a certain show of confidence. Evacuation of the Dutch in the expectation of a Japanese victory was never intended; now it was physically impossible. But a panic, a sapping of morale through a premature announcement of the inevitable, must be avoided. ABDA command was organized; we were all standing together and, God willing, perhaps we need not fall. But miracles do not happen when the chances are a hundred against nil.

Between January 5 and February 20 I travelled from Java to the United States and back on a last-chance trip to explore the possibilities of reinforcement. They did not exist. War production was only just beginning; the United States forces

badly needed equipment and replacement themselves; the situation in the European and North African theatres was equally critical. Out of a production of well below 2,000 airplanes for that month I wangled an extra 100 fighters (40 had been allotted), which never reached the Indies but became a welcome first instalment for Australia. Pearl Harbor was full of wreckage; the Pacific *felt* deserted (it always looks deserted) with its atolls between Oahu and Fiji just getting their first small garrisons; our Catalina had to find them by navigation alone because of an almost total radio silence.

On my way back I spent a couple of hours with some very dear friends near Los Angeles. Walking through an orange grove I felt, for a few moments, the relaxation of being completely out of the war. If I ever understood isolationism, it was then; at the same time I felt that Southeast Asia, the beautiful Indies, were doomed to fall under the Japanese terror. And that nobody could do anything about it.

But what was for me and for a few others an early realization of harsh and immutable facts, penetrated to the consciousness of others like a slow and treacherous disease, and came to the masses of Indonesians with the suddenness of a stroke. Fighting accompanied the advance of the Japanese only in those few places where resistance was possible. Elsewhere, for the great majority of people, the change hardly announced itself before it was there.

Reports from different districts in the interior or from outlying islands presented as a rule the following picture.

At first nothing unusual happened. Certain measures for coast watching or air-raid protection hardly made an impression. There had been so many exercises, nobody really took them very seriously. Then, very slowly and almost imperceptibly, a darker hue crept over the scene, like the ash-grey light of a partial eclipse. Some read the news and told it to their family and friends. The people in authority began to look grave; certain wild stories circulated. And one day an

individual, one of those shiftless, brutal, and discontented types that are found in every community, would let fall a remark that obedience to the district officer was no longer necessary. He would follow it up by an act of malignity or churlishness, and the man in authority, unless he was a very strong personality, would let it pass because the impending collapse had made him lose heart. And then, suddenly of an evening, the bad characters of the village would band together and start a little roughhouse and a little looting to demonstrate that the old order was gone and that the time had come for the bully boys to assert themselves. And then chaos would slowly and cautiously creep out of its dungeon until the Japanese came with their machine guns and bayonets to shoot and stab it back again.

I witnessed this process in its urban version during those last days in Bandung, where government headquarters had been established, before I left the city the night before the capitulation. Of course among the government people and the military the tension had been conscious and painful for a long while, but among the people the deterioration did not set in until near the end. It then proceeded by numerous little steps: a hotel servant who left for the comforting surroundings of his village; a shop that no longer filled orders; a cab that did not stop when hailed; a gradually emptying street. Until, all of a sudden, we realized that the social texture had frayed and that authority hung in rags. It was like some experience of the unreal until the looting began and the Japanese marched in.

One must understand what the government, the "Company," as it was still popularly called—mostly in its military aspect—meant, to appreciate the almost volcanic convulsion of this change. Gone overnight was a structure that had seemed solid and trustworthy and immovable as granite. Gone was the organization where even the violent nationalist used to take his complaints, his cares, and his needs. A psychia-

trist ¹⁰ has compared it to the sudden loss of the father image, a sudden emptiness where the fixed conception had been that directed the lives of the people.

What came in its stead, what explained part of this mystery in the following days, the subsequent fate of the Dutch and of the Indonesian civil servants—all these things modified this first impression in many ways. But the effect of the original shock remained; the conception of the colonial government and of government in general, as a kind of natural force, could not be easily restored. And the force of nationalism, the mother image of country, offered itself with much more insistence and persuasion in its stead, now that the king had been overthrown.

Of course there were shades and variations. In the Philippines a young national government maintained its hold although it had been weakened, a national army in embryo resisted the invader, and the known power of the United States gave hope of restoration. In French Indo-China the government still carried on but had abased itself before the conqueror. In Malaya the heterogeneous and materialistically minded community developed its impressions in a diversity of ways, strongly influenced by the opportunities of the black market and the fortunes of China. In Burma the comparatively recent ties of colonial rule that held the country together were violently ruptured. And in the Netherlands Indies the internment of practically all the white inhabitants accentuated their enduring presence and fortitude. Only Ceylon escaped, but narrowly enough to realize it.

On this variety of situations the Japanese worked their evil ways for three years and more.

¹⁰ Dr. P. M. van Wulfften Palthe.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Transient Empire

IT IS not difficult to gather from the Japanese activities in the conquered territories a general idea of their political conception of the Co-Prosperity Sphere. At the same time we can get an understanding of the course the war was to take according to their plans and imagination.

They had realized the great advantages that would derive from a close amalgamation of the industrious and hardy millions of China, the natural resources and easygoing, unambitious peoples of Southeast Asia, and the leadership and military power of Japan. It was a great conception; an Asiatic empire, stronger and more permanent than that of the Great Khan and equally well appointed on land and sea. Only, like every great conception that is made dependent on military conquest and subjugation, it was killed at the outset because it ignored the affection and trust on which enduring human alliances must be founded.

It is not probable that India or the Near East loomed large in that conception. The Mongol and the Malay or Indonesian have certain affinities which are wholly lacking between the Mongol and the Indian or the Mongol and the Arab.¹ What-

¹ The Malay, on the other hand, finds no difficulty in mingling with Indian or Arab communities, because behind his matter-of-factness there is a romantic strain of religious and mystic sentiment. And although intermarriage

ever dreams Japan has dreamt for a more distant future is immaterial; even in this first conception of the Co-Prosperity Sphere she more than overreached herself.

Within this shimmering Sphere she saw four different political constructions. Central of course would stand the Empire of the Rising Sun, from which the directing rays would emanate and in which the virile Japanese, armed to the teeth, would constitute the protecting force. China was a special case, too big to be absorbed. But its government was to be subservient to Japan; an alliance was to bind it to Japanese world policy and to grant Japan economic privileges and a special position of political and technical assistance for the development of Chinese resources. Then there were to be a number of downright puppet states after the pattern of Manchukuo, with more or less Japanese interference according to their importance for the combination. They were Burma, Thailand, Annam, and the Philippines. And lastly, the colonial empire of Japan was to be greatly extended by the addition of the richest plums of the area: Indonesia, Malaya, and British Borneo.

So we find that the Philippines and Burma were promised "independence" almost at once, in a speech of Prime Minister Hideki Tojo in the Diet on January 28, 1942—an independence that was ceremoniously granted in August–October, 1943. For Indonesia, Malaya, and British Borneo the prospects of freedom were less rosy. On his trip through the "southern provinces" during 1943 Tojo only promised them an increasing share in the government, but they were not invited to the Great East Asia Conference at Tokyo in November, and only when Japan saw that she was losing the war was future independence mentioned for Indonesia by Prime Minister Kuniaki Koiso ² (September 7, 1944); not until a few months

with Chinese is a frequent occurrence, the separatism and commercialism of certain Chinese groups repel him.

² General Koiso succeeded General Tojo in 1944, when the chances of victory or even of a stalemate had disappeared.

before the capitulation were the preparatory measures hurriedly taken (May, 1945). What would have happened in French Indo-China, had it been conquered like the other colonies, is uncertain; when the French were finally thrust aside and interned on March 9, 1945, it took the Japanese but a day to proclaim the "independent" empire of Viet Nam as the successor to the colonial government.

All these manoeuvres with independence, which became more spasmodic as the tide of war began to run against Japan, could hardly convince the more sensible nationalist leaders in Southeast Asia of the sincere and altruistic intentions of Tokyo. The Japanese armies continued to behave like conquerors and rulers; Japanese "advisers" installed with the newly made national governments did not trouble to discuss their advice, which was to be taken as a command. Yet it is not right to view all those Filipinos, Burmese, and Indonesians who accepted office in what were obviously puppet positions, as mere collaborators or vain and egotistic weaklings. The psychological reactions were much more complicated. Three additional circumstances deeply affected the point of view and the reactions of the Southeast Asiatics.

First of all there was the direct appreciation of the Japanese chances of victory. It seems that even from the beginning of the occupation many more people expected the Allies to win in the end than their rapid initial defeat would warrant us to suppose. There was, however, in this belief an element of uncertainty that could not be ignored. The great mass probably formed no definite opinion and simply awaited what would happen. Others again—and there were violent, even rabid, nationalists among them—considered the expulsion of the West by Japan as final. This view conformed to their desire and to their conception of nationalism itself. They had learnt to see it, from their understanding of history, as a concentration of power which enabled national states to subjugate less united peoples. Japan was, in their eyes, the last and

therefore the strongest offshoot of the species, the embodiment of superior ruthlessness; and as she was at the same time the foremost Asiatic nation, to accept her leadership and to follow her destiny must be the next step on the road to Asiatic liberty.

These different opinions caused a difference of attitude towards the new rulers, apart from the individual inclination to resist, to obey, or to temporize and dissimulate. But all this was further complicated by their reaction to the Japanese themselves.

Japan had engaged herself in an undertaking that far exceeded her administrative and economic capability. She had conquered an empire which it had taken the best brains of Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the United States to build and govern, and she had only second-rate people—and of those too few—to continue their work. The Japanese are incredibly diligent and laborious; they work in swarms, fourteen hours a day, at the tasks they set themselves. But they are neither brilliant nor imaginative. They have great difficulty in their contacts with other people, both in language and in comprehension. As a matter of policy they eliminated practically all the whites in these territories from public work and private business, the only exception being French Indo-China till March, 1945. They had to replace these whites by generally insufficiently trained and often hostile Filipinos, Burmese, Malays, and Indonesians, or by drawing on their own scanty resources of this type of manpower. Moreover, the military remained supreme in every field of activity, and they were still less versed in civil administration than their civilian underlings, the "economists."

So the Japanese were feared, particularly their equivalent of the Gestapo, the military police or Kempeitai. But they were not looked up to. The local civil servants soon became aware that Japanese supervision might be meddlesome and fussy, but that it was neither subtle nor smart enough to be

penetrating. They could do many things and leave many things undone of their own accord without being detected, as long as they paid homage to the Japanese bosses and made a show of delivering the goods. They often had to take the places of their former white chiefs, because there were no Japanese available, and they found that certain parts of the public service that did not interest the Japanese or escaped their notice were left entirely to their care.

For many of them, particularly in Indonesia, this brought an unaccustomed feeling of responsibility and self-importance and at the same time a relaxation of the continuous and expert scrutiny to which their work had been subjected in former days. Some grew in stature and maintained the administrative traditions in which they had been schooled; others made a good or tolerable effort; some went to seed and practised every form of graft and dishonesty that would escape the attention of the unwary newcomers. The younger ones, particularly, saw a way thrown open to quick promotion and early prominence that was wholly fascinating.

There was another thing. The Japanese might live in a world apart; he might require Moslems, Buddhists, Christians, and pagans to bow towards the palace of the divine Emperor (the "Tokyo ceremony") before bowing to his own God or gods; he might demand an obeisance for every soldier of the exalted Nippon forces; but he was an Asiatic. You could squat with him on a mat and carry on those leisurely conversations that demonstrate the absence of hustle in the Oriental character. His presence might cause apprehension, but it gave no feeling of bewilderment or of inferiority. The well-educated native of Southeast Asia, agile and as a rule soundly trained, could see no mental supermen in the general run of Japanese who professed to be his superiors or his equals; he often found them rather stupid and mediocre.

All this would have made life easier, in certain respects, for the educated classes as long as they submitted to the

bowings and scrapings, occasionally enforced by face-slapping and kicks, of Japanese military protocol. The mass of the people suffered a diminution of security and justice, but at first they suffered in silence. The incessant military measures for the prosecution of the war, however, which resulted in a combination of suspicion, cruelty, and exactions, soon became hard to bear. The economic situation, which had been exceptionally good and which remained tolerable during the first few months of occupation, deteriorated rapidly. The continuation of these vexations and disturbances for three years caused an amount of misery and confusion which it is even now difficult to estimate.

But the most profoundly upsetting activities were Japan's violent and systematic anti-Western propaganda and her depravation of the youth of Southeast Asia. In this field the Japanese proved themselves master craftsmen.

Again the clearest picture of the evil that was done may be obtained by a survey of the measures to which Indonesia—and particularly Java—was subjected. In that part of their new domain they were able to work undisturbed for over three years.

The propaganda machine accompanied and in a way even preceded the invasion. It had the immediate support of the astounding success of the Japanese forces and at the same time established from the beginning the idea that disobedience to Japanese orders would have the most dire consequences. Wherever law and order were in danger the machine gun, the bayonet, and the samurai sword were freely used. The tough and dirty little soldiers of the invasion troops showed—on the whole—a remarkable discipline, but they left no room for doubt that they were going to be the absolute rulers of the country.

Their first political measure was a prohibition of any discussion of the military—or naval—government (*Gunsei* and

Minsei) and its decrees. Next came the systematic humiliation of the Dutch, who were soon almost completely eliminated by internment. A few were temporarily retained for indispensable services, but they too were sent to the concentration camps as soon as the Japanese could replace them. Women and children followed; they were herded together in ever narrower "protected" areas behind barbed wire. At the same time everything possible was done to eradicate the Dutch influence. The representative councils, central, regional, and local, were abolished; the Dutch language was proscribed; the schools where that language was the medium of education—the intermediate and upper sections of the school system—were closed down.

The next attack was directed against those parts of the administration where the Dutch-Indonesian tradition of government was strongest. The Japanese notably suspected the Indonesian civil service of harbouring ideas and cultivating ideals that would screen the masses against their impositions and the direct impact of their anti-Western and pro-Japanese agitation. Its members had to be degraded, deprived of authority, or—better still—replaced by people without tradition and with a grievance against the Dutch. The direction of the police was taken from them and transferred to the dreaded *Kempeitai*. They had to submit to a treatment that came near to sacrilege in the age-old conception of hierarchy. They were made to dig the fields at popular demonstrations of intensified farming. They were made to wait outside among petitioners and criminals until some petty Japanese official had time for them. Their intercession for the simple people of their districts was ignored or ridiculed. And unless they became unquestioning executors of Japanese policy they were in constant danger of being denounced for subversive activities and tried for their lives. A number were killed, others dismissed. The majority tried to carry on as best they could; only

relatively few became out-and-out collaborators and prospered accordingly.

Not all of the Eurasians were interned; those who were not, however, were gradually ostracized for their pro-Dutch attitude and were reduced to pauperism. Many of them—as well as several Indonesians—endeavoured to alleviate the distress of the interned, even though they were themselves hard pressed and took great risks in smuggling food and money and information into the camps.

The Dutch and Eurasian prisoners of war and the internees were very harshly treated. Very many in the first category were transported to other parts of the co-prosperity paradise; thousands were worked and starved to death on the horrible railroad from Thailand to Burma. The civilian internees were put to work only in a limited number of cases, but they, too, suffered from the Japanese mania for reorganization and reshuffling. They were transported hither and thither, and each change of camp meant a further loss of their scanty belongings and more cramped quarters. Starvation became systematic as time went on. The treatment of women and children in this respect was, if possible, worse than that of the men. In the last phase many died or saw their health ruined for the rest of their lives.

If this general maltreatment caused the greatest number of casualties (some 20 to 25 per cent perished or became total invalids), the ruthless persecution of a morbidly suspicious police inflicted the cruelest wounds. The slightest irregularity would set the machinery of the Kempeitai in motion, and suspects would be tortured and intimidated until sufficient "evidence" was gathered to stage those weird trials for high treason and subversive activities with which the Japanese legalized their terrorism. The cells for questioning chilled the stoutest hearts. Beheadings were frequently the final outcome of these tragedies; imprisonment was judged almost

equal to acquittal, notwithstanding the gloomy prospect of months or years in a Japanese jail, because the prisoners were convinced that their confinement would come to an end with the defeat of Japan.

The Chinese were less persecuted. The majority kept themselves out of the limelight and quietly continued their commercial activities or hid their stocks for better times. They were the milch cows for the often-repeated drives for war funds and victory celebrations and bought their freedom with "voluntary" contributions. Certain groups professed loyalty to the Wang Ching-wei puppet government at Nanking. Others were actively anti-Japanese and suffered internment and worse. Many rendered invaluable assistance to internees, being expert smugglers and most inventive cooks.

It will probably always remain unknown how many Indonesians were killed, raped, or starved to death. Notwithstanding their Asiatic leadership, the Japanese used less circumstantial methods to eliminate their co-Asiatics than they saw fit to use in the persecution of the whites. Many were "shot while trying to escape"; others were just shot. One of the most wholesale killings occurred in West Borneo, where some 2,000 Chinese and upper-class Indonesians—including most of the native rulers and their families—were murdered at one time on the unproved supposition of an anti-Japanese plot. Most of the Indonesian soldiers were incorporated into the auxiliary corps of the Japanese army, but thousands of loyal Amboinese and Minahassans³ were interned or jailed. But perhaps the gravest atrocities happened to the labour slaves (*romushas*), who were shipped by the thousand to the Japanese forces in New Guinea and the northern Moluccas and were

³ Amboina is the central island of the southern Moluccas; the Minahassa is the most northern part of Celebes. The inhabitants of both are mainly Christians and are much attached to the Netherlands and the royal House of Orange.

left to die of hunger and neglect—sometimes after having been hamstrung—when these forces were driven into the jungle or isolated by the Allied offensive.

All this was intended to demonstrate that the old order had passed and to strike terror into the hearts and minds of those who might deplore the change or endeavour to resist Dai Nippon—to kill all hope and expectation of release from the new despotism. But the positive inculcation of the Japanese outlook and way of life and of hatred and contempt for the West was the worst evil. The terrorism had to prepare the spirit; it was followed up by an education of devilish ingenuity.

In their method of mass suggestion the Japanese concentrated on two groups in particular: on those who had a real or an imaginary grievance against the Dutch regime and on the young Indonesians. Their main theme, at first, was rather racial hatred than nationalism, because it was not their purpose to grant independence to Indonesia, but they could not avoid introducing nationalist elements in their teaching, and as the prospects of victory grew dim, national independence in close alliance with Japan, to be obtained through the “final victory” of the Imperial forces, became an essential part of their propaganda.

The political situation had many ups and downs. In the first period, when political activity was absolutely forbidden, the profits went to the Indonesian officials who had to take the places of the interned Dutch—there were as yet few Japanese civilians and experts—and to the profiteers, the unprincipled adventurers, who sometimes outdid the Nipponese. Nationalist leaders of more substance were divided: some were willing to follow Japan, provided she could prevent the return to power of the West; some thought a Japanese hegemony inevitable because they believed in a Japanese victory and were prepared to accept the status of a puppet state as a first step to independence; some abhorred Japanese domination—

particularly the democratic, socialist, and communist groups—and prepared for action by the time Japan would be beaten. None of them could achieve much, although the prominent members of the second group accepted certain ornamental functions in the Japanese service. The leading figure among them was Mr. Sukarno, an engineer who had come to the fore through his oratorical talent in the late twenties and had been imprisoned for sedition in 1930 and subsequently interned. He was made some sort of general political adviser to the Japanese military government in Java and was joined as deputy by Mr. Mohammad Hatta, an alumnus of the economic faculty in Rotterdam and also an erstwhile political internee, who was, however, rather closely connected with the third group. Sukarno's main task was the interpretation and recommendation of Japanese policy to the general population; his gifts as a demagogue and his reputation as a nationalist made an ideal combination for the purpose. He knew little of world conditions and of the relative strength of the countries at war. But the ideal of an independent Indonesia was a very real part of an otherwise rather vain and unstable character, and even in his most bombastic rantings against the Allies ("We shall iron out America and break up the British") there were always ambiguous sentences concerning the future relation to Japan.

But the Japanese did not rely on Indonesian assistance alone for the indoctrination of the masses. Almost at once they started direct propaganda and mass organization. For that purpose they transplanted Japanese institutions like the *tonari gumi*, the neighbourhood associations, which make Japan one of the most thoroughly policed states in the world. They organized a countrywide society, the *Jawa Hoko kai* or corporation for community service in Java, to spread the doctrines of their new order; they amalgamated the existing Moslem societies in one vast organization, the *Mashumi*, to turn Mohammedan intolerance to account against the less tractable West-

ernized and Christian Indonesians and against the West in general; they enlisted more than a million people in the *Keibodan*, a kind of rural guard for political supervision and spying; and, above all, they took hold of the youth.

For that purpose thousands of immature youngsters between 14 and 25 years of age were taken away from their homes and given an almost exclusively military training in the Japanese style, with its mixture of brutality, hero worship, and the cheapening of life. The instructors successfully worked upon their romanticism, their nationalist ambitions, and their lust for adventure. They warped these feelings into a hatred of the West, trading on the lack of knowledge of the good things the West had brought and on the resentment of white privilege, which had not yet been counterbalanced by any experience of white friendship. And they could count on the deep impression which the Japanese military machine, of which these pupils were to form a part, must make on the imagination of youngsters who no longer felt the correcting influence of their parents and elders.

The tremendous effect of this training can hardly be exaggerated. In the shadow of great and shattering events the youth of every country is caught by a strong desire for action and an equally strong dislike of the long apprenticeship and the routine existence that fall to the lot of most men. Moreover, as I observed before, in the process of modernization of Asia young people take a preponderant position, because education is of recent growth. All these circumstances combined to make them resistless instruments in the hands of the Japanese instructors, who seemed only bent upon driving them to the fulness of manhood in the shortest possible time. The Bishop of Batavia, Msgr. Willekens, who staunchly carried the care for his flock and for the whole community through the years of occupation, described to me how his deepest worry was caused by the exercises he could witness from his house in a near-by *ashrama*, a young men's boarding

institute and military training school; here the boys were taught every day to plunge bayonets into dummies with raucous and inhuman shrieks, which excited them to a frenzy in which they must have imagined that those dummies were live enemies, malevolent white men who wanted to take away their birthright.

They were organized in another corps, the *Seinendan*, who also had to serve as spies and propagandists. They learned to despise and to look with suspicion upon older people, who were less overstrung and more critical of Japanese mismanagement and exactions. A number of these young men joined the *Heiho*, an auxiliary army corps formed of Indonesian ex-soldiers, one of whose duties was guarding the internment camps. Many of them, at a later stage, were enrolled in the embryonic Indonesian army (the *Peta* = *pembela tanah air* = guardians of the fatherland) or in the fighting gangs organized by the *Mashumi* and other political organizations. And when the admired Japanese fell from their pedestal of power, they were the ready-made soldiers and partisans of the revolution.

There were other young men, who escaped this Japanese tuition and who followed the lead of politicians resisting Japanese domination. But when Japan capitulated the two groups merged without friction and the Japanese doctrines triumphed, as the Japanese roars of command, slappings, and kickings survived to the end in the armed forces of the Republic of Indonesia.

Outside this circle of youngsters, however, Japan soon began to lose ground. The nationalist movement was at first suppressed, then hoodwinked by empty promises and concessions. The more serious leaders turned away from these transparent devices; only the adventurers, the jobholders, and those vain men who prefer the glitter of a title to the obligation of a duty still found some satisfaction in the game. And Sukarno? He went on and on, praising Japan, reviling the

Allies, urging his people to aid in the war effort and to take service as *romushas*. Did he really believe that Japan would win? Was he only putting up a smoke screen to hide the plotting for revolt? There is no evidence that he was very active in planning; he merely made a constant effort to rouse nationalism in his speeches together with admiration for Japan and abhorrence of the Western nations. But he seemed to exert a strange and bewitching influence, somehow to embody the fundamental desire for independence, for although others did much more and showed far greater courage, he was chosen as the leader without discussion—he even had to be coaxed and forced to accept it—when the moment for action came.

The officials and civil servants, never very martial as a class, mostly swallowed their discontent. They were more and more impoverished by inflation; they were pushed back to lower posts by an increasing number of Japanese officials. Many of them were genuinely concerned about the slow ruination of their once excellent services; others gave up and retired till better days. Quite a number of incompetent upstarts filled their places.

Those who suffered most were the common people. Japanese economy was frightful, Japanese administration a farce. The country had been subdivided from the beginning into three almost watertight compartments: two, Java and Sumatra, under army commanders, and a third, the rest, under the navy. But as food and other commodities became scarce even the traffic between districts and islands was prohibited in order to facilitate pillaging by the military. The system of finance consisted of a number of printing presses, turning out crude government notes; inflation acquired disastrous proportions. Trade and export production were dead, because Indonesia was cut off from the world markets and Japan, her shipping going under the blows of Allied submarines and aircraft, preferred to fetch the products she needed from Indo-China, a thousand miles nearer home. She remained inter-

ested only in oil, nickel, and bauxite. Estates and factories rusted and decayed; plantations were uprooted to increase the food acreage; means of communication that broke down were no longer repaired; the import goods were gone or hoarded; clothing became almost unobtainable. This meant unemployment for hundreds of thousands; it meant poverty, poverty, poverty, for all but a few henchmen of the Japanese and a number of black marketeers.

By the end of 1944 the Japanese must have known that they could not win the war. The United States, instead of compromising, had thrown every ounce of effort into the construction of a gigantic war machine. Asia had not risen at the behest of Tokyo; it began to turn against Japan almost everywhere. But it might yet be so corrupted that it would be equally lost to the West as to a defeated Dai Nippon.

And so the requisitioning of food and labour went on; the courses in co-prosperity blessings, the propaganda meetings, had to be attended; the secret police pounced on the slightest provocation. No wonder that in many villages people were near to desperation; that during the last year of the occupation disorders broke out and even certain sections of the *Peta* mutinied. These signs of rebellion were bloodily repressed; the boldest might join the growing gangs, but the mass of the people had to look elsewhere for their liberation.

But although many of them heard rumours of Allied advances and victories, there was no general desire for an Allied invasion. Though the people had come to hate and despise the Japanese, their propaganda had done its work. True, in the old days even a nationalist would turn to the Dutch, authorities or friends, when in trouble. But where were they now, when trouble was worse than it had ever been? In camps behind barbed wire, thin and brittle like the dried paddy stalks, or swollen with edema; in prison cells; or buried in some unknown grave. They were stout-hearted and indomitable men and women, but they were powerless and to

be pitied. The Netherlands had been occupied by Germany two years before the Japanese occupied Indonesia; what help could be expected from that side?

And there were more insidious whisperings. The Japanese said that the Netherlands had recklessly and without reason declared war upon Japan and provoked the invasion of the mighty Imperial forces without consulting, without even informing, the Indonesians. Then they had been annihilated in a few weeks without being able to defend themselves or their charges. Those were the evils of colonialism, and with the return of the white man, whether Dutch or Ally, those evils would come back. Were they not right? Only an independent Indonesia could fight for her freedom and choose her own allies; independence was to be won at all costs. Even the rural masses were affected; in the depth of their misery they learned to look towards the nationalist leaders for rehabilitation, as they had looked towards the civil service, Dutch and Indonesian, in former days. But hardly anybody could visualize a new, non-colonial departure with the restored Netherlands as a partner. The older generation might doubt the ability of the people to stand by themselves, but for the younger ones it sounded captivating and convincing. And those who had crimes to hide or who were filled with racial pride and hatred by the continuous propaganda wanted no Dutchman ever to govern or control or even advise them again.

It must be realized in the case of Indonesia that there was no contact at all with the outer world except in the eastern part of the Archipelago, where the affection for the Dutch was the greatest. One of the consequences of our weakness was that we could not or were not allowed to spare the means for such contacts from our scant resources. Our remaining submarines were constantly on war duty; the Allied command refused to free them for secret reconnaissance or to provide other means for that purpose. Indonesia was by-

passed; there was no need for subversive action. So even the consolation of such visits, the information about the approach of victory and liberation, were withheld. Left to their own ideas and fantasies the Indonesians plotted and dreamed. And the Japanese whisper always gave the same direction to those dreams.

When Japan became convinced of defeat, the independence movement in Indonesia obtained official sanction. Very reluctantly the Japanese army and navy chiefs withdrew their opposition to the insistence of the *Gaimusho*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that active steps be taken for the granting of independence at an early date. On May 28, 1945, a committee for the preparation of independence was inaugurated, with Messrs. Sukarno and Hatta as chairman and vice-chairman. There were official speeches and rejoicings as there had been in September, 1944, when Prime Minister Koiso made his announcement of an independent if still indefinite future for Indonesia. But a secret report warned the Japanese authorities not to take these expressions of joy as "signs of confidence in Japan and in final victory."

However sceptical the Japanese might be, their propaganda was as effective as ever. Whoever has seen their film *Indonesia Raya* (*Great Indonesia*, the nationalist hymn), composed in those days, with its continuous, haunting background of that song and its scenes of mass enthusiasm, of young and fanatical soldiers on the march, and of the fertility and the loveliness of the land and its children, can imagine how the idea of an independence almost won must have dazzled the mind and roused the spirit.

On August 7 Field Marshal Count Terauchi, commanding the southern theatre, announced the impending grant and the Commander in Chief at Batavia said: "And now the Indonesian people will take its place in the line of battle as an independent nation, which shall constitute a link in the chain of Co-Prosperity in Great East Asia." On the eighth Terauchi

received Mr. Sukarno and Mr. Hatta at his headquarters in Saigon for some last instructions and discussions. And on the fifteenth Japan capitulated before anything final had been achieved.

In Indonesia the Japanese virus worked under the most ideal conditions, because external influences were almost totally excluded and the internal neutralization of Western activity was nearly complete. The sharp hoof of Nippon was imprinted on the entire occupied area, including Thailand.

In Burma the nearness of Allied territory (India) and later the infiltration of Chinese troops from the north and of General Wingate's Chindits, followed in the last phase by a successful invasion under Southeast Asia Command (SEAC), complicated the picture, as did the presence of a Japanese-inspired Indian army of liberation under Subhas Bose and the changing allegiance of a number of armed gangs, from which Mr. Aung San emerged as the leading figure. The independence made in Japan passed with the recapture of the country by the Allies, but much of the propaganda remained operative and contributed to the succeeding confusion.

In Malaya the preponderance of the Chinese gave a different aspect to the situation, as it tended to drive the weak Malay sultanates into the arms of the Japanese. When contacts with Chinese groups were established by the British and arms were introduced for guerilla fighting, it threatened to pile a kind of civil war on top of the occupation troubles. But here again Japanese teaching had its results, although the Malays were less violently nationalistic than their Indonesian brothers, with whom certain relations were formed that were to bear fruit afterwards.

In Thailand the Japanese remained paramount throughout the war, but their corrupting influence was counteracted by the fact that they did not bring the pseudo liberation they

could pretend to in the colonies and only succeeded in making themselves thoroughly disliked. It is a fact that the Allied prisoners of war, who were used as slave labour on the Thailand-Burma railroad, experienced a real though naturally shy friendliness from the Thai people. Whether Field Marshal P. Pibulsonggram, who capitulated to the Japanese in 1941 and was therefore temporarily branded as a collaborator, did the only possible thing, history may judge when the mists of secrecy and passion have disappeared. In any case it seems that the sores of Japanese infection are less deep-seated and festering here than elsewhere.

In French Indo-China the picture was, on the surface, very different from that in the other colonial areas. By allowing Japanese occupation in 1940-41, the Vichy government kept the direction of civil affairs in French hands.⁴ Even when this situation had become anomalous by the accession of the De Gaulle government in liberated France, it continued until the Japanese deposed Admiral Decoux, the Governor-General, disarmed the French troops, and interned the French civilians on March 9, 1945. It would seem that Japanese agents had been plotting for some time with the leftist revolutionaries under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, who were organizing inside the country and around it in Thailand and China. For although they began by proclaiming the independent Empire of Viet Nam under the Emperor of Annam, Bao Dai, they promptly withdrew their support when, by the end of the war, Ho Chi Minh and his followers staged a republican revolution. Some corruption of youth was certainly effected by them and was facilitated by a rash experiment of the French in organizing a general youth movement. How much the Chinese added to the confusion will be told in the following chapters.

⁴ Incidentally, the first result of this submission to Japan was a "war" with Thailand, mediated by the Japanese, by which Cambodia lost to Thailand for a sum of money the provinces acquired in 1907. I could not find out whether it was ever paid.

In the Philippines, lastly, two facts have counteracted the Japanese contamination to a considerable extent. In the first place the President of the Commonwealth, Mr. Manuel L. Quezon, evacuated with General MacArthur in April, 1942, and so maintained a Filipino focus of loyalty within the Allied camp. And in the second place both the advanced experience of self-governing nationalism and the assistance secretly provided by the American forces throughout the war stimulated continuous resistance and guerilla warfare against the Japanese in the remoter regions. And, of course, the importance of the fact that the Philippines were liberated during the war by the American forces cannot be overrated.

Nevertheless the Philippines, too, suffered pillage and anti-Western incitement. Though the independent republic, created by Tokyo and presided over by Dr. Jose P. Laurel, may not have been a purely collaborationist organization and may have mitigated Japanese oppression in some respects, it obviously caused internal dissensions and offered an assembling point to those sections of the people who were, for one reason or another, antagonistic to the United States and to the West in general. And the guerilla fighting with its inevitable reinforcement of gangsterism promoted an insurrectionist movement against the big landholders among the tenants, whose miseries were worse than ever—a movement resulting in the organization of the Hukbalahaps, who are still terrorizing the country today.

Only Ceylon prospered. After the successful repulsion of an air attack by the Japanese on April 5, 1942, it was never again seriously threatened. As the one remaining important producer of natural estate-rubber and the biggest producer of tea her exports flourished. The installation of SEAC headquarters at Kandy and the fact that a considerable number of troops and the British Eastern Fleet were based on the island brought a flow of extra revenue which continued for several months after the capitulation of Japan.

In the meantime constant progress was made in the direction of responsible government and certain measures were devised to solve the complicated and ticklish problem of Indian immigration and Ceylonese citizenship for Indian immigrants. The war period did not pass without political and labour troubles, but the problem of gangsterism and the illegal diffusion of arms hardly arose. The road to dominion status, as projected by the British government, appeared free from serious obstacles.

We must now turn, however, from these scenes of almost general ruin and decay to the Allies, who suddenly found themselves on August 15, 1945, with a tamely subsiding foe, whose "defeat drill" was as perfect as the planning of his initial assault had been, and whose loss of empire spelled the dissolution of the empires he had conquered.

CHAPTER EIGHT

An Unforeseen Peace

IT IS A trite—and often misused—saying that he who wants peace must prepare for war. But it is equally true that he who is at war should prepare for peace. Only, however desirable, it was almost impossible for the Allies in their war of defence against the aggression of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

To begin with, the outcome of World War II remained uncertain until 1943; and even after the battle of the Atlantic had been won, after the Germans had been defeated at El Alamein and Stalingrad, after the Allies had landed in North Africa, and after the tide had turned against the Japanese in New Guinea and the Solomons (October, 1942–February, 1943), a gigantic effort had to be continued for over two years to force the unconditional surrender of the Axis partners and their Far Eastern ally. The direct objectives, defeat of Italy, Germany, and Japan, absorbed all the energy and attention of the Allied governments and staffs; and if political considerations and discussions were not wholly excluded, they did not go much beyond tentative speculations and were made completely subservient to the supreme purpose of victory until the year 1945 was well advanced.

To the military leaders, particularly those of the United States, every deflection of forces from that supreme purpose

appeared wasteful, if not criminal. General Eisenhower wrote: "This purpose of destroying enemy forces was always our guiding principle; geographical points were considered only in relation to their importance to the enemy in the conduct of his operations or to us as centres of supply and communications in proceeding to the destruction of enemy armies and air forces."¹ Everything else—liberation of occupied countries, occupation of enemy territory, conditions of peace and rehabilitation—had to come afterwards. And if there was an almost constant difference of opinion between Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt about the advisability of an early invasion in force of France, if the British Premier seemed to prefer digs into the "soft underbelly" of Europe almost until D-day in Normandy and the Riviera, his estimate of the terrible cost of those landings in casualties seems to have influenced his views at least as much as the possible political advantages of an early entry of Western forces into the Balkans.

In the Pacific theatre the same singleness of purpose prevailed; the reconquest of the Philippines and Burma was only in part a deviation. After the months of defeat that were ended by the need for the Japanese to consolidate the vast territories they occupied, and by some extremely bold moves of the remnants of the United States fleet and air force in the Pacific, the direction of the counterattack was decided first by the direction in which the enemy tried to continue his advance, and then by the greatest possible economy of naval, military, and air power compatible with the earliest possible defeat of Japan.

Looking backward, it seems that the results have vindicated this military policy. If large forces had been made available to invade and reconquer the Japanese-occupied areas, the surrender of Tokyo would have come at a much later date than August 15, 1945, and the number of Allied

¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, pp. 247-248.

casualties would have been incomparably greater. Moreover, a mere comparison of Manila and Rangoon, on the one hand, with Singapore, Saigon, and Batavia, on the other, must convince us that forcible liberation has its drawbacks; much of the two first-named cities was set free as a hopeless mass of rubble. The Japanese way of fighting to the death, of wanton destruction, and of ruthless slaughter among the population to cover their retreat competed with the terrible artillery and air bombardments with which the Allies prepared the ground for assault to cover the battle area with destruction. It remains doubtful whether a few months' earlier freedom would have compensated for the terrible cost in property and life. Of course any delay meant prolonged suffering for the people and particularly for the prisoners of war and the internees, but nobody can say what their fate would have been during the process of reconquest. In and near Manila they were saved by the rapid advance of the American forces, but elsewhere the Japanese might have had time to carry them off or to execute the plans of slaughter and extermination that they prepared for certain cases.

It is even less easy to estimate the effect of the compromises with the Russians and the Chinese, which were to accelerate the defeat of Japan. In retrospect neither the prolonged resistance of China nor the last-minute assistance of Russia seems to have contributed much to the final result. Japan's military power was almost immobilized by the destruction of her shipping more than a year before her surrender; her continental armies could no longer take the offensive or reinforce the home front. Soviet participation was bought at the expense of Chinese recovery in Manchuria and of Russian interference in the solution of the Japanese problem. And the unconditional support of the Kuomintang government probably prevented an internal regeneration in China that was long overdue.

Four Allied commands were instituted during the war in the Pacific after ABDA Command had been dissolved. The

main naval area, covering the northern and central Pacific, had its headquarters in Pearl Harbor and was commanded by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. The extensive fleet and carrier-borne air operations in this area were conducted throughout the war by this command, including the important landings on a score of islands and atolls, ending with the conquest of Okinawa in May-June, 1945. It had a sub-theatre in the South Pacific with headquarters in Nouméa, New Caledonia, under the command first of Admiral Robert L. Ghormley and from October 18, 1942, until June 15, 1944, of Admiral William F. Halsey. This command was responsible for the campaign in the Solomons and became a back area after those islands had been recaptured by the end of March, 1944. The Southwest Pacific Area under General Douglas MacArthur included New Guinea, British Borneo, the Philippines, and the Netherlands Indies except Sumatra. After the first hard-won repulse of the Japanese across the Owen Stanley Range in Southeast New Guinea, the American and Australian forces under this command proceeded by ever wider leaps along the east and north coast of that island to Morotai in the northern Moluccas to land on Leyte in the central Philippines in October, 1944. After the prolonged fight for that island these forces, in conjunction with the naval squadrons of Admiral Nimitz, went on to capture Mindoro by the end of the year and to land on Luzon on January 9, 1945. The Americans entered Manila after heavy fighting in February and liberated the whole of the Philippines in the following months. The decision to concentrate on the Philippines at this stage must have been influenced by the special responsibility of the United States for those islands, although they certainly could be valuable, too, as a jumping-off place for the invasion of Japan. Meanwhile the Australian troops of SWPA made landings at the oil ports of Tarakan and Balikpapan in East Borneo (Netherlands Indies) and Brunai in Northwest Borneo (British Borneo) in April-June, 1945. A further thrust to

Java was proposed but was cancelled by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington, because all the available forces had to be made ready for an early move against Japan proper.

On the western side of the Japanese advance, after the retreat of the British forces from Burma, the Allies were completely on the defensive until the end of 1943. This holding action was conducted under the leadership of the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army and the commander of the Eastern Fleet, until Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) was designed at the first conference of Quebec in August, 1943. It was given a great deal of publicity at the time, as was the appointment of its supreme commander, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, of combined operations fame. But it was given only very limited scope in the following period, because the second front in Europe and progress in the Pacific absorbed all the means for amphibious assaults.

The theatre under this command covered Burma, Malaya, and Sumatra, with a possible extension to Thailand and French Indo-China left in the air. Almost from the beginning SEAC aspired to the inclusion of the whole of Indo-China, the Netherlands Indies, British Borneo, and Hong Kong within its limits; in October, 1943, when I met Admiral Mountbatten in London, he was still convinced that such an extension would be only a matter of months. But very soon it transpired that little attention was to be given to this command, which was further weakened by the difficulties of extricating itself from the administrative encumbrances of the Indian army (which was done by transferring its headquarters from New Delhi to Kandy, Ceylon) and by recurrent frictions between the British and American components. It had first to fight back a Japanese invasion of Manipur in Assam (the long battle around Imphal during the first months of 1944), before it could start really active operations in North Burma, and even those were for a long time restricted to the restoration of a land connection with China (reopened

in January, 1945) and executed by a combined SEAC-Chinese force under the American deputy commander, General Joseph W. Stilwell. The liberation of Burma did not get a real start until the end of 1944, leading to the recapture of Mandalay on March 20 and Rangoon on May 3, 1945. The next attack towards Malaya, planned for September of that year, became unnecessary because of the capitulation of Japan on August 15.

Before we consider the situation on that fateful date, we must try to describe the attitude of the Allied powers towards the political problems of Southeast Asia.

It was generally understood by all that war and occupation would result in an accelerated growth of nationalism in the whole area. From the viewpoint of psychological warfare it was obvious that only an unequivocal recognition of this fact could counteract the Japanese anti-Western propaganda. Moreover, a war that was predominantly waged by American forces would be very unpopular if it resulted in the mere restoration of a colonialism that had been on its way out before Pearl Harbor. This aspect of the case was stated in its most absolute form by Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles in a speech of May 30, 1942, in which he said: "As the result of this war we must assure the sovereign equality of the peoples the world over. Our victory must bring in its train liberation for all peoples. The age of imperialism is ended. The right of people for freedom must be recognised."

But if there was little difference of opinion among the colonial powers about the necessity of a rapid emancipation of Southeast Asia after the defeat of Japan, it was a far cry from the acceptance of that principle to its implementation in such a manner that it would avoid creating chaos out of the ruins of Tokyo's imperial adventure.

In a war of such magnitude and intensity, however, responsible leaders and military authorities have little leisure to ponder on the details of every individual case. In the po-

litical field generalities and statements of an absolute character catch the imagination, and the indestructible hope for better times to come makes men—even great men—forget that human values and relations do not change overnight and that the hardships and cruelties of war stimulate bad instincts as much as good. There was a tendency to concentrate exclusively on the idea of national liberation and to consider every cautionary advice as an expression of reaction or colonial egotism.

This was particularly true of United States propaganda, which reflected the strongly anticolonial sentiments of American public opinion and viewed the European democracies possessing colonial interests in Asia with distrust. It hardly ever mentioned the political and military efforts of its British and Dutch allies, of which it was frankly critical and suspicious. A spate of leftist idealists and not a few fellow-travellers entered into the activities of the offices of War Information and Strategic Services (OWI and OSS) in the Far East; the same happened on a less pronounced scale in the British and Australian intelligence and propaganda services. The initial objective, eradicating the fear of the return of colonial domination and oppression, was excellent. But the ensuing action overshot the mark, nourishing that fear by sometimes discrediting the intentions of Allied nations and by neglecting the fact that a badly organized liberation would expose millions of common people to the miseries of revolutionary and chaotic conditions, piled upon the destruction wrought by the enemy.

Yet all this would only have caused little and passing harm—the Allied war propaganda hardly penetrated the soundproof walls of Japanese censorship—had it been possible for the Western powers to consult together and to come to a common decision concerning the political guidance and the economic aid to be extended to the peoples of Southeast Asia after the expulsion of the Japanese. But here the concept

of a new world order, which would take care of all the great international problems of the postwar period, prevented by its universal character a separate and practical agreement among the democracies on a common, responsible line of action in which American idealism and drive and British, Dutch, and French experience and genuine care for the fate of ex-colonial peoples might have been merged into a strong, liberal, and beneficial policy.

It is a matter of common knowledge that when President Roosevelt unfolded his great conception of a United Nations organization in the course of 1943 and particularly at the conference with Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin at Teheran (November–December, 1943), he and many people with him were convinced that sharing the rigours and sacrifices of war had brought together the great powers which waged it to such an extent that the belief in their continued and cordial co-operation after the war was justified. It was supposed that the totalitarian system of Russia and the democratic system of the West not only could live peacefully side by side, without threatening each other's internal order, but that they could join in a constructive leadership of the world and maintain the peace by their collective power. As it was clear, at the same time, that Russia remained suspicious of the forces of capitalism in the West, every semblance of special agreements and combined action between the democratic powers alone was scrupulously avoided. Everything had to be organized within a worldwide frame—though with the exclusion of the enemy. But as it gradually transpired that there was a fundamental cleavage between the Soviet bloc and the Western nations, the only consequence was that the international agencies did not command sufficient confidence or were paralyzed by dissensions, while the democracies hesitated for several years to get together and develop their own joint policy.

The special attention given to China as the fourth great

power in the war further clouded the vision of Western leaders with regard to Southeast Asia. In reality Kuomintang China had, by the end of the war, a weak and corrupt government that was fast losing the confidence of the Chinese nation. But it was the only Asiatic member of the Big Four and the Big Five and had to be cherished accordingly. And while the West was trying to adapt its policy to the hopeless task of staving off internal dissolution in China without interfering in its internal affairs, it failed to observe that Southeast Asia was slowly degenerating into a state of permanent convulsion that threw it wide open to all the evil forces of the capitalist and communist worlds.

The ideal of world regulation by the United Nations gave birth to the idea of a trusteeship that would take care of the embryonic nations in their infancy. It was bound to fail as long as the United Nations themselves remained a political arena, full of strife and divided by the most fundamental controversies. At the San Francisco conference, the UNCIO, we found the Soviet delegation insisting upon free inspection of trusteeship territories and freedom for every party and minority in those territories to carry their grievances to the Trusteeship Council. We heard Chungking recommend the most absolute freedom of the press. We saw the United States champion free trade and low tariffs. It was difficult to reconcile these suggestions with the iron curtain of Russia, the censorship blackout of Chungking, and the tariff walls of America. It is not to be wondered at that the nations which would have to assume responsibility as trustees if the system was to be generally applied to colonies and dependent areas objected to such an application because it would have introduced all the political ambitions and struggles of the world into the delicate task of nation building.

But even if these signs of interestedness had been absent, if the ideologies of the several nations and the rivalries between them had not been injected into the subject, if the

U.N. had succeeded in organizing its Trusteeship Council as a body of high-class, impartial, and non-political supervisors, the trusteeship system would hardly have solved the problems of nationalism in Southeast Asia. The colonies concerned had passed that stage of tutelage. Their right to self-determination, to self-government or independence, had been recognized or was presently to be recognized by the mother countries. If in certain cases it might appear desirable to render such recognition more specific and to accelerate its implementation, to hold the mother countries to their good intentions, another type of international pressure or international agreement, a single-minded organization for assistance to newly born nations, would be more effective than the cumbrous and politically divided Trusteeship Council, whose supervisory powers would smack of a lingering after-taste of the colonialism that was to be abolished. In discussing this matter as a delegate of the Netherlands I said at San Francisco:

We are convinced that the trusteeship system is as indispensable now, as it was in 1919, with regard to enemy territory to be detached from its former allegiance. We can imagine that the system might improve or aid the development of certain other territories. But we are not at all sure that the system would always give better results, especially in those cases where the territory is well on its way to full self-government, and where the combination of an essentially democratic mother country and a civilized and sufficiently homogeneous people in the territory guarantee their unhampered evolution towards nationhood. In such a territory the superimposition of a special international authority, be it ever so advisory, would be felt by the people themselves as a step backward. It would be resented. Where they already participate largely in the business of government, not only locally but also in the central part, and where representative bodies are functioning more and more successfully, such a superimposition could never be allowed without their consent, and I have good reason to believe that

such consent would not be obtained. In short, we think that the application of the trusteeship system would not be an improvement in cases where the fulfilment of the trust is assured by the historical development of the territory and by the relationship between the peoples concerned.

The further history of trusteeship in the United Nations has proved that it gives no solution for the evolution of colonies into nations when that process has passed the phase where it could still be interrupted or reversed. And the interference of the U.N. Security Council and the U.N. Assembly in certain cases of such evolution has proved, as we shall see, that this international organization, valuable as it is as a forum for the discussion of international problems and the investigation of international conflicts, still lacks the impartiality and the executive ability and force to step into the place of the directly responsible governments and parties.

The trusteeship system in the Charter of the United Nations offered no agreed, democratic solution for the grave and complex problems that were uncovered in Southeast Asia by the sudden capitulation of Japan. The nations most directly concerned had not come to any mutual understanding concerning those problems. Each one of them had to look out for itself, and yet such had become the interdependence of the peoples of the world that no policy could be evolved and no measures taken without affecting or exciting others. The Netherlands and France, themselves liberated but shortly before Japan was defeated,² needed Allied assistance before they could assume full responsibility. But before we consider the situation in each of the Southeast Asiatic countries, certain events during the closing weeks of the war have to be de-

² France was practically free of German occupation by the end of 1944; at that time only the southern part of the Netherlands, with less than one-quarter of the population, had been liberated. The remaining parts were not freed until April-May, 1945.

scribed, because they had a serious—in some respects even a calamitous—influence on what happened afterwards.

The expectation of the SEAC Command that its theatre would be extended over Indo-China and the Netherlands Indies was not realized for nearly two years. As late as April, 1945, General MacArthur still planned an invasion of Java. What happened next has not yet completely come to light. It seems that during the conference of the Big Three at Potsdam (June, 1945) it was decided that a transfer of area should take place sometime in October, after the intended invasion of Malaya by SEAC forces. One gets the impression that the Americans wanted to concentrate on the problems of Japan, China, and the Philippines and were rather eager to divest themselves of responsibilities in the Netherlands Indies and British Borneo. The British, on the other hand, had for a long time been willing to take care of that part of the Japanese-occupied territory because of their direct and parallel interests and their prestige in the area.

Thailand was more or less a common problem: it might be treated as an enemy, or as a co-belligerent on the Japanese side, or simply as another victim of Japan. SEAC could in any case be entrusted with the task of disarming the Japanese forces in Thailand.

The case of French Indo-China caused a certain amount of friction. It is well known that President Roosevelt doubted whether it should return to the sovereignty of France. The American military adviser to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, General A. C. Wedemeyer (who succeeded General Stilwell) advocated the occupation of the whole of French Indo-China by Chinese forces, which would enhance the waning authority of the Kuomintang government and contribute to the good will in China towards the United States and the Western Allies. The British, who foresaw the dangerous consequences of such a move both in Southeast Asia and in

France, objected; the result was a compromise based on the consideration that SEAC had shipping available to reach the southern half of French Indo-China; the delimitation between the two commands, SEAC and China, was put at 16° North Latitude, cutting the country in half just south of Hué, the ancient capital of Annam.

The political and military reasons for this important realignment had little to do with the interests of the nations and peoples concerned. The Dutch government was neither consulted nor advised of the impending change; neither, probably, was the French. Southeast Asiatic policies started to become a mysterious void in which Washington, London, Paris, and The Hague revolved in orbits of their own. Instead of coming together, the directly responsible countries began to move apart and to keep their innermost thoughts and counsels to themselves. If the most fantastic suspicions arose afterwards, it was the fault of those who failed to put trust in their brothers-in-arms.

The next phase shows a curious discrepancy. On June 19 I was informed by my representatives at SWPA headquarters in Manila that the functions of that command concerning the Netherlands Indies would presently cease; the date of August 15 was mentioned. SEAC, on the contrary, proceeded on the assumption that no transfer would take place before October. A couple of days before the Japanese capitulation the transfer was officially ordered as of August 15; this date coincided exactly with the end of the war and found the new command utterly unprepared. As a matter of fact, the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago had to be entrusted to the care of a separate Australian command that had to be hurriedly thrown together for the purpose.³

Burma had only just been recaptured from the Japanese; a strong British-Indian army was in occupation. Several big

³ The Australians had two divisions in Morotai, Tarakan, and Balikpapan as part of the SWPA forces.

cities and important districts had been cruelly ravaged by combat and demolitions; the capital and principal harbour, Rangoon, was very badly damaged. Armed gangs and guerillas, of whom it was not yet known to what extent they had been fighting for or against the enemy, or merely with each other, roamed the country. Negotiations and police actions were in progress to create some sort of order out of chaos. Part of the former Burmese government under Governor Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith had remained functioning in exile in New Delhi and could resume its task as soon as the military phase was concluded. There was at least an opportunity to restore more or less normal conditions before further political reforms were undertaken.

For the occupation of Malaya preparations could tie in with those for the intended invasion of that peninsula in September; troops and shipping were in readiness for it. Every movement into Japanese-occupied territory had to wait for the formal signature of the surrender in Tokyo Bay on the U.S.S. *Missouri*, but from that date—September 2, 1945—the landings in Malaya began. Here, too, sufficient troops were available; several divisions were brought ashore in the succeeding weeks; the whole country was rapidly occupied and the Japanese were collected and disarmed.

The Philippines had been liberated before the surrender; only scattered groups of Japanese had still to be gathered in. The war had grievously shaken the islands; the beautiful centre, the picturesque Spanish walled quarter, and the modern port of Manila were in ruins. The Commonwealth government had been reinstalled under Vice-President Sergio Osmeña, who had succeeded President Quezon after the death of the latter. There was still a great deal of turmoil and violence in the country, but the capitulation made little difference in the course of events.

In Thailand the end of the war brought a change of government and a fairly orderly elimination of the Japanese.

Conditions in the country changed but little, and that for the better; Japanese oppression was replaced by an Allied supervision which was to prove much less harsh and exacting and which soon even abandoned its stern attitude. Apart from the general deterioration and neglect that were the inevitable inheritance of Japanese occupation, the country and the capital had suffered comparatively little war damage.

In French Indo-China and Indonesia conditions differed widely from those in the countries just mentioned. Neither France nor the Netherlands had sufficient forces available in the area to take the Japanese surrender themselves and to establish law and order in those war-torn territories. Yet there were significant differences in the way in which the end of the war came to the two colonies.

The Empire of Viet Nam, which the Japanese had proclaimed the day after they interned the French (March 10, 1945), was but a phantom structure. The mandarin class, which formed its administration, showed neither grit nor integrity; bereft of its French superintendents and advisers, it sank back in an inept corruption. Meanwhile the revolutionary nationalists, who had found a refuge across the borders in China and in the Annamite settlements in Thailand, strengthened their organization under Chinese patronage and with stealthy Thai connivance. They consisted mainly of two temporarily federated parties: one conservative, a replica of the Kuomintang; one communist. The latter excelled in revolutionary technique; among its leaders several were alumni of the institute for revolutionary training in Moscow. The terrible conditions that developed in the overpopulated and poor delta of the Red River in Tonkin, where the extreme mismanagement of this period caused the death of hundreds of thousands, gave them an excellent recruiting ground among the desperate villagers.

Actively supported by the Chungking government, the League of Annamite Revolutionaries, Viet Minh, had been

formed and the Republic of Viet Nam (= Annam) projected by the end of 1944. The Japanese, when they saw defeat approaching, established closer contact with these militant revolutionaries, who began to cross the border. When the end was near the Japanese acted quickly. On August 6, 1945, they withdrew their support from the gimcrack puppet empire; on the sixteenth the Japanese capitulation became known, and the next day rioting started in Hanoi. On the twentieth the "democratic" Republic of Viet Nam was proclaimed, and ten days later the "grand old man" of communism, Ho Chi Minh, was raised to the presidency, with the ex-emperor lowered to the position of adviser.

A period of great and general confusion and terror ensued, only very temporarily relieved by the adventurous advent of certain Frenchmen, foremost among them the hardy and daring Mr. Jean Roger, acting under his *maquis* appellation of Sainteny. He parachuted at Hanoi on the eighteenth, and by occupying the Governor-General's palace succeeded in making the Japanese take his orders as commissioner of the French government. But this situation lasted only a fortnight. The Japanese very soon abandoned their authority or openly sided with the revolution; the Chinese army began to enter Tonkin; and Sainteny with his compatriots was shut up within a narrow quarter of the city under a constant threat of assault and extermination.⁴

While hell broke loose in the northern part of the country, aided by thousands of criminals whom the Japanese had released from their prisons as a last instalment of their new order, the revolution spread southward and everywhere the French were closely beset. In Saigon some 2,000 Dutch ex-prisoners of war offered invaluable assistance to the hard-pressed civilians and although several murders and other

⁴ Certain OSS agents badly influenced this course of events by spreading the word that the empire of the French was finished and that Viet Nam could count on their sympathy and that of the world.

atrocities were committed, wholesale slaughter was avoided or prevented until the British-Indian troops began to land at Saigon on September 12 under the command of General D. D. Gracey.

Although his task was limited to accepting the surrender of the Japanese, releasing and protecting ex-prisoners of war and internees, and establishing law and order in the area occupied by his troops, General Gracey took vigorous action against Annamite terrorism in Saigon and refused to recognize the republican authorities. It seems that this attitude nearly led to his recall by his British superiors, who were extremely anxious not to become involved in the political conflict. By his action, however, he enabled the French, without overstepping the limits of his own task, to undertake the solution of the troubles without the severe handicap of decisions by an alien authority—the Allied military commander—that could prejudice the legal situation.

The French had the advantage that since the landings in North Africa they had been able to reconstitute the nucleus of an army, which was greatly enlarged after the liberation of France and the participation of the French forces in the final phase of the war against Germany. This fact and a fair amount of Allied—mostly British—assistance made it possible for the late General Leclerc,⁵ who arrived on October 5, to have the disposal of some 4,000 troops by the end of the month and to collect a much larger and very mobile force by the end of the year. This fact and the arrival, late in October, of the French High Commissioner,⁶ Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, gave the British Commander in Chief the opportunity to withdraw completely from the field of political and civil affairs and re-embark his troops in the beginning of 1946.

⁵ Also a pseudonym taken during the war; his original name was De Hautecloque.

⁶ The title of Governor-General had been abolished.

Only the Chinese forces of occupation, in the north remained an extremely aggravating problem. They came in with very little equipment or worldly goods and considered the country under the obligation of furnishing them with the necessary amenities. They lived on the land and constituted a heavy burden on the impoverished peasantry and on the cities, which were already being squeezed dry by the new republican authorities. It took great skill, endurance, and restraint and several concessions to bring about their final evacuation. This was only completed, not without some bloody incidents, in May, 1946; they took quite an amount of movable property with them. But this part of the story is so interwoven with the political developments that it belongs in the next chapter. It is only mentioned here because this evacuation ended the external interference with the problem of French Indo-China; henceforth its solution would depend on the political and human relations between the French and the peoples of the country themselves.

If there were unfortunate elements in the Allied policy concerning French Indo-China, the case of Indonesia was treated quite differently—worse in most respects, better in a few, but again without any prearranged plan.

The difficulties began with the reconstitution of a Dutch military and civilian apparatus for participation in the war with Japan and for taking over the administration of Indonesia in the event of a reconquest or a surrender of the Japanese. At first both the Netherlands and Indonesia were under enemy occupation; the means and men available in the free world, apart from a considerable number of merchantmen, all sailing under the control of the Allied shipping pool, were extremely limited. They consisted of a few hundred civil servants, a light cruiser, a few destroyers and submarines and smaller naval craft, a few fighter, bomber, and Catalina squadrons (mostly without ground forces), some air transport and some ten companies of soldiers. They were com-

posed of all the races within the Kingdom, but mainly Dutch and Indonesian. A nucleus of the Netherlands Indies government had been evacuated during the last days before the capitulation of Java; it had its headquarters in Camp Columbia, Brisbane, Australia, but had to maintain agencies and liaisons in London, the United States (Washington and New York), with General MacArthur (Hollandia, Leyte, Manila), with Admiral Mountbatten (New Delhi, Kandy), with the headquarters of the Australian army and navy and of the Eastern Fleet (Melbourne and Colombo), and in India and South Africa. It had to take care of considerable Netherlands Indies assets, distressed cargoes, and lend-lease affairs;⁷ it had to provide civil affairs detachments and some troops for Dutch New Guinea, Morotai, Tarakan, and Balikpapan as they were invaded by the Allied forces; it had to do all the advance planning and to make whatever purchases were possible for the rehabilitation of Indonesia. It could only achieve these tasks with the utmost effort and application.

The Netherlands government-in-exile in London took up the problem of the political future of Indonesia at an early date. On December 6, 1942, Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina outlined a tentative sketch of that future in a radio broadcast, of which the essential clauses were:

In previous addresses I announced that it is my intention, after the liberation, to create the occasion for a joint consultation about the structure of the Kingdom and its parts in order to adapt it to the changed circumstances. The conference of the entire Kingdom, which will be convoked for this purpose, has been further outlined in a Government declaration of January 27, 1942. The preparation of this conference, in which prominent representatives of the three overseas parts of the Kingdom will be united with those of the Netherlands at a round table, had already begun in the Nether-

⁷ Mostly claims, because the Netherlands Indies had paid for their war materials in cash until the occupation; those which arrived too late to be used were mainly turned over to the Australians against lend-lease refunds.

lands Indies, Surinam and Curaçao, the parts of the Kingdom which then still enjoyed their freedom. . . .

We can only resume these preparations when everyone is able to speak his mind freely.

Although it is beyond doubt that a political reconstruction of the Kingdom as a whole and of the Netherlands and the overseas territories as its parts is a natural evolution, it would be neither right nor possible to define its precise form at this moment. . . .

I am convinced, and history as well as reports from the occupied territories confirms me in this, that after the war it will be possible to reconstruct the Kingdom on the solid foundation of complete partnership, which will mean the consummation of all that has been developed in the past. I know that no political unity nor national cohesion can continue to exist which is not supported by the voluntary acceptance and the faith of the great majority of the citizenry. I know that the Netherlands more than ever feels its responsibility for the vigorous growth of the Overseas Territories and that the Indonesians recognize in the ever increasing collaboration the best guarantee for the recovery of their peace and happiness. The war years have proved that both peoples possess the will and the ability for harmonious and voluntary co-operation. . . .

I visualize, without anticipating the recommendations of the future conference, that they will be directed towards a commonwealth in which the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, and Curaçao will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct for each part regarding its internal affairs, but with the readiness to render mutual assistance.

It is my opinion that such a combination of independence and collaboration can give the Kingdom and its parts the strength to carry fully their responsibility, both internally and externally. This would leave no room for discrimination according to race or nationality; only the ability of the individual citizens and the needs of the various groups of the population will determine the policy of the government.

Of course no definite plans could be made, nor detailed proposals elaborated, until the Netherlands and Indonesia were free again to express their desires and intentions and to

consult together about the future. But the purpose of raising Indonesia to a national status equal to that of the Netherlands and of organizing the voluntary co-operation of both countries for their mutual benefit was clearly expressed.

As soon as the southern part of the Netherlands was liberated (September–October, 1944) a call was issued for volunteers to serve in the armed forces both against Germany and against Japan. It met with an enthusiastic response, notwithstanding the rigours of occupation which the half-starved people had just suffered. Recruiting for civilian assistance in Indonesia also brought most satisfactory results. But then we began to experience the neglect that apparently must be the lot of a small and as yet weak country caught in the battle between giants. The troubles that ensued were reviewed in a letter I wrote on May 29, 1945, to Admiral Sir James Somerville, British naval member of the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington.

The situation itself, eight months after we began to enroll our volunteers, was described as follows:

Although I would not like to pretend that we got no help at all in the matter, I cannot but observe that there has been but slow progress and that the objections have been more frequent than the suggestions. It took over two months to convince SHAEF and twenty-one Army Group that part of the volunteers in the southern Netherlands could be assigned for duties overseas right away. When this was decided, the matter of transport took another month. At one time there were no uniforms, even for a few hundred men. The transportation to Australia of 5,600 men, promised on the sixteenth of April until the end of the war in Europe, did not materialize and has now been reduced to a paltry 600. There is as yet no arrangement in England for alternative training; there are neither facilities nor food in Holland for that purpose. The Australian army was very helpful and agreed to put at our disposal camps, equipment, and training facilities in western Australia, which were ideally suited for the training of the light battalions we shall need;

but they wanted us to take over those camps within a reasonable time. Because we obtained no transport, this offer threatened to lapse, entailing further unpredictable delays. We organized with great exertion and in the face of almost unsurmountable difficulties a Netherlands Indies Government centre in Brisbane, where we could handle the executive business for the liberated areas, the problems of relief and rehabilitation, and the training of badly needed civil affairs people at the same time. I think we did a good job with almost no personnel, but now there are hundreds of indispensable men and women in the Netherlands, and in England, twiddling their thumbs, becoming rebellious and discouraged because they cannot be transported. Meanwhile the theatre commanders ask us where those people we promised them are, and begin to doubt our capacity and our good faith.

The most painful part of the treatment given to our insistent requests was that we could not even obtain the use of a few of the 27 Dutch transports, having a total carrying capacity of 60,000 men, which were still available in the Allied pool. But our greatest concern was for the future. The following passages were to prove miserably prophetic:

This war has two objectives: to defeat the enemy and to do so at the lowest cost. I think I need not prove that we are in this war as a whole: not just with a narrow view to our direct interests. But this does not mean that we can neglect those interests. We want to take part, if possible, in the drive against Japan; but we want very much also to liberate our people in the Indies, Netherlands and Indonesians, as quickly and with as little prolongation of their misery as possible. . . .

We are eager to do so, but we cannot do it without adequate and timely preparation. Our participation will spare many Allied lives, as it will save many of the lives of Her Majesty's subjects. . . .

You cannot put against this argument any guarantee that this will be done by your or other Allied troops. You have to reckon, as we have, with public opinion at home that will want to see your soldiers and sailors return once Japan herself is beaten. . . .

But while we cannot be content with the contemptible role of goose-stepping in after others have done the fighting, we might not even be able to do that if the delays in training and transporting our men from Holland continue. Even for that job we need trained men brought to the spot; up till now we haven't got them and we cannot yet see when we are going to get them. If Japan should surrender before we have them, and if her troops should pull out of certain important areas, or if an expedition to one of the major islands should be launched, we would have to ask you, or the Americans, or the Australians, not only to leave an armed force in occupation but also to take over the government and to take care of relief and rehabilitation for the time being. This is literally true.

When the capitulation came our circumstances had hardly improved, and all the additional setbacks seemed to have been reserved for the case of Indonesia.

There, as in Annam, the Japanese assisted at the outbreak of a revolution they had helped to foment. Its curious genesis will be told in the next chapter; here it may suffice to mention that the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed on August 17, 1945, in the house of Rear Admiral Maeda at Batavia, with the connivance of this Japanese officer and others. A few days afterwards the Australian wharfies under communist leadership declared a boycott against all Dutch ships and cargoes, destined for Indonesia, which was to last for two and a half years and to hold up important goods for rehabilitation, to the detriment of the country and its people. The change of command at this very last moment caused endless delays.⁸ Malaya, Thailand, and French Indo-China were given priority. The first occupation troops, less than 1,000 strong, were not landed on the main island of Java until September 29, 45 days after the capitulation of Japan.

⁸ It was one of the many paradoxes of the situation that the Australian forces in the eastern part of the archipelago acted with much more rapidity and decision than the British-Indians from SEAC and so contributed materially to an early restoration of law and order in Borneo and East Indonesia, whereas the Australian government followed an increasingly anti-Dutch policy as time went on.

The movement for the republic began to spread rapidly when no Allied action followed the surrender of Japan, week after week. On September 6 Admiral Mountbatten ordered Field Marshal Terauchi to disallow the revolutionary movement and to maintain Japanese responsibility for law and order until the arrival of the Allied troops. The order was simply ignored; the Japanese pleaded inability to stop events. Gradually the revolutionary hysteria rose; Japanese-trained youths and criminal elements joined the movement and the continuous anti-Western propaganda began to have its effect. The demoralized Japanese troops began to intern themselves in healthful and beautiful mountain resorts, leaving most of their armaments in the hands of the republicans. In other cases there were clashes between the *pemudas*⁹ and the Japanese, sometimes resulting in the capture of additional arms and explosives.

The numerous ex-internees and prisoners of war—over 60,000 in Java alone—were ordered by SEAC command to stay in their camps. Small rescue teams were parachuted to those camps in the beginning of September, but although they performed feats of great daring they could hardly change the situation. Food conditions had much improved, but the continued confinement behind barbed wire was terrible. Several internees left the camps to return to their homes, only to be massacred or interned anew by the republican gangs. A cruiser, H.M.S. *Cumberland*, which arrived at Tanjung Priuk harbour (the harbour of Batavia) on September 15, managed to give a little extra protection to the camps in and near Batavia, but elsewhere, and particularly in the interior, the danger for all these cooped-up thousands of starved and exhausted men, women, and children became graver every day. Neither the republican leaders nor any other authority could hold the unfettered violence and rapacity in check. Japanese protection became more ineffective and more ab-

⁹ Revolutionary youngsters.

surd as time went on. The uninterned Eurasians and the Chinese were likewise threatened by the outbreak of xenophobia. And the sweet taste of victory turned to gall in the mouths of all those thousands who had suffered patiently and courageously for years to find themselves abandoned and—as they thought—forgotten in the end.¹⁰

The British were in a quandary. They had taken on a job that was beyond their strength. The civil affairs agreement, concluded with the Dutch government on August 24, 1945, said, among other things:

1. In areas affected by military operations it is necessary to contemplate a first or military phase during which the Supreme Allied Commander will, to the extent necessitated by the military situation, de facto possess full authority to take all necessary measures. During this first phase, in order to assist the Supreme Allied Commander in the exercise of his authority, the Netherlands Government will attach to his forces sufficient Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Officers to conduct the administration of liberated Netherlands Indies territory under the general control of the Military Commander of the Allied Forces in the territory in question. The Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Officers will, whenever possible, be employed in all matters concerning the administration of the civilian population including the control of such projects for the exploitation of the resources of liberated Netherlands Indies territory as military necessity may require during the first phase. It is understood that the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Officers will be fully competent to take all necessary measures. . . .

2. It is agreed that the Netherlands Indies Government will resume as rapidly as practicable full responsibility for the civil administration of liberated Netherlands Indies territory. The Supreme Allied Commander will, as soon and as fully as the military situation in his judgment permits, notify the Lieutenant-Governor-

¹⁰ This feeling grew much worse when it became known that even in evacuation the ex-prisoners of war and internees of other nationalities got priority over those of a nation that stood third in its share of excellent transport vessels. This was the most serious blow to the comradeship that had blossomed during the war.

General of the extent to which responsibility for the civil administration should be resumed.

3. The Netherlands Indies Government and the Netherlands Indies administrative and judicial services will be re-established as rapidly as possible. Appointments in the Netherlands Indies administrative and judicial services will be made by the competent Netherlands or Netherlands Indies authorities in accordance with Netherlands Indies law.

There were, however, not nearly enough troops to take the surrender of the 155,000 Japanese in Java and Sumatra. To collect their armaments under the actual conditions prevailing soon became absolutely impossible. The new Labour government in London felt the greatest reluctance to become involved in the political troubles of Indonesia, particularly so because SEAC had to use mostly Indian troops. On the other hand it was the bounden duty of the Allied command to liberate and protect the internees and prisoners of war. The tardy assistance rendered to the Netherlands in the organization of their own forces made it unavoidable that Allied occupation—even if only in key positions—would have to be continued for a long period. Under the pressure of these circumstances Admiral Mountbatten suddenly reversed his former non-recognition of the revolutionary republic, and when the first troops came to Batavia, the Commander in Chief of AFNEI (Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies), General Sir Philip Christison,¹¹ invoked the assistance of the “republican authorities” and refused either to keep the civil affairs of the occupied area—a very minor part of the city—exclusively in British military hands, or to install the Netherlands Indies officials. By taking this precipitate step the Republic of Indonesia—which at that time was neither an administration nor even a unified movement—acquired

¹¹ General Christison only learned on September 27 that he was appointed to this sub-command, which he had to take up two days later. He had never been in or near Indonesia before.

a kind of international recognition, which irrevocably prejudiced the future, and about which no previous consultation with the Dutch government or its representative had taken place.

The greatest harm caused by these high-handed proceedings was not so much the friction it caused between the British and the Dutch on the spot. For again it was one of the paradoxes of this story that the same anxiety to avoid commitments in a thorny situation, which made the British act with such ill-judged rashness, made them extend a very active and liberal aid to the Dutch in the training and equipping of forces that could relieve them of their duty. The really grave consequences must be seen in the natural reaction of both primary parties in the Indonesian conflict. The essential injustice of these actions was deeply felt by the Dutch, both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia, and made it much more difficult for them to adjust themselves to the changed conditions and to approach the Indonesian republican nationalists with an open mind and a sympathetic understanding. And this selfsame act gave the republicans a disproportionate idea of their importance and the righteousness of their position and hardened them in a hostile and contemptuous attitude towards the Dutch.

Under the black cloud of an estrangement from our closest ally, caused by this sudden shock, and in the midst of continuous and senseless agitation and violence, we had to take up the work of rebuilding the country and preparing it for a national existence. The shadows of the camps and the hysteria of a sorely oppressed people surrounded us; the forces of construction and stability were few and seriously crippled; outside assistance depended on the British, who had themselves greatly suffered and felt compelled to impose conditions which lamed our action and at the same time seemed to put us in the wrong. No meeting of minds existed in the democratic world concerning Southeast Asiatic policy that

might have offered support and endowed us with the strength of a joint effort. But the greatness of the task and the love of the country gave Dutchmen and Indonesians the strength to carry on, notwithstanding the sufferings of the past and the threats of the present.

CHAPTER NINE

The Nationalist Revolt

THE PROSPERITY sphere lay in shivers. The once busy ports were silted up and full of wreckage. The roads were deserted and often reduced to strings of potholes. Railroads had stopped or were irregularly run with ramshackle and dirty rolling stock. Production had fallen very low; most estates and factories were closed; famine and near-famine were widespread, even in countries that used to have a considerable surplus of foodstuffs. Trade was dead but for the vicious doings of the black marketeers. Whole cities were destroyed by Allied bombing or Japanese destructiveness; others were in a dreary state of disrepair, with the weeds and the wild grass covering the gardens, the squares, and the sides of the streets. An atmosphere of sullen resentment, sometimes bordering on despair, hung over these once lively and happy regions. Only in the rural villages the unceasing industry of the peasant kept up a semblance of the old prosperity; but even there many were hungry in the lean season and everybody went in rags. The monetary system had ceased to function almost everywhere.

The Japanese had left little of the former well-appointed

and delicately balanced economic machinery in working order. And we must not forget that only through the continuous and smooth operation of this machinery had the Southeast Asiatic countries been capable of providing their crowded millions with the essentials of life and of equipping themselves with the modern conveniences of lighting, transport, and communications. An average yearly export of 6 to 7 U.S. dollars per head, or \$25 to \$35 per family, meant much in a region where the average yearly income per family did not rise above \$100 and often remained below that level.¹ A constant care for and improvement of production for the home market and of the apparatus of distribution perhaps meant still more. Unless all this could be restored to a reasonable degree, the general decline would inevitably continue and the gloomy prospect of decay, distress, and dearth could not be relieved.

It will most probably be impossible for many years to estimate the cost in lives and misery of these years of occupation and postwar turbulence. For the present it seems out of the question to organize a census of even very modest reliability. The abundance of nature and the retiring disposition of the people cover many sores that would be glaringly conspicuous in the West. But in certain cases we get a glimpse of the terrible truth and find that, for instance, the population of the island of Madura (northeast of Java) has diminished by a third of its original 2.5 million. Only occasionally has the deterioration taken the aspect of a catastrophe, with people found dying along the streets, on the roads, and in the fields. Generally it is less spectacular: a shortening of life, an increase of infant mortality, a spread of epidemics and deficiency diseases, a progressive lowering of vitality—but all

¹ This amount, though certainly small, is not nearly as low as it looks to Westerners, because the internal price levels were considerably lower, too, than in Europe or America and certain needs, like heating, housing, and clothing are either absent or much simplified as a consequence of the tropical climate.

together an amount of human suffering that hardly bears summing up.²

On top of this came the growth of gangsterism that is the inevitable outcome of such conditions in Southeast Asia—and not only there. It prepared the ground for a much wider outbreak of violence, once the containing force of Japanese tyranny was removed and the results of Japanese education and inflammatory propaganda could come out into the open. And on top of all this came a distribution of modern arms and explosives that still defies the imagination and cannot be even approximately assessed.

The amount of this illegal armament varied with the richness of its several sources. The most abundant distribution came from the Japanese.

In Burma and the Philippines this source was probably the least plentiful, but the retreating Japanese armies must have lost equipment and abandoned dumps; the guerillas and partisans and other gangs certainly captured light arms and ammunition, and the remainders of the Japanese forces that surrendered must have left all kinds of war material in unauthorized hands, here as elsewhere. Nobody ever counted their stocks, not even where the surrender proceeded regularly; and as they had to relinquish their arms anyway there was no possibility of a checkup afterwards. Certain stores were dumped into rivers or shallow waters after being gathered in and were partially recovered by enterprising fishermen.

An important source in these countries was the Allies themselves when they provided the underground forces with munitions of war. In the confusion of the time there could

² It is curious how coldly we receive such information. The reader who finds from his Sunday paper that there is a "distressing" problem of 700,000 refugees driven from their homes by the Kashmir conflict barely feels distressed—much less, for example, than he would be by what he considers an "imperialist" police action with a few hundred casualties or by an airplane crash near home.

be no control on the ultimate destination of these supplies, and many partisans changed their allegiance rather easily or were robbed of their weapons by their less well-intentioned brethren. And still others were lost through the typical slovenliness of large fighting forces in demobilization or transferred—lawfully or unlawfully—to less careful custodians.

In Thailand the wastage may have been less serious for the country itself than elsewhere, but it seems that considerable stocks were misappropriated at a later stage and smuggled to neighbouring regions; there has also been evidence of such smuggling from Manila. In Malaya arms were introduced for guesilla activities during the war, and although occupation followed the surrender within three weeks, we may be sure that not a few Chinese traders had meanwhile replenished their stores of lethal weapons.

But the greatest leakage occurred in French Indo-China and in Indonesia, particularly in Java and Sumatra. In these territories the abandonment of arms to the revolutionaries by the enemy went ahead systematically; in Indonesia many of the Japanese-trained auxiliary troops went home with their equipment. The stocks themselves were large,³ for apart from their own supplies the Japanese had kept the armaments captured from the French, the Dutch, and other Allies. In some cases the Indonesians and the Annamites obtained their arms by force; small additions came later from illegal traffic with occupation forces and more from smuggling. Tonkin was probably also provided from China.

Numbers cannot be estimated, but as there were somewhere near a million Japanese in Southeast Asia,³ they must have been large. It certainly is no exaggeration to think in terms of 100,000 rifles, 2,000 to 3,000 machine guns, and thousands of tons of explosives—including many aerial bombs—for Java and Sumatra alone. What this must mean for the

³ In Indonesia alone we collected 325,000 Japanese: 155,000 in Java and Sumatra and 170,000 in Borneo and East Indonesia.

problem of law and order, whatever government is at the head of those countries, is easy to imagine. It certainly is the largest single factor that has contributed to the state of unrest and terrorism that prevails in the whole expanse of Southeast Asia with the exception of Ceylon and—at least to all appearances—Thailand.

The first days after the capitulation, however, brought a certain relaxation because the oppressive continuity of war and Japanese military government was suddenly broken. Boys who had been summoned away returned home, political prisoners were gradually released, the compulsory homage to the Nipponese and their God-Emperor was abolished. Hoarded goods appeared on the markets; traffic and travel limitations were no longer strictly enforced.

But this period of relief did not last long; where the revolutions mentioned in the preceding chapter broke out, it hardly even took shape. And as time progressed, scenes of unprecedented savagery followed in many of these territories; no Southeast Asiatic country which had been under Japanese occupation remained wholly free of them. We must try to understand the origins and the character of these outbursts if we want to understand the subsequent history of the area.

Underneath it all was a deep change of the nationalist spirit caused by the experiences of war and occupation. The age-long pressure of foreign rule had, in a way, been lifted by the advent of the Japanese. Though they tried hard, they had not succeeded in taking the place of their Western predecessors. They commanded no spiritual respect and therefore infused no feelings of inferiority. If they excited admiration, it was an admiration for qualities and achievements that the Southeast Asiatics felt capable of emulating: patriotism, a martial spirit, ruthlessness, and even cruelty. When they ordained that the Japanese must be considered the foremost people of Asia and must take precedence over

all the other citizens, whatever their rank, they were obeyed out of fear, but at the same time despised. Neither their outward appearance nor their mental powers put them in the same category with the white man of colonial history and legend; they were at best equals of the other Asiatics.

At the same time the ingrained and involuntary acceptance of white superiority had received an almost mortal blow. This was not in the first place, as has been superficially concluded, the result of the humiliation of the white people and of their expulsion from the community. The imprisoned white might be looked at with derision by the coarse-grained, or with a certain satisfaction by those who had a private account to settle; most of the people saw their suffering with pity and their endurance in torment with deference. But the greatest shock was in their defeat itself; in the fact that these foreigners from Europe and the United States, who had come as conquerors and had stayed as rulers and protectors, had been overthrown and had shown an inability to defend their subjects against an Asiatic invader. Although the word is not wholly adequate, they felt a kind of betrayal in this sudden downfall of a giant, who had seemed unshakable as a rock—not so much a betrayal of trust as one of faith.

Simultaneously all the accumulated and repressed feelings of nationalism burst loose. What had been felt as a secondary irritation in an otherwise stable relationship—the constant coming and going, every few years, of the individuals who exerted white supremacy—suddenly became a demonstration of the evanescence of that supremacy itself. The suspicion that only the care for their own personal and national interests was behind every action of the whites hardened again to a conviction; those who had said that their main concern was the well-being of the dependent peoples, an assertion which those peoples had begun to believe, were now seen as hypocrites or rationalizers. The Japanese made no bones about *their* intentions and motives. Colonial rule could only

mean oppression and exploitation. It was no longer acceptable; its *pax*, whether *Britannica* or *Neerlandica*, had been broken; it was felt to be merely transient and hostile. And in its stead arose the love for the "country," the mother that alone remained now that the father had deserted her.

For those who had been active in the nationalist movement, many of whom had experienced the harshness, the conservatism, the critical attitude, or the ridicule of colonial rulers, this fundamental feeling loosened the last fetters that kept in check their ambitions and their self-reliance. At last the white, who had always been there to direct, to admonish, or to censure, had gone. His establishment, where he lived, communed, and kept counsel with those of his own race and from which the native of every Southeast Asiatic country had been excluded,⁴ stood empty; if the Japanese would let them, the nationalists could step in; if the Japanese went, it would be theirs. This took material shape in the evacuation of all those European quarters, bunds, civil stations, clubs, swimming pools, and hotels where the whites had lived and associated in comfort and abundance; in the well-appointed offices, the first-class railway coaches, the motorcars and mountain resorts they no longer occupied. True, in many cases the Japanese took over and barred the entrance, but their presence was not nearly so impressive and might be temporary. There was even an ancient and widespread legend in Java, the Joyoboyo, which said that Indonesian liberty would come after an interregnum of people of yellow race, which would last only for the lifetime of a cornstalk or a fighting cock (*jagung* or *jago*); even intellectuals shared this apposite belief.

⁴ There were, of course, many individual exceptions, and in several cases the size and penetration of colonial supervision had been materially restricted by progressive grants of self-government; but as a general proposition it remained true, and very much so in the business community. The friendly and intimate relations that existed between the members of different race of the *Volksraad*, the representative chamber at Batavia, "the only really mixed club in the Orient," were probably unique.

And however immature this nationalism might yet seem; however crisscrossed by personal ambitions; however liable many of its leaders were to become corrupted by power or money: the general trend emerged so clearly that it could not be mistaken. Every Indonesian who had gained political consciousness was a nationalist and found his ideal in an independent Indonesia. Many of them were convinced of their lack of ability and experience; many wanted continued help and guidance, if possible from their Dutch friends, in the tremendous task of welding these 65 million people together into one nation; but all of them now explicitly wanted the colonial regime to come to an end and to take the direction of their people into their own hands. It could be said—and many colonials said it—that the nationalists were a minority; in the same way ripe coconuts are a minority on the coconut palm, but in time all the young ones become ripe coconuts.

The nationalist sentiment spread downward much farther in these years of occupation, when Japanese propaganda opened the way for mass incitement as long as it was directed against the West and did not concern itself with the realities of self-determination and self-government. After all, Indonesians could understand Indonesians, Burmese could speak to Burmese, and Annamites to Annamites. The ideals that were proclaimed sounded infinitely better than the day-to-day experiences under the Nipponese. Not a few of the older generation remembered the good life before the war and still doubted that all those bright promises would be realized; they feared to lose their positions, which had been so secure in the times of orderly and beneficial government. The feudal elements regarded any kind of mob excitement with apprehension, however much they might sympathize with the idea of abolition of white interference with their power. But the younger people of some intelligence or enterprise saw only prospects of the most alluring adventure.

So the positive longing for independence arose; and the

Japanese took care that hatred of the whites and fear for their return were inculcated in the minds of the militant *pemudas*. And those who turned against the oppression of their new rulers did so with the conviction that they might need Allied help but must reject a renewed submission to the colonial powers as the price of such assistance.

Below this ever-increasing number of active nationalists the majority of the villagers went on as before, at least outwardly. They tried to evade the requisitions of the conqueror and reluctantly obeyed his calls for manpower, going slow in that inimitable and almost inoffensive way of which the Orient owns the secret. They could bear shortages and suffering almost illimitably. But even among them the unrest began to grow and was to grow fast when gangsterism reappeared, recruiting those who had either the inclination or private reasons to join up, and threatening the others unless they were helpful and submissive.

For by the end of the Japanese regime the golden age of gangsterism⁵ dawned. The authority of the Japanese military government weakened and for a while nothing appeared to take its place. The number of desperadoes had vastly increased, and now a new, inspiring element took the lead in a national uprising. A flag, a national hymn proclaimed the unanimity and the sanctity of the cause, and if the real understanding of the meaning of "nation" remained absent, even the most stupid felt the uplift of fine words and sentiments. The internal cohesion was still frail and uncertain, but the revolt against foreign rule and influence could provide the necessary unity. And the instinct of looting that so easily turns even peaceable people into a raging mob found an alluring objective in all those things that were considered foreign property in those countries; and we must not forget that in many colonies—not in the Philippines—the people

⁵ I may remind the reader that the words "gang" and "gangsterism" are used for want of a better term, not in the Al Capone sense; see pp. 89 ff.

had still to learn that the institutions, the public works, the public utilities, the mines and the estates, owned by the colonial governments, were *not* foreign property but their own.

Against this background, lighter in the Philippines, where independence had been in view before the war began, but much darker where whole districts were near despair as a result of destitution, we must judge what happened in the postwar months. And yet one has to remember also that in many individual relations, and even more generally in a country like Indonesia, the mutual appreciation between the races did not vanish and the good things of the past might be temporarily lost sight of but were not quite forgotten.

Finally there was yet another factor in the complicated structure, which was to prove of great though varied and variable importance. In practically all the colonial countries of Southeast Asia there are tribes and sections of the population which have lagged behind in modern development or which are separated from the bulk of the people by their particular history or their religion or their social and economic status. The Christian Karens in Burma, the simple hill folk of Laos and Cambodia in French Indo-China, the Mohammedan Moros and the pagan Igorots in the Philippines, the New Guinea Papuans and the Borneo Dyaks as well as the Christian Amboinese and Minahassans in Indonesia, all stand somewhat apart from the dominant groups with their older civilization and greater political skill. In other parts the villagers are too poor to bother about politics, as in Tonkin, or too dependent on a ruling class of landowners, as in the Philippines and Burma. Again there is the special case of Malaya, where the autochthonous Malays feel threatened and oppressed by the immigrant Chinese.

In all these cases the likelihood of sudden national independence was not applauded unreservedly. In the experience of these people the white, who considered himself superior to

all brown or yellow men, dispensed a better justice than the native cousin of a more developed race or greater wealth, who considered them as his inferiors. They objected against exchanging colonial rule for the rule of those cousins. They wanted at least a guarantee against being overpowered, or a continuation of white protection, or a state or status of their own. Their attitude was determined by what freedom they could expect from the pending reforms or the exploding revolutions, and as they were sometimes militant enough to go and defend themselves against all unwanted comers, they constituted a serious problem for the unity of the nations that were to be built in those colonial areas. And even where the different groups of the population were not particularly depressed or backward, their local and tribal patriotism resented a construction in which the most numerous section would become the master of the new situation.

In the Philippines the postwar troubles arose primarily from the rebellion of these minorities and of the exploited tenants, who no longer wanted to suffer extortion once they had got hold of arms. Communism appealed to them if they had some political consciousness; others simply accepted any system that promised them an opportunity to soak the rich or to maintain the freedom of their hills. In Burma the confused fighting for and against the Japanese, or against both the Japanese and the returning British, was further complicated by the threatening internal schisms between political groupings, particularly the communist-led poor against the landowners, and racial subdivisions, particularly the Karens against the Burmese. The temporary coalition under the late Mr. Aung San could hardly conceal these rifts as long as British supremacy still offered a common target; but Mr. Aung San was murdered on July 19, 1947, and the British left Burma independent and prostrate on January 1, 1948. The arms for civil war were well distributed.

In Malaya nationalism had no clear-cut chance because

of the extremely composite character of the population, in which neither the Chinese nor the Malays have a working over-all majority and there is as yet no such thing as a common citizenship. There was a certain amount of violence and robbery in the first months after the capitulation. A political dispute arose over the British plan to reduce the Malay sultanates to a kind of administrative districts within a Malayan Union, but the policy was reversed and a Malayan Federation constituted on January 21, 1948, in which the native states retained a better-defined identity. During those first postwar years⁶ the country was a busy and prospering oasis in the Far East, too busy profiting from high prices for its products (rubber, tin, and copra), and from a great and illegitimate trade with the commercially inexperienced republicans in Java and Sumatra, to have much time for political thoughts and adventures. Some strikes against measures to regularize and limit that trade were given a political character, and agents from several disturbed countries and parties were very active in Singapore, but the real trouble began later, when prosperity began to dwindle and the signals for a more "positive" communist action had gone up in Moscow. This action, again, did not so much lack arms as adherents, because the fundamental antagonism between the Malays and the Chinese prevented a countrywide appeal based on a common nationalist ideal.

The most violent and wholesale revolutionary outbursts, right after the Japanese capitulation, occurred in French Indo-China and Indonesia. They offer the most complete material for a study of their character.

The Republic of Viet Nam started in the north of French Indo-China⁶ and for a time was free to move at will under the protection of the Chinese army of occupation and with the direct assistance of quite a number of Japanese. It is not improbable that the Chinese hoped to be left in charge

⁶ See pp. 159, 176 f.

indefinitely and to annex this former tributary province to China. Their conduct towards the French, cooped up with Sainteny in Hanoi, was decidedly unfriendly, and it is doubtful whether the Annamites were very happy about their presence.

But the revolution went on, and soon the extreme—partially communist—elements in the political coalition dominated. The republic assumed a dictatorial character; the old mandarins and civil servants were discharged, and the elective village authorities replaced by appointed and closely supervised committees. Terrorism struck down the opposing moderates; thousands were imprisoned and killed, and the farcical “general elections,” soon organized, gave the familiar 97 per cent majority to the party in power, Viet Minh. The means to keep the sentiments at fever heat were an out-and-out campaign of accusations and invective against the French, who were suspected of the most sinister plans, and a general promise of “no taxes” to the population, combined with an ever less gentle squeezing of the ex-mandarins and the well to do.

The republican government counted a number of moderates among its members, but behind the ministers were the younger revolutionaries, who did the work and made the decisions and belonged to the extreme left. By February, 1946, however, their situation became precarious. They had not yet had enough time to organize—the preparation under Japanese tutorship had been very short—and the country was already chaotic and ungovernable. In the south (Cochin-China) General Leclerc was able to start restoring law and order with the forces brought in by December. China was but a doubtful and not quite disinterested friend; other international support was not forthcoming. It is a curious fact that while international newspapermen flocked in droves to Indonesia to boost Sukarno and his followers and to blame the Dutch, who were at that time practically powerless and sorely pressed, they let themselves be kept out of Indo-China and

left Ho Chi Minh out in the cold. It is equally curious that the latter failed to get help from his communist comrades; were they speculating on an easy win in France, where they were to enter the government, and did they want to avoid prejudicing their chances of infiltration, as they might do by siding openly with the rebels? Or were there other reasons in Moscow for this particular party line?

Meanwhile Sainteny had made contact with Ho Chi Minh and the French were negotiating for the withdrawal of the Chinese troops, in return for which they offered the free transfer of the part of the Yunnan railroad situated in China, and the promise of a free port in Haiphong for the transit of goods to and from that country. And then a direct landing of French troops in Haiphong, the harbour of Hanoi, was organized, to be accomplished in the beginning of March, 1946.

An agreement was put before the republican government which described its future status as a "free state, forming part of the Indo-Chinese Federation and of the French Union."⁷ It was very vague; although the Republic of Viet Nam was to have its own government, parliament, army, and finance, its external representation and its precise status were to be reserved for further discussion. Its territory—particularly the question of the inclusion of the important province of Cochin-China, the rice belt of the country—was to be decided later by referendum. Meanwhile Viet Nam would peacefully receive the landing of the French troops, part of which were to occupy a military base, while another part would co-operate with the republican forces for the restoration of law and order.

The cessation of hostilities was to be energetically furthered by both parties, who would order a stand-fast, and an improvement of the atmosphere was to be brought about for a rapid resumption of the negotiations. This agreement was

⁷ Which was the new name for the French empire.

signed on March 6, the day of the landing. "You have been stronger than I," said Ho Chi Minh to Sainteny. But had he?

The entry of the troops did not come off without incidents; the ships were fired at by the Chinese. There was to be yet another attack by the Chinese on French troops in Hanoi in April before their withdrawal was completed, but by showing—in both cases—what a British observer called "an inhuman discipline," the French succeeded in preventing an extension of hostilities.

It may have looked for a moment as if peace and co-operation were on their way, but the next months showed that the agreement existed only on paper. The differences of opinion that transpired during the subsequent conferences of Along Bay, Dalat, and Paris were significant for the real position of nationalism in Southeast Asia. They also proved that such agreements, concluded in a hurry or under duress, may be useful to tide over the immediate difficulties, but can hardly touch the fundamental problems of what is essentially a complete reversal of relations.

Viet Nam and the French started from almost completely opposite assumptions. For Viet Nam independence in the international sense came first; the French Union, which in their conception should be based on an international treaty, second; the Indo-Chinese Federation, which they saw only as an unavoidable form of co-operation of independent states within a narrowly circumscribed field as long as all of French Indo-China had not yet been absorbed by the republic, came very much third. For the French the Union was the international entity, with a possibility of an important transfer of authority to the Federation, in which they would have a substantial influence. Viet Nam itself would merely get a large measure of internal autonomy, and the whole reorganization was to be seen as a change of French imperial constitutional law.

Again Viet Nam took it for granted that the whole of French

Indo-China, with the exception of the Kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos, would be its territory, as the eastern and southern parts are mainly inhabited by Annamites, the principal exception being the more primitive tribes in the hills. The referendum was seen by them as an administrative formality. The French, however, did not recognize the authority of the republic south of Tonkin or of 16° latitude; for them the referendum had to be a very real and unbiassed consultation of public opinion, particularly in Cochin-China, which is legally a French colony and not a protectorate like Annam and Tonkin. But at the same time rice-producing Cochin-China is the mainstay of Annamite economy.

Although the new structure met with little opposition in Cambodia and Laos, or among the hill tribes of Annam—all these people being rather intimidated by the pugnacious and overbearing Viet Minh—the fighting in Cochin-China continued. The French had begun a police action in this province early in 1946; Viet Nam, assuming that the gangs operating there belonged to their “army,” decried these actions as infringements of the stand-fast. The north remained comparatively quiet only as long as the French did not move out of Haiphong and Hanoi.

It soon became obvious that no permanent agreement would be reached. The Viet Minh proceeded to organize a resistance that grew ever more violent, and rapidly moved in the direction of communism. All negotiations proved abortive. A movement in Cochin-China to organize that province, with French assistance, under a government of its own, further inflamed the Viet Minh and was answered by a campaign of terrorism and intimidation against native “collaborators.” Even Saigon and the surrounding country remained dangerous; there were continuous infiltrations into Cambodia and Laos, and the prospect of an orderly and equitable solution of the conflict receded.

It would seem that the structure contemplated by the

French still contained too many "colonial" elements; the general urge of nationalism to manage its own affairs on an international level could find no satisfaction in a union of which the centralized direction would be predominantly French, or in a federation which was seen as a stratagem to curb the impetuosity of the politically ambitious by chaining them to the slower pace of the politically diffident. On the other hand, the government of Ho Chi Minh had very few promising aspects, and the extremely disturbed and chaotic condition of the country made it almost unthinkable that he would succeed in re-establishing even the minimum of law and order which the new state would need for its inception. And a constant influx of arms and revolutionary reinforcements across its Chinese and Thai frontiers could not be prevented.

So by the end of 1946 no further steps towards a peaceful solution appeared possible. The curious state of regression towards a purely Asiatic isolationism, accompanied by a superstitious mysticism that even got hold of the better-educated, obsessed the republican movement and an increasingly savage propaganda had for its aim the total expulsion of the French and the extermination of their Annamite and other indigenous associates. A rupture was inevitable, and in December negotiations were broken off and the agreement lapsed.⁸

In Indonesia the nationalist revolution had had more time to mature; Japanese policy had, at first, created possibilities for underground action and then actively promoted the vio-

⁸ An interesting side light on these negotiations, which at first were conducted with the charm which the French know how to infuse into their dealings with coloured races—against whom they feel little or no racial prejudice—is provided by the demand of Viet Nam for nationalization of several French enterprises and for participation in the capital and the direction of others. Although the Viet Nam proposals included payment for the values to be expropriated, nobody had a very clear idea about the way in which these payments were going to be effected. As the communist influence grew, expropriation without compensation became the more popular (and realistic) slogan.

lent seizure of power at the time of the capitulation. There was, moreover, the beginning of an Indonesian administration, at least in Java and parts of Sumatra, because the conduct of several government services was progressively transferred to Indonesian civil servants, among whom there were a number of capable men. And, finally, the Allied forces came very late and slowly and the British Commander in Chief almost at once recognized the republican authorities as such.⁹

In order to understand the revolutionary development of the first months after the capitulation it is necessary to go back to the days just before August 17, 1945, when the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed.

The preparations for independence made under Japanese supervision had not passed the paper stage. Those who were appointed by the military government for this work were either nationalist leaders of the pre-war generations or the higher Indonesian officials, who had made their career in the Netherlands Indies government service. As defeat drew near, a number of these officials were appointed to more important posts: as "governors" of the former residencies, or as heads of services and even departments. The group as a whole had a not inconsiderable average ability; it was rather conservative and of a cautious disposition. There were among them, however, certain more militant elements as well as a number of doubtful characters—profiteers and collaborators, with contacts in several directions. The unmistakable leftists (socialist and communist) had never been very popular with the Japanese, who eschewed "dangerous thoughts." The orthodox Moslem element, however, was well represented, as Islam had been one of the instruments of Japanese propaganda against the West and the Western-minded Christians.

Outside this group a number of clandestine parties and bands, mostly consisting of students and other young people,

⁹ See p. 187.

were plotting for political insurrection against the Japanese. Many of them had strong socialist tendencies, others were simply nationalists without any definite ideology; all hated the men from Nippon. This hatred was almost general by 1945; from then on their action could be certain of a wide popular appeal. Among their leading figures was Mr. Sutan Shahrir, who had been interned before the war by the colonial government—a confirmed socialist with a well-poised, rather philosophical, and strong character. Mr. Amir Shari-fuddin belonged to the same category; he had had only a minor brush with the law, but he was much less stable, though very intelligent. Others were of a more flamboyant and adventurous type, but all were militant and keen on action. They had connections with Sukarno and Hatta and with the semi-militarized youths under Japanese training.

The mass of the people were sick and tired of their Japanese rulers. In many parts of the country economic conditions were bad; gangsterism had increased everywhere. Then, suddenly, the proud tyrants of yesterday collapsed; the general hatred was left without a clear objective and the seat of authority became vacant.

What followed possessed the elements of a melodrama. The revolutionary organizations in and near Batavia decided on August 15 that the time for independence had come and that Sukarno was the man to proclaim it. His collaboration with the Japanese was passed over; if his methods were open to criticism, he had always been a nationalist and an arresting figure, widely known and with great oratorical powers. He was approached immediately, but he hesitated; he shrank from taking the fateful step without at least some further preparation and the consent of the Japanese military government. Others had qualms; Shahrir doubted whether the Indonesians were indeed capable of taking the full responsibility of government. But the younger hotheads prevailed; in the comings and goings of these days there appears only one

oldish man. In the disguise of a common labourer from Bantam (West Java), he entered the house of one of the young leaders towards nightfall on the fourteenth; he departed shortly afterwards, but he seemed to put determination into the minds of those he met. He was Tan Malaka, communist leader in the rebellion of 1926, who had remained outside Indonesia until he returned in stealth during the occupation and now made his reappearance after twenty years.

As a result of heated discussions Sukarno and Hatta were kidnapped before dawn on the sixteenth and brought to a swamp-bound district northeast of Batavia, which had been occupied by armed youths. There, after more pressure, they agreed to return to Batavia and proclaim the Republic of Indonesia. Among the people who persuaded them appear many names of the extreme left and of the more sinister type of plotters, together with overstrung youngsters. The company returned at midnight between August 16 and 17 to the house of the Japanese Rear Admiral Maeda, where the proclamation of independence was signed at two in the morning. It began: "We, the people of Indonesia. . . ." It was broadcast by the Indonesian telegraph operators of Domei (the Japanese news agency); the subsequent official denial by the Japanese authorities came too late.

But what had been pure melodrama soon became a tragedy. The leaders at Batavia still tried to obtain some kind of legalization from the Japanese; they formed a first cabinet and tried to organize an army out of the semi-military *Heiho* and *Peta* organizations. But as the news of the revolution spread and the people recovered from the first shock of the Japanese surrender, the long-endured suffering and the inflammatory propaganda of all those years of occupation exploded in an untrammelled outburst of vindictiveness and violence. The criminal section of the community, ~~both~~ professional and potential, soon took its chance, as it always does when a vacuum of authority develops. And the continued

absence of any sign of Allied troops and Allied activity left this mounting wave of blind rebellion free to swamp the country.

The pent-up emotions, the accumulated hatred of the oppressor, vented themselves, in a number of cases, on the Japanese. But these bullies of yesterday had today suddenly become very meek and indifferent. They moved themselves out of the way, leaving arms and munitions behind. And as they could still give a good account of themselves when forced to defend their lives, the unchained instincts of brutality sought another objective. And this objective was found in the Dutch, who were just emerging from imprisonment or entering—at last—with the Allied forces; in the Chinese, who still possessed the commodities that had become so scarce; in the cautious and the timid among the Indonesians and those, like the Amboinese, who had remained loyal to the Dutch flag; in individual enemies; and finally in everyone who held public office and as such had been the instrument of Japanese or any kind of authority.

The months from October till the end of December, 1945, saw horrible scenes of cruelty and mass hysteria. In Surabaya all the succeeding phases of the French Revolution from the first seizure of power to the terror seemed to follow each other in a few weeks, ending with a gruesome "people's tribunal" in the principal club, where a number of defenceless Dutch and Eurasians were "tried" and delivered to the mob to be cruelly clubbed and speared to death.

This "*bersiap*"¹⁰ period will not be easily forgotten. It certainly was not the intention of the republican leaders to incite this wanton inhumanity, but they did little to prevent it. On the contrary, their wild accusations and fiery propaganda against the Dutch, the negative means to consolidate

¹⁰ A *bersiap* meaning "Be ready!"—the signal for mob violence against some unfortunate passer-by. Probably some two to three thousand Dutch and Eurasians were thus killed, both men and women; the number of non-Dutch victims cannot be estimated with any degree of precision.

a following that hardly recognized their positive authority, kept the nationalist sentiment at fever heat. And yet there are numerous instances to prove that all this hate and violence did not spring from any inner conviction, but was an artificially directed reaction to the wretchedness of the occupation years. Wherever the terror relaxed and the threatening looks of rabid *pemudas* were turned the other way, the former friendly relationship resurged and peaceful people of different race appreciated one another as of old.

It is easy to understand that at such a time and under such circumstances the renewal of contacts between the Dutch and Indonesians was a difficult operation. The unconsidered recognition of the republican authorities by the British Commander in Chief (and the disregard of the legal government) had created grave repercussions among the Dutch both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. There were few who could grasp the difficulties of the British position; those who had undergone every kind of maltreatment by the Japanese for over three years felt themselves completely let down by their ally; those in Holland who were still wrestling with the problems of postwar adjustment saw decisions that should rightfully be theirs jeopardized by the rashness of their liberators. It is an undeniable fact that this unfortunate beginning has gravely impeded the solution of the problem.¹¹

Meanwhile the first republican cabinet, which contained a number of avowed collaborators and certain very shady characters, had been replaced on November 14 by a much more competent and trustworthy group under the leadership of Sutan Shahrir. Before that happened a first contact had been made by me with Sukarno, which elicited strong crit-

¹¹ For several months the Dutch at Batavia were not allowed to repossess themselves of the radio transmitting station and the printing presses, which had been seized by the republicans and were used against them. The Allied forces made daily broadcasts of a very neutral character and ~~re-~~ closely supervised the more extravagant republican outbursts. The Dutch case could not be presented to the people.

icism both in Batavia and at The Hague, but somehow a bridge had to be built between the two parties if we wanted to explore the possibilities of reconstruction. The British had become convinced that even their very limited aims could not be achieved by sitting down in a restricted quarter of Batavia; tens of thousands of internees were in imminent danger elsewhere and were dependent on the constantly weakening protection of Japanese troops. Several other cities were occupied and a number of camps in the interior rescued by force, but the brigade occupying Surabaya—the second biggest city of Java—met with a serious reverse; the city had to be captured by a division in bloody combat. This clash showed the trance-like character of the mass psychosis, strengthened by the traditional belief in invulnerability procured by magic amulets and incantations; almost unarmed boys tried to rush the advancing tanks and armoured cars.

The Netherlands government—a grouping towards the left (except the communists) with a provisional mandate, as elections could not be organized until May, 1946—had to shape its policy in a tense atmosphere, full of recrimination and contradictory emotions. It was convinced that self-determination had to be accorded to the Indonesian people, but at the same time it saw no possibility of rehabilitating the country without an interim period, during which the Netherlands would still carry their part of the responsibility. After the initial agitation had died down a bit and the Shahrir government had had a chance to consolidate its more moderate line of conduct, the Dutch principles were formulated in a statement, issued on February 10, 1946, which said:

The Netherlands Government . . . take the view that the peoples of Indonesia should, after a given preparatory period, be enabled freely to decide their political destiny.

Therefore the Netherlands Government . . . consider it their duty to do everything in their power in order to create and to fulfil as soon as possible the conditions which will permit such a free

decision to be taken and which will assure its international recognition, thereby complying with article 73 of the United Nations Charter.

The Netherlands Government therefore intend, in consultation with authoritative representatives of the Indonesians, elected from a large variety of groups, to draft a structure for the Kingdom and for Indonesia based upon a democratic partnership.

This new organization is to be maintained for a limited period, believed to suffice for the fulfilment of the conditions for the free decision referred to above. At the end of this period, the partners shall decide independently about the continuation of their relations on the basis of a then complete and voluntary partnership. Any difference of opinion as to the question whether the period should be extended before a free decision is possible, shall be solved by a procedure of conciliation or, if necessary, by arbitration.

This statement and the fact that Sutan Shahrir's cabinet had survived the first attacks on its moderation by the wilder elements in the interior made it possible to begin real negotiations in March. Both parties were assisted by the wisdom and experience of British Ambassador Sir Archibald Clark Kerr,¹² who was made available by the British government (still responsible for the Supreme Allied Command in Indonesia). Although many thousands of ex-internees were as yet unaccounted for in the interior and the shootings on the narrow Allied perimeters in Java and Sumatra went on day after day, the discussions, after a laborious start, began to look more promising. The French agreement with Viet Nam, which became known by the tenth of March, offered some inspiration, and at the end of the month the republican delegation entered proposals which sufficiently approached the Netherlands' point of view to serve as a basis for discussion; it was agreed that this discussion should take place in Holland.

¹² Who later became Lord Inverchapel and the United Kingdom's Ambassador at Washington.

The main features of the proposals, which were couched in the form of a draft treaty, were:

1. Recognition by the Netherlands government that the government of the republic exercised *de facto* authority in Java and Sumatra, with the exception of the areas occupied by the Allied forces.
2. Agreement between the two governments to co-operate in order to convert the Netherlands Indies into a federal free state that was to become a partner with the Netherlands, Surinam, and Curaçao in a commonwealth along the general lines of the statement of February 10.
3. Agreement concerning the entry of Allied and Dutch forces for the purpose of collecting and evacuating the Japanese and liberating the ex-internees and prisoners of war.
4. Agreement on an immediate cessation of hostilities upon the conclusion of the treaty, after which discussions were to be initiated about the construction of the Free State and the Commonwealth, with an agreed participation of representatives of the parts of Indonesia outside Java and Sumatra, and of non-Indonesian minorities.
5. An escape clause for territories that might refuse to join the Free State, where the ultimate constitutional position was to be decided upon by referendum.

This draft was discussed in April, 1946, between the Netherlands government, a republican delegation and a number of non-republican Indonesians at the Hoge Veluwe, a government country estate in the province of Guelderland. The conditions for accepting a sweeping reform with the latitude necessary in such cases were not favourable. The Netherlands ministry had no parliamentary basis; the outcome of the first

elections after the occupation, to be held in May, was uncertain. The vehement reaction to what were considered the iniquities of the Allied measures after the Japanese surrender had not died down. By unduly exalting the revolutionary—and, many said, Japanese-inspired—government of the republic and proportionally depreciating the legal authority, the Allied command had made it difficult, if not impossible, for many who did not object to a progressive policy of emancipation to recognize the republic as the strongest exponent of Indonesian nationalism. Its administrative weakness and the irresponsible violence of its followers added to Dutch distrust. Our colonial history had made us genuinely concerned about the future of the country; our national character with its excess of caution and its deficiency of imagination stood in the way of a large gesture that might have given the history of the conflict a turn for the better.

Whether that would have been the result of a broad acceptance of the republican proposals is not certain. There is no reason to suppose that the problem of restoring law and order would have become much easier; the armed gangs surely would have continued to disturb the peace until they had been disciplined, disbanded, or eliminated. Endless worries would have accompanied the implementation of the treaty, for it soon became evident that in proposing it Shahrir could not count on a majority support in Jogjakarta, where the republican government had begun to isolate itself from the outer world. But a successful, liberal, and quick solution of the over-all conflict—though only on paper—would undoubtedly have strengthened his hand and drawn the moderates together on the side of constructive action. A less unfortunate beginning could have made this possible, as it seemed beyond all doubt that the sentiment of a strong majority in the Netherlands was against the continuation of colonialism, if only the change could be made in an orderly and legal way.

Whatever the possibilities, they did not materialize. There

were objections to the proposed form of an international treaty and to admitting republican authority over Sumatra, where the situation was, to say the least, confused. Apart from other, minor differences these objections went straight against the core of republican sentiment, which wanted a maximum of scope and status for the republic prior to any engagement. On these rocks the negotiations, which had been sailing along so propitiously, foundered, and shortly afterwards the course of events in Jogjakarta and elsewhere proved that on the republican side the minds were even less prepared for a meeting from which a more lasting harmony could spring. Shahrir was forced to revert to the original demand of a full recognition of republican independence, to be followed by a special treaty. He had to reconstruct his cabinet with more radical and irresponsible elements; he began to look for international support, beginning with an offer of rice to famishing India. Even so he was kidnapped, together with some others, in the night of June 27, 1946, and held in custody by communist-inspired youths until he was set free by the sudden uncompromising support of Sukarno and Hatta.

In the meantime the political and economic situation in Java and Sumatra began to show signs of a further deterioration. Although the mass hysteria of the first months had somewhat subsided, the struggle for power among the local political and military bosses with its attendant phenomena of terrorism and assassination went on. Trained administrators were replaced by executive committees in which either every member followed his own inclination, or the man with the strongest bodyguard dominated. Sometimes a class of traditional chieftains was completely removed or exterminated, as in Achin and East Sumatra. In certain districts the Moslem orthodoxy got the upper hand; in others the radicals triumphed with their slogans of nationalization, equalization of property and income, and sovereignty of the people.

A yet more corrupting influence found its origin in an ex-

ternal trade that was initiated in these months by merchant-adventurers of various races, who were looking with avidity at the stocks of much-wanted products in republican territory and found sympathetic partners in certain republican authorities, particularly the leaders of armed groups, who wished to acquire additional armaments and to enrich themselves and their followers with the much-coveted import goods that could be bought on the restocked markets outside. This trade indiscriminately exported native produce and stocks or capital goods which were the property of others, and as it was conducted from the Indonesian side by people with hardly any commercial experience, the country as a whole sustained fearful losses. In 1946 alone the returns on republican trade with Singapore, with exports totalling between 100 and 150 million United States dollars, did not exceed 40 per cent of that value at the utmost. The people at large profited little, if at all, by it; the proceeds went to the soldiers and officials and political leaders and their retinues, or were converted into more combat equipment. The corrupting influence of these generally illegitimate transactions can be imagined, as can be the attraction of these easy profits on a certain type—not only Chinese—of international trade. The Singapore authorities were for a long time unable to do much about a traffic by which Malaya gained excessively, both in private incomes and in foreign exchange. A maritime control, which had to be instituted at long last by the patient Dutch,¹³ was met with loud accusations of blockade and legal proceedings by some of the disappointed profiteers.¹⁴

The outlook had grown dim by the middle of the year. Although the Dutch forces were gradually taking over the

¹³ It was not formally established until January, 1947.

¹⁴ The Isbrandtsen Line, whose ship *Martin Behrman* had been seized for loading estates property illegally confiscated by the republic, summoned me before the United States District Court of Southern New York as "head or leader of a group of armed or militarized persons, calling themselves the Netherlands Indies government." These legal proceedings were disallowed by the United States authorities.

scattered outposts from the British-Indian troops, the last of these could not leave until the end of November. Only on that day did the divided responsibility cease for Java and Sumatra—a situation that of necessity led to a tangled and wavering policy, however good the personal relations might be between the main executants. For the interests of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands with regard to Indonesia diverged in many respects and an Allied agreement on a Southeast Asiatic platform seemed farther off than ever. The occupied areas were narrow and overcrowded. The worst days, when murder and starvation had been rampant, were past, but even so traffic with the rice-producing neighbourhood was everywhere prevented by armed gangs and famine could only be staved off by a series of emergency measures. On the borders the soldiers stood guard night and day, sniped at or threatened by mines and booby traps laid under cover of darkness, and yet forbidden to follow the attackers across the demarcation lines. Nevertheless they maintained a security behind those lines that attracted numberless refugees from the other side,¹⁵ as a rule destitute and hungry, in a constant stream that sometimes swelled to thousands, as was the case when the Chinese population of Tangerang, west of Batavia, was mobbed by excited republicans in June.

And yet through all this period of bitterness, tension, and misunderstanding the rift between the peoples never became complete. Personal relations remained friendly and even intimate, and however fiercely isolated Jogjakarta broadcast the villainy of the Dutch, the Indonesians who lived in daily contact with them continued to trust their probity and kindness. There were curious anomalies: Batavia obtained its electricity and water from works outside the border, under republican management; republican institutions like the medical college and some municipal services continued to function—

¹⁵ Hardly anybody crossed voluntarily in the opposite direction.

not very efficiently and not always for the public good alone—within the city.

A brighter scene was presented by the islands outside Java and Sumatra: Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, the Lesser Sunda Islands from Bali to Timor and New Guinea. The surrender of the Japanese in those islands had been taken more quickly and more effectively by the ready-to-hand Australians; only in some spots (South Celebes, South Borneo, and Bali) had arms been dispersed in any quantities. There the Netherlands Indies government could take over full responsibility on July 14, 1946, and on the following day the first gathering of representatives from all these islands was convened at Malino, a mountain resort some fifty miles east of Macassar, to discuss their political future.

The prevailing fashion of the time, which found a Machiavellian design in everything the Dutch did or proposed, has for a long time tried to label this gathering as a puppet show and the territorial organizations that had their origin in its resolutions as puppet states. In reality it was an important beginning of reconstruction, not less important in the realm of achievement and understanding than the republic was in the realm of ideas. Those who were present soon found that it was no sham performance.

Three things were greatly clarified by the conference, which was held in a peaceful atmosphere, free from any constraint. First of all the delegates, who were people coming from every corner of the area, were overwhelmingly in favour of a federal structure of Indonesia. Although many—possibly a majority—were strongly impressed by the republican revolution, they did not belong to the restricted class of politicians, who, moving in a world of ideas and centralized action, lose the intimacy with local and regional life and view the people as an unthinking mass, to be moved in the sole interest of over-all revolutionary strategy. They knew from daily ex-

perience—dating from the time when the colonial government at Batavia was equally unmindful of the difficulties and desires at the periphery—how hard it would be to obey a distant national government if it were to attempt the regulation of the local and regional life in detail. The conference made them, if anything, more aware of the existing differences between the Hinduistic Balinese, the Christian people from Amboina and the Minahassa and neglected Flores, the Moslems of South Celebes and Borneo, and the pagan Dyaks and Papuans. They also felt the bond of a common nationalism, without, for the moment, clearly realizing how the nation as a whole was going to look and work. As a matter of fact, the accent on unity came at least as often from the Dutch chair as from the Indonesian meeting.

In the second place it was a revelation for the Dutch—at least for me—that those who particularly wished the special relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands to continue were keenest on a very early independence for Indonesia. They found a guarantee in that relationship that we would not leave them in the lurch when they would have to manage their own affairs. But independence, national self-expression, had to come first, with the shortest possible practical preparation; only a self-respecting Indonesian nation would be able to accept Dutch assistance and turn it to the best and most enduring account.

And, thirdly, they very much wanted that assistance, but not in the old didactic and condescending way. They wanted neither a Dutch schoolmaster nor a Dutch Santa Claus, but capable friends who would advise them honestly and with the interest of the country at heart, and leave them to learn by their own mistakes. The conference met more in committee—without Dutch direction—than in plenary session, where I was chairman. The results were above expectation and satisfied both the Indonesians and the Dutch.

From Malino stemmed those member states that were to

be so much ridiculed and reviled by the republicans and by what is mistakenly called world opinion: East Indonesia, West Borneo, West Java, East Sumatra, and others. They had to rebuild their shaken communities under the most difficult circumstances and became the first really organized member states of the future United States of Indonesia. They did not feel compelled to maintain an artificial unitarianism, because they no longer felt threatened in the realization of their nationalism, and now are able to demonstrate a healthy decentralization that may well be one of the surest and most stable foundations of the Indonesia of the future.¹⁶ They have also gone a long way towards the solution of the problem of coexistence and co-operation between the various races in the archipelago.

As the days went on it became ever more evident that another endeavour had to be made to break the deadlock between the main contending parties. Another British ambassador offered his services as an intermediary in the person of Lord Killearn (formerly Sir Miles Lampson), Special Commissioner for Southeast Asia in Singapore. Again the beginning was difficult, but a Commission General of three members¹⁷—with myself as the fourth—appointed by the Netherlands government for this purpose, put a new aspect on the negotiations. This time it looked as if there would be a sufficient delegation of authority to produce results, if results were possible.

The Commission General, treating with a republican delegation again headed by Mr. Shahrir, indeed achieved two agreements: a truce on October 14 and a general agreement on November 15, 1946; the last became known as the Lingga-

¹⁶ A considerable number of republicans are federalists, too, in their heart of hearts. Only the fear of disunity in the face of the "enemy" has kept them from saying so.

¹⁷ Professor W. Schermerhorn, ex-prime minister (Labour), Mr. M. van Poll, M.P. (Catholic), and Mr. F. K. de Boer, director of a shipping company and ex-mayor of Amsterdam.

jati Agreement after a little village in republican territory, where the final—and decisive—sessions took place in the presence of Mr. Sukarno and Mr. Hatta.

The truce agreement fixed the demarcation lines between the opposite forces on the position as of the date of its conclusion. The main stipulations of the Linggajati Agreement, which had still to be approved by the Netherlands States General ¹⁸ and by the Central National Committee of Indonesia, ¹⁹ read as follows:

ARTICLE I. The Netherlands Government recognizes the Government of the Republic of Indonesia as exercising *de facto* authority over Java, Madura, and Sumatra. The areas occupied by Allied or Netherlands forces shall be included gradually, through mutual co-operation, in the Republican territory.

ARTICLE II. The Netherlands Government and the Government of the Republic shall co-operate in the rapid formation of a sovereign, democratic state on a federal basis to be called the United States of Indonesia.

ARTICLE III. The United States of Indonesia shall comprise the entire territory of The Netherlands Indies, with the provision, however, that in case the population of any territory, after due consultation with the other territories, should decide by democratic process that they are not, or not yet, willing to join the United States of Indonesia, they can establish a special relationship for such a territory to the United States of Indonesia and to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

ARTICLE IV. The component parts of the United States of Indonesia shall be the Republic of Indonesia, Borneo, and the Great East without prejudice to the right of the population of any territory to decide by democratic process that its position in the United States of Indonesia shall be arranged otherwise.

¹⁸ The traditional name of the Dutch parliament.

¹⁹ A body appointed by President Sukarno, the K(omite) N(asional) I(ndonesia) P(usat).

ARTICLE V. The constitution of the United States of Indonesia shall be determined by a constituent assembly, composed of the democratically nominated representatives of the Republic and of the other future partners of the United States of Indonesia. . . .

ARTICLE VI. To promote the joint interests of The Netherlands and Indonesia, the Netherlands Government and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia shall co-operate in the establishment of a Netherlands-Indonesian Union by which the Kingdom of the Netherlands, comprising The Netherlands, The Netherlands Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao, shall be converted into said Union, consisting on the one hand of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, comprising The Netherlands, Surinam, and Curaçao, and on the other hand of the United States of Indonesia.

ARTICLE VII.

C. The joint interests shall be considered to be co-operation on foreign relations, defence, and, as far as necessary, finance, as well as subjects of an economic or cultural nature.

ARTICLE VIII. The King (Queen) of The Netherlands shall be at the head of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union.

ARTICLE XII. The Netherlands Government and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia shall endeavour to establish the United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands-Indonesian Union before January 1, 1949.

ARTICLE XIII. The Netherlands Government shall forthwith take the necessary steps in order to obtain the admission of the United States of Indonesia as a member of the United Nations Organization, immediately after the formation of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union.

Again, for a while, a door seemed to open towards a peaceful settlement. There was an immediate feeling of relief, at least in and near the occupied and beleaguered zones. But soon the sky darkened again; for neither side had the magic formula been found. It is a pity that the States General at The Hague projected their scepticism, not unjustified in it-

self, into the debate on the agreement and clothed it with a number of interpretations and reserves that were not worth their cost in confidence and time. But it soon became manifest that the same words meant different things in the Dutch and in the republican paraphrase.

The truce was never observed by the republican forces. Their local commanders had impossible ideas about demarcation lines; ideas that in certain cases would have located our troops in the sea. The irregular formations, the fighting clubs, just went their own way. A visit to the fronts by a combined high-level committee of republican and Dutch authorities—including the republican Minister of Defence—achieved practically nothing; apparently the Minister could only try to persuade but had no power to command. By the end of December the infringements became so numerous that counteraction was unavoidable and certain boundaries had to be enlarged in order to deliver our posts and civilians from daily republican target practice.

But the main difficulty was that the truce remained, in the republican way of thinking, an accessory measure, only to be perfected when peace should be restored. And peace was only conceivable when an internationally recognized republic transferred its sovereignty, on its own terms, to the sovereign United States of Indonesia and concluded a treaty of mutual assistance, called the Netherlands Indonesian Union out of deference for Dutch sentiment, with the Netherlands. Whereas we read the agreement so as to imply a period of transition and rehabilitation including the whole of Indonesia until sovereignty would be solemnly transferred on the first of January, 1949, the republic calmly went on extending its foreign relations and blocking the way to any organization of government and government services on an all-Indonesian scale.

Apart from matters of principle, both parties had their own practical reasons to differ. The Dutch were convinced

that Indonesia, and especially the republic, was not in a fit state to carry the responsibility of nationhood. Every public service, every financial or economic institution, the entire monetary system, was in a mess, if it functioned at all. The administrative problems to be solved were appalling. And above all, the apparatus of law and order was powerless against the lawlessness and the total lack of discipline of the political *soldateska* and the organized bandits.

Those same facts obstructed republican co-operation, whatever the more worldly-wise and balanced republicans might want. The very feebleness of their organization prevented their asking our assistance before independence was assured. It would mean not only a terrible loss of face and a great reduction in profitable jobs and uncontrolled abuse of authority, but the lack of trust in our intentions, constantly nurtured by inflammatory propaganda, made many believe that we would use the evidence of incapacity as an excuse to back out of our promises. The revolutionary spirit had to be upheld and could only be upheld by keeping the "common enemy" in existence. And, finally, the republic was their own creation; it had to be saved at all costs and could never be exchanged for a gift from others.

So even when, after a long-drawn and futile quarrel over words and interpretations, the Linggajati Agreement was finally signed on March 25, 1947, the real solution still remained as elusive as ever and the parties were drifting almost inevitably towards an open clash.

BOOK THREE

The Future of Southeast Asia

CHAPTER TEN

United Nations and Divided Counsels

IN HUMAN relations the time lag in the march of ideas among different peoples is one of the most fruitful causes of conflicts and mutual suspicion and recrimination. When the high tide of imperialism had passed for the older colonial empires and they were deliberately, if leisurely, settling down to the liquidation of the colonial system, a tidal wave of a much more aggressive and devastating character whipped up its receding waters. The self-styled "have-nots," Germany and Japan—with Italy as a flaunting but feeble third—wanted their turn at the imperialist game and nearly destroyed Western civilization in trying to get it. And when the ultimate and irresponsible sovereignty of nationalism became an obvious danger for world peace, and the older nations were diligently exploring the possibilities of ceding some of their powers to a higher regional or world authority, the nationalism of Asia, seeing the dawn of independence, impatiently rejected the idea of such a new dependence, suspecting another machination of the West to perpetuate their subjection. They wanted, if only for a moment, to be absolutely free.

Besides the huge upheavals caused by these collisions, a third danger spread more slowly and insidiously: the danger of an ideology that under the guise of a scientific

analysis of the modern world and the needs of humanity tries to create a new order by a world revolution, in which the supreme authority shall be in the hands of one party, if not of one state, and personal or national liberty will have to go by the board. We shall see how dangerous the appeal of its apparent simplicity and its freedom from the old class distinctions can be for the masses, when chaos and wretchedness leave them with nothing to lose.

We have seen that three major problems confront most of the newly arising nations of Southeast Asia. The first—and in itself, though formidable enough, probably the least difficult—is that of rehabilitation, economic and administrative, after the destructiveness of war. The second, much harder to grasp and to solve, is their national and political integration and the formation of governments with sufficient authority and ability to take over the work that was done in the past under Western direction. The third and most ominous is the suppression of the lawlessness that has erupted almost everywhere, incited by a propaganda of racial hatred, by fear and desperation, and armed by the badly controlled liquidation of the war machines that rolled over these countries.

The Western democracies were directly concerned with these problems, for their influence had been paramount in this region and they carried direct responsibility for most of its component territories. Yet in the stress of the first postwar years the region was not seen as an object for collective policy; it was not seen that its main elements were closely interrelated: the general character and importance of these countries, limited in size when compared with the Asiatic giants north and west of them; their political and administrative weakness; their economic decline; their gravely unsettled condition; and the dangers threatening their young nationhood from without and from within. For most of them the rapid change-over from colonial to national status is a delicate operation, requiring every possible precaution and assistance.

But Europe, China, Japan, and the Middle East absorbed all the attention that was left by the problems of Russia, communism, and the U.N., and every mother country had to follow its own line of policy; or, if the international agencies interfered, they did so without being able to assume the responsibility.

In the ensuing confusion people have been apt to lose sight of the fact that those Western policies are, if not identical in principle, at least fundamentally similar and that a common denominator could have been found much more easily for them than for the more general political conceptions of the West and the Soviet bloc or of the West and Asia. Nevertheless we were to see Western democracies acting as if they were potential opponents in this field and to witness the sorry spectacle of mutual accusations of reaction, partiality, and bad faith before a world audience that must be inwardly astonished at such a quarrelsome disposition among near relatives in the face of common dangers.

The United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands are, so it seems to me, one in acknowledging the right or at least the inevitability of self-determination for Southeast Asia. They also appear to agree in their desire to do everything in their power in order to save these countries from the clutch of totalitarian communism and to aid them in recovering their internal peace and prosperity. It is only in the application of these principles that their policies show marked differences and a deplorable lack of co-ordination.

The United States had and has an undeniable start in the case of the Philippines, which were near-independent when the war broke out and now continue as a nation under the same governmental structure—if not under the identical leaders—which they have had for over ten years. Their difficulties and dangers lie elsewhere: in the running sore of a repressed and rebellious peasantry; in the lack of a well-defined, indigenous civilization and a common native lan-

guage; and in an economy that has been badly damaged and remains too much dependent on American protection and grants-in-aid. The United States has liberally assisted the country by paying hundreds of millions of dollars for the reparation of war damages, but, as in the case of the billions spent on China, the anxiety to avoid hurting a touchy national pride and incurring the reproach of dollar imperialism seems to have prevented them from taking measures and imposing conditions for the effective use of those millions. It is not sufficiently realized that unconditional gifts have a corruptive influence, and it is a paradox in itself that the sending of Marshall Plan aid to countries with a high standard of economic probity and skill is carefully regulated and supervised by an elaborate machinery, whereas the aid to these still inexperienced or weakly organized nations is handed over practically without any reservation or control.

If I rightly interpret the recent developments, the Philippines are slowly but increasingly turning their attention towards Asia. This seems natural and unobjectionable; they are an Asiatic nation and should be able to contribute in a special way to the development of Asia by exchanging the elements of Western culture they absorbed to such an exceptional degree for a deeper and more thorough understanding of the Asiatic civilization and outlook, with which they retained a spiritual kinship. But even so they will need a more enduring economic foundation and a better social and political structure, and they could be greatly assisted by a continued and better-defined relationship with the United States and the Western democracies.

The United Kingdom has, under the present Labour government, resolutely taken the course of an early and unconditional grant of independence, with the option of remaining within the British Commonwealth even on the loosest of terms. By doing so it has gained, in the first instance, the confidence of colonial peoples in the purity of its intention

to abolish imperialism. But it has thereby failed sometimes to discharge its responsibility for the structural soundness of the transition and has not succeeded, especially in the case of Burma, in transferring its inheritance to a stable national government. On second thought this is felt as a grievance against Britain, both in Burma and in Pakistan. Whether circumstances demanded such a policy of abandonment only history can determine; it seems too early, and the available data are too scanty to enable an observer to estimate their force. But there is certainly room for doubt.

What happened in Burma seems more obvious than why it had to happen. The pre-war government returned temporarily, presently with a general officer as representative of the Crown. Law and order in the disturbed interior was only partially restored, and the cabinet of Mr. Aung San, under pressure from the more extreme and rebellious factions, urged a speedy grant of complete independence, which was bestowed upon Burma on January 1, 1948. But Mr. Aung San, who might have been strong and popular enough to restrain the disruptive forces, was murdered with a number of his colleagues on July 19, 1947, and his successor, Mr. Thakin Nu, lacked his political ability. Although the non-Burmese Shan States obtained a measure of autonomy within the Burmese Union, the Karens did not, and there was no agreement about the territory they should govern. The evils of big landholdings, often owned by Indians, were aggravated by the troubled condition of the country, the weakness of the rural authorities in the face of dacoity, the financial confusion, and the trade rackets of the period. Disorders soon amounting to civil war broke out, with two groups of communists and the Karens in attack. Economic reconstruction had hardly begun, and the successive rice crops, the staple export of the country, remained far below pre-war standard. The government and its supporters oscillated between the British connection and a possible linking up with the Russian sphere,

which had the additional attraction of "nationalization" of foreign interests, but they now seem to have decided against communism. Peace and unity are still farther off than ever, and this country, which could be one of the strongest economically because of the constant value of its rice production and the proximity of the hungry Indian market,¹ is going down steadily and will become an ever more suitable objective for the communist world revolution.

Whatever the merits of the case, two conclusions appear to be warranted. The results of the change as it was organized are disastrous, and there is every reason for the Western democracies to explore all the possibilities of an assistance that might restore to the unhappy country some measure of the prosperity and order that Western influence had built up before the war. This will be especially urgent as the communist wave that is flooding China approaches its borders. That Burma, painfully aware of this threat and of her own weakness, was the first non-communist country to recognize the new communist government of China seems an inevitable consequence of her position. The West and India could give her the necessary backing. But Western aid is not yet organized, and the relations with India are still marred by the memories of the economic grip in which Indians held Burma a short while ago.

And in the second place this example of the effects of a precipitate withdrawal may give pause to those who rashly judged that a government which wants to grant the desired independence to its colony but at the same time feels that it has to do everything in its power to achieve the necessary rehabilitation and stabilization first, must be acting from imperialist motives. The day may not be far off when this judgment will be regretted and when the efforts to make

¹ Literally hungry, because India depends on Burma rice particularly to make up the deficiencies in its food supply.

law and order precede independence and, to organize continued co-operation, however blundering, will be seen as efforts in the right direction. This remains true, whether the mother country owns considerable interests in the colony, as is the case in Indonesia, or whether the colony has become a liability, like Burma. The cost of a previous restoration of order and production will almost always exceed any short-term profits; but the money may be well spent for the future of the country and its people.

In Malaya the initial difficulties were the slightest, for reasons that have been indicated. With British Borneo and Portuguese Timor it may soon be the only remaining colony in the area, and it is not easy to imagine how its compound population could constitute the basic citizenry for a national state in the near future. Yet it is as much exposed to the impact of nationalist sentiment as the rest of Southeast Asia, and more than that rest to the influences emanating from China. The terrorism that was unchained in a number of districts in June, 1948, and that is still dragging on notwithstanding strong British repression, proves how a relatively small number of insurgents² can keep large districts in a turmoil, tie up considerable military and police forces and seriously impede production and transport, as long as the community itself remains passive and afraid. As a communist rebellion it has been unsuccessful, but to eliminate it as a menace a further development of at least local public spirit and resistance seems necessary.

Fortunate Ceylon, hardly touched by war, quietly progressed from the status of a crown colony to that of a dominion on February 4, 1948. Its peace was not disturbed by armed irregulars; its mind not poisoned by propaganda. It had its share in the advantages of postwar prices because it could go on producing, and it continued to make use of British

² The estimates have varied between 5,000 and 10,000.

assistance, though on a reduced scale. Under its "grand old man," Mr. Senanayake, it was the only Southeast Asiatic country that retained its stability throughout the postwar years and could even begin to solve the problem of citizenship for its large, immigrated Tamil community. But even in Ceylon the new government is not without its financial difficulties resulting from somewhat rash extensions of public activity.

Thailand first had to win its way back to the Allied world, but was treated with laudable leniency by the victors. The United States took the view that they had not been at war with the country at all, and the British and other Allies soon followed suit, considering its alliance with Japan as a case of *force majeure*. Its position was strong in so far as it is an ancient nation and the only rice-producing country in that part of the world which had a surplus available shortly after the Japanese surrender. It had to restore to French Indo-China and Malaya the territories it had occupied with Japanese aid, and to make restitution for the railway materials Japan had transferred to the country from its other conquests, but otherwise it was not punished for its collaboration. The direct damage wrought by the war was considerably less than in the surrounding countries. It did good work for the Allied ex-prisoners of war left in the country by the Japanese.

Its internal politics were less unaffected. The differences between those who collaborated and those who resisted were accentuated by the Allied victory and the disintegration of the wartime government of Field Marshal Pibulasonggram, but after a period of fairly liberal governments and much internal strife and intrigue, the Field Marshal seized power again on November 9, 1947. Under his virtual dictatorship the monarchy has been given a relief which it had lacked since the mysterious death of the late King. Whatever its merits, there seems to be a good measure of stability, only slightly troubled by discontent of Thailand's Moslem (Malay) subjects in the south—a stability that will be needed as

the shadow of communist China draws nearer³ and the newly installed Russian legation at Bangkok extends its focal activities.

French policy in French Indo-China has shown a gradual evolution after the break with the Republic of Viet Nam. Police action, commenced under the handicaps of economic difficulties and of a necessary demobilization of the original French forces, could not prevent a continuous improvement in the organization and equipment of the Viet Minh guerillas; law and order remained in a very unsatisfactory state, with security restricted to towns and a few connecting roads. Politically some progress was made by attracting and combining a growing number of anti-Viet Minh or anti-communist parties and sects and by converting the French-sponsored government of Cochin-China into a government for the whole of Viet Nam (Cochin-China, Annam, and Tonkin; the ambition of the republic in reverse) under the presidency of Mr. Huu and the premiership of General Xuan. Behind it was the projected reinstallation of Emperor Bao Dai, who came out of exile as a rallying point for the more conservative nationalists and with whom negotiations were opened about the conditions for his return to power.

The situation is still in flux. On September 10, 1948, Viet Nam, continuing under its provisional government, was proclaimed an independent nation within the framework of the French Union, but it is not quite clear what this restriction will mean. There seems to be no doubt about full internal autonomy; foreign relations and defence, however, appear to be partially subject to the Union, in which of course France will have a much greater voice than Viet Nam. The negotiations with Emperor Bao Dai have been dragging on, complemented by contacts with certain half-nationalist, half-

³ There is perennial friction with the numerous and economically strong Chinese community in Thailand. Before the war Thailand had no diplomatic relations with China, but that privacy could not be maintained after the Allied victory.

religious factions opposing Viet Minh. Although recent history is too confused to allow a clear picture of the situation, it would seem that an anti-Viet Minh consolidation under the emperor has little chance, unless the forces of law and order can be assembled around the ideal of a really sovereign Annamese nation, which can count on French assistance through a special relationship and understanding with France.

In Indonesia the efforts for the implementation of the Linggajati Agreement bore no results and the situation changed for the worse. This was the more deplorable because the opposition in the Netherlands against real independence for Indonesia and a special agreement for co-operation between the two countries on a footing of absolute equality had largely disappeared and persisted only among a small though vocal group of colonial die-hards, who found their arguments in the untrustworthiness of the republic but made no great popular impression. If a start could have been made with political and economic reconstruction and if Jogjakarta had only shown the intention or even the inclination to abide by the main provisions of the truce and the agreement, all the remaining resistance against such a conception would have vanished. But there was one thing in which both the Netherlands government and Netherlands public opinion stood firm: the conviction that a transfer of sovereignty before at least a minimum of law and order was restored and the administration of government was functioning again in the whole of Indonesia would be disastrous.

The republican government did certainly not provide such an administration. In several parts of Java and Sumatra the internal authority of that government was simply ignored. Local leaders struggled for supremacy. In Achin the traditional chieftains were eliminated; in Tapanuli authority changed hands several times; in Jambi the hereditary and the

revolutionary power lived together in a kind of armed neutrality; in Bantam a Moslem theocracy had replaced the Indonesian (republican) civil service. Economic conditions were chaotic, tolerable in districts with a food surplus, terrible where there was a shortage. Smuggling and graft corrupted the remaining services; permits for transportation and travel had to be bought many times over without guaranteeing that the traveller or the goods would not eventually be captured or confiscated by a fighting club along the road. The Minister of Economic Affairs was a colourful and in some ways even attractive adventurer, who had a very varied experience—as a physician and as a movie actor, among other things—but none at all in the field of economics. The monetary system was a farce, founded on printing presses and stencil machines, the imitations being generally better than the originals. Only the propaganda machine worked efficiently. Its constant theme was the perfidy and the oppressions of the Dutch, eagerly absorbed by all those who took the appearances for the reality and saw those appearances as a repetition of any liberation or independence movement from the heroic age of their own history. We were perhaps foolish in not exposing the reality with vivid colours and blatant headlines; but the Dutch are inept at that sort of thing, and they did not want to denounce and stigmatize the people whom they knew to be intrinsically good-natured and whose future they had at heart.

Meanwhile conditions within the Dutch-occupied areas became well-nigh intolerable. The shooting at our posts and the kidnapping of people who worked for us continued. In one case the country south of Surabaya was flooded on purpose by republicans, who tampered with the waterworks upstream outside our lines. When people—Indonesians, who always were the principal victims of these depredations—were driven from their houses or drowned and two months

had gone by in fruitless talk, Dutch troops had to occupy the works and redress the mischief.⁴

The boundaries were so closely guarded that what amounted to a tight blockade was established, causing a permanent food shortage that could only be relieved by day-to-day emergency measures. No promise of supplies—to be bartered against textiles and agricultural tools—was ever fulfilled by the republic; in Medan, Sumatra, where thousands of refugees had entered from republican territory to escape the terror reigning there, people were starving in June, 1947. Although a number of Dutch, Eurasian, and Indonesian internees had been very slowly released from the interior, thousands remained there in custody as potential hostages. And every subject taken up by the Dutch negotiators only led to inconclusive discussions and impossible demands.

There were other, less eloquent but not less ominous signs that the forces behind the government of the republic did not want the co-operation under Dutch sovereignty which was to precede the formation of the independent United States of Indonesia, nor the restitution of Dutch and foreign property in the interior. The so-called Central Trade Union Organization, which was mainly an imposed frame for political labour regimentation, developed a whispering campaign for sabotaging an eventual resumption of work on foreign-owned estates by extravagant demands, in order to compel the owners to sell out or to quit. A test case made with a British textile factory began well; the old personnel hailed the visiting manager with pleasure. But when he came the second time he was met by unfamiliar faces and refused admittance.

Although it was an acknowledged part of the agreement that foreign relations would be developed under the Crown

⁴ One of the reasons given by the republican general for his inability to stop the flood was the allegation that the works had been damaged beyond repair as a reaction to a supposed Dutch threat of capture. Aerial photographs showed that this was a lie; after the occupation of the works the flood was stopped within two days by a very simple manipulation.

until the transfer of sovereignty, a republican mission under Haji Agus Salim, a shrewd and amiable old gentleman with great linguistic ability, was roaming through the Near East and suddenly brought forth a treaty with Egypt in which the republic was internationally recognized. In Australia and elsewhere this kind of intriguing went on steadily. But the greatest obstacle remained the problem of internal security and the almost complete isolation of Jogjakarta, where publicity and propaganda were immutably biassed and hostile, if not downright inflammatory. The republican agitation and aggression became increasingly systematized; even the republican "governors" of the non-republican territories outside Java and Sumatra were left in office at the head of subversive organizations for disturbing the peace in their "governments."

On May 27, 1947, the Commission General presented to the republican delegation a final draft of its proposals to constitute a federal interim government for Indonesia, together with the other member states and the representative of the Crown, which would organize the federal services, prepare the future foreign service and co-operate in the restoration of law and order with the assistance of a mixed constabulary. The armed forces were to be retired, demobilized, or converted into a federal defence force as quickly as possible. A number of urgently necessary monetary, economic, and social measures were included. The Commission General informed the republic that it saw no advantage in further negotiations and expected an early and comprehensive reply.

The answer, which came on June 7, was almost wholly negative and unsatisfactory, but was followed up by a personal statement of Mr. Shahrir in which he accepted the joint interim government, which the answer had rejected. The representatives of the non-republican territories, on the other hand, fully agreed with the draft proposals. In a renewed discussion the Netherlands point of view was once more elucidated—that sovereignty would certainly be trans-

ferred to the United States of Indonesia, but that such a transfer must be preceded by a reconstruction for which all parties concerned had to share the responsibility. But before this could lead anywhere Mr. Shahrir had to resign (June 26) and was succeeded as Prime Minister (July 3) by Mr. Amir Sharifuddin, who was to take a leading part in the communist rebellion fourteen months later.

During those days the United States government presented a note to both parties urging acceptance of the draft proposals; it said that the United States "must necessarily be concerned with developments in Indonesia because of the importance of Indonesia as a factor in world stability, both economic and political." It suggested the possibility of financial assistance for the economic rehabilitation of the country, once the implementation of the Linggajati Agreement had got on its way.

For a short while it was supposed that the loss of Mr. Shahrir's wisdom might be made up for, in part at least, by the quick intelligence of Mr. Sharifuddin, who had been Defence Minister in the former cabinet, and by his popularity with the more vehement youth organizations. But although he seemed plausible enough in Batavia, he showed no moderation or strength of character in Jogjakarta. On the contrary, the temper of that city was ever more worked up by aggressive measures and speeches. A scorched-earth policy was announced in case of conflict, and an increasing number of demolitions were executed at the borders and in the interior. The republic expected a clash; the Dutch could no longer see how it was to be avoided. They and their Indonesian friends could not remain exposed indefinitely to republican violence without doing something about it; they could not stand by and see the country go to rack and ruin.

Mr. Sharifuddin, interpreting the American note as a recognition of "the essential position of the *Republic of Indonesia* as a factor of political and economic stability in the world,"

played fast and loose, first rejecting the proposals in their essence, then turning about and ostensibly accepting a number of them. On the matter of internal security, however, there was not even a semblance of a rapprochement. Finally on July 14, I cut down our demands in this respect to the barest minimum compatible with a revival of the worn-out truce. I asked a withdrawal of the republican forces to six miles from the demarcation lines and their replacement by the *republican* police, and the acceptance of Dutch help in cleaning up the security mess at the request and under the responsibility of the interim government. If nothing tangible happened, the situation could not be further prolonged.

Mr. Sharifuddin agreed; he even said that these points were well taken; he even discussed Dutch technical assistance for improving the mobility of his police. But when he returned to Jogjakarta nothing came of it; he did not even defend or elucidate the proposals to his followers, although he was fully aware that they constituted an ultimatum. Our confidence in his promises evaporated completely. We had to choose between abandoning the country and re-establishing security ourselves; and the first alternative was out of the question. On the twentieth the Netherlands government informed the republican delegation that it could no longer consider itself bound by the truce and the Linggajati Agreement and resumed its liberty of action, declaring at the same time that the Linggajati program would remain the constant aim of its policy and that it had no intention of destroying the republic. The clinical method had failed; a surgical operation was necessary to save the patient from the cancer of lawlessness and terrorism. On the twenty-first the police action in Java and Sumatra began to clear the country across the demarcation lines. On August 1, 1947, the U.N. Security Council intervened at the behest of Australia and India.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Bad Conscience of the West

A FUTURE historian who studies the action of the Security Council in the Indonesian conflict objectively, keeping in mind what was happening elsewhere in the world at the same time, will undoubtedly be struck by a number of anomalies that want explaining. I cannot pretend to such a historian's detachment; I was too directly involved in the case. But I can at least point out frankly how those anomalies looked from the Dutch point of view.

In doing so I am not going to assume a purely legal attitude. The Security Council is admittedly a political ring, as the Assembly is a political arena. In such surroundings legal arguments are not very impressive, particularly when tempers are strained. It is much more interesting to speculate on the motives, the sentiments, and the forces behind its decisions than to consider articles and paragraphs and their violation.

To mention the legal position briefly, it seems beyond doubt that the U.N. had no *prima facie* right to take action in the affairs of Indonesia, as Article 2, Paragraph 7, of the U.N. Charter specifically denies to that organization the right to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a state. The sovereignty of the Netherlands

in Indonesia was still recognized; certain irregular and varying recognitions of the republic as a body with international status¹ could not alter that fact. There is no pronouncement on this question by the highest legal authority, because a Belgian resolution to request an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the competence of the Security Council was denied by that body. And if it is conceivable—though not very probable—that a domestic issue might constitute a danger to peace, such an issue will generally become a danger only through the interference or the partisanship of other powers.

•The resolution of August 1, 1947, adopted by the Security Council, read:

The Security Council,

Noting with concern the hostilities in progress between the armed forces of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia,

Calls upon the parties:

- a. to cease hostilities forthwith, and
- b. to settle their disputes by arbitration or by other peaceful means and keep the Security Council informed about the progress of the settlement.

It avoided the legal difficulty by not mentioning any article of the Charter; the concern it expressed and the recommendation it made could rest on strictly humanitarian motives.

Such humanitarian concern is quite comprehensible when an armed conflict breaks out within a state or its dependencies. Indonesia, however, was not at the time the only country where a conflict was going on, nor even the only case of its kind. There was a much more frightful civil war raging in China, presenting a much more obvious danger to the peace of the world, as its outcome may prove soon enough. The

¹ The interpretation of Article I of the Linggajati Agreement as a *de facto* recognition of the Republic in the international sense is obviously incorrect; it was only recognized that the republican government exercised *de facto* authority in certain parts of Indonesia. See p. 222.

fighting between the French forces and the Republic of Viet Nam did not differ in one single aspect from the conflict in Java and Sumatra, except that the casualties were much heavier and the positive results less apparent. Yet this conflict did not lead to action by the Security Council.² In other countries the Council exerted or tried to exert a certain influence in domestic or quasi-domestic quarrels, e.g. Greece and Kashmir, but nowhere did it show the almost scornful peremptoriness with which the Dutch were sometimes treated. Even in the Palestine war the Council reconsidered its recommendations and orders rather than threaten the use of sanctions or force against the parties when their actions did not conform to its resolutions. What could be the causes of these differences?

From the moment of the capitulation of Japan, Indonesia came into the limelight. Its size, its importance, its renown in trade and tourism before the war were factors. Then there was the dramatic conflict of a vast colony throwing off the shackles of its bondage, and a comparatively small and weak mother country, only just liberated itself and as yet incapable of taking the Japanese surrender and resuming its task of leading the destiny of that colony. The really great endeavour of the Netherlands to provide the necessary means and forces by which it could take over Allied responsibility in Indonesia were easily interpreted as the frantic efforts of a colonial nation to restore and maintain its old position.

Then there was—there had to be—foreign interference from the beginning. The policy of the British Commander in Chief seemed to be founded on an almost immediate recognition of the republic; in that respect the action of General Christison in Batavia differed fundamentally from that of General Gracey in Saigon. His attitude towards the republican authorities gave the republic a quasi-international status. It seems beyond doubt that the Dutch authorities

² It is true that France could block such action by the use of its veto.

would in any case have tried to make contact with the republicans in order to find a solution for the political problem, if only because the republican action for independence was a reality that could not be ignored; but now they had to do so under the supervision of a third party and with a doubt cast upon their position as a ruling nation. So they seemed to be treating with a more or less independent state, whereas in reality they were only discussing the political future of Indonesia with the representatives of an important section of its population. The negotiations, in which British ambassadors gave their assistance, acquired the appearance of international negotiations; the agreements they led to looked a little like international agreements.

On the other hand, this course of events fixed the more militant and passionate republican elements in the belief that the republic *had* obtained international recognition; that independence *had* been achieved. They could not see the necessity and the advantages of building up their nation in an orderly way. Every extreme faction, every outburst of xenophobia, every ambitious revolutionary could point to what seemed accomplished facts and brand the more cautious leaders as traitors who, in their concern about the future of their people, threw or traded away the freedom it had gained with its blood.

And, finally, Indonesia was probably the worst case of Japanese influence and of a mismanaged surrender. The demoralization of youth by Japanese instruction and propaganda had been more intensive, the distribution of armaments more copious and indiscriminate than elsewhere. The problem of rehabilitating the country, of restoring law and order was bigger than anywhere else and the forces of reconstruction were weaker and more limited.

So the peculiar situation came about that what was admittedly a domestic problem in the legal sense became something like a conflict between two contending nations in the

minds of men, while yet the Netherlands remained saddled with the ultimate responsibility and were taken to account for failing to discharge it fully and to the satisfaction of everybody.

From the Dutch side a constant and patient endeavour was made, under the most adverse circumstances, to construct the base on which an Indonesian nation could really stand and flourish. The Netherlands felt that they could not abandon the country to its fate; that quite apart from safeguarding their own interests they carried the obligation to transfer the inheritance of centuries in good order to the people of Indonesia and their new leaders. In this their sincerity was proved by the great sacrifices they made, the stubborn endurance they showed, and the absence of vindictiveness in the face of the loss of life and property they suffered in the first revolutionary period, when they had no means of protecting their people and their friends. But such things are not spectacular, not obvious for the casual observer who wants to see things in a romantic and sensational way.

And in spectacular moves, in the *grands gestes* that appeal to the heart rather than to the head—and are of vital importance in times of roused popular sentiment—the Dutch failed. They were lacking in imagination, whereas the Indonesians were lacking in realism. Their method was too heavy-footed and therefore their intentions were supposed to be too heavy-handed. And so the realities of the case remained hidden for that evanescent and superficial, yet sometimes powerful, influence that is called world opinion.

Naturally the Indonesian conflict stirred the minds of Indonesia's neighbours in Asia, where nationalism was coming into its own everywhere. When the Netherlands government undertook a second police action, in December, 1948, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru convened a conference at New Delhi on January 20 to 23, 1949. The partisan spirit shown by the Asiatic nations gathered there was a unanimous expression

of offended nationalism, however divided the meeting may have been on other subjects—which were carefully excluded from the agenda. It is worth noticing at the same time that the overwhelming majority at that conference consisted of new nations or nations that had only just got rid of Western supervision in one form or another. Of the older Asiatic nations China and Thailand only sent observers; their attitude on this problem was less violent throughout, because they had experienced the cares and dangers that beset an independent country and they knew that wild enthusiasm alone cannot preserve the liberty of a state and that the threat of political or economic collapse is a very real one.

That the “thirteen men in the Kremlin” and their satellites on both sides of the iron curtain have their own ideas and intentions regarding developments in Southeast Asia has become abundantly clear. They are certainly not supermen and are as liable to make mistakes as other human beings, but however much their tactics may alternate or fail, they have the advantage of a consistent strategy. Every defeat of the Western democracies means a communist victory. As champions of the liberation of colonial peoples they are certain of applause as long as the next stage, communist domination, is not apparent. They stimulate the disorders accompanying the struggle for independence because such disorders cut two ways: they impede the economic interests of the West, and they prepare the East through poverty and dissolution for the reception of communist doctrine and leadership. During the war much of the work was done by subtly influencing progressive and idealist elements in the Western community and its government organizations to denounce imperialism and all its works and to ally themselves blindly to any and every nationalist movement in the East. Now that this creeping disease has been discovered, they have come out into the open and it can astonish nobody when they hurl their invectives impartially at the Western powers and at the

Asiatic "fascists," who are beginning to resist the communist imperialism in their turn.

It is, however, utterly deplorable that between these strong forces the Western democracies have not yet found a common attitude and a policy of their own. The time is past when the West could indulge its quarrels without fear of outside interference and without concerning itself about their repercussions in the minds of others. But the habit persists, and it brings Western democracies in opposition to each other over differences that are insignificant compared with the antagonisms that divide the world as a whole. And it deprives the young and unschooled nations of Southeast Asia of a co-ordinated, sympathetic, and honest assistance that they sorely need in their formative years.

The West suffers from a bad conscience; it has not yet found its attitude towards the reversal of values that confronts it in Asia. One can notice it in the conduct of individual whites, to whose pose towards coloured people the Gilbertian description applies:

That's if anything too unbending,
Too aggressively stiff and grand.
Now to the other extreme you're tending,
Don't be so deucedly condescending.

The Western reaction against imperialism and colonialism before the war was the natural outcome of a development of ideas and relationships. It was not necessary to feel ashamed of the past in order to understand that the present was changing the old ideas of superiority and manifest destiny and that the future would see the Asiatic peoples take their stations beside, not below, those of Europe and America. It was a result of alterations on *both* sides. The impact of Western ideas and the extension of Western government had as much to do with the growth of Asiatic nationalism as the resentment of Western domination.

But the radicalization brought about by the war and the need of counteracting Japanese propaganda made the furtherance of nationalist aims, the consideration of nationalist sentiment, paramount and led people to reject the past completely and to lose sight of its real significance for the present. Behind it all, maybe, was the realization that one thing had gone very wrong in that past: the human relationship between white and coloured people itself. It oscillated violently between the uncompromising stand of the *pukka sahib*, who held to a fore-ordained classification of human beings according to a scale of colours, and the exaggerated esteem of the idealist, who could see nothing wrong with anybody if only he wasn't white.

When the realities confronted the Western nations after the Japanese lid had been taken off the seething countries of Southeast Asia, this bad conscience troubled Western minds, particularly those of the governments and parties of the left, which had not been in power during the imperialist years. Their unambiguous recognition that colonialism is dead was highly commendable and prevented a reaction that might have been calamitous. But they were inclined to lose sight of the fact that the West had a grave responsibility towards the colonial peoples in the transitional period, particularly where they had not been able to protect them against the ravages of war and occupation. The old structure could not simply be torn up before the new was ready without letting the whole building crumble and smash its inhabitants. And when this responsibility was clearly felt, as in the case of the Dutch, who had identified themselves more with the fortunes and the people of their Asiatic colony than any other white nation, they were suspected of having insufficiently absorbed the new spirit or of double-dealing.

Yet it must be obvious that even a deep and sincere regret for the harm that imperialism caused does not justify us in letting the good it did be destroyed. If the colonial era stulti-

fied or hampered the development of Asiatic initiative and skill in the economic field, such a shortcoming is not set right by breaking up the much larger economic assets that were built up by the West. If Western domination stopped the growth of Asiatic political institutions, it seems absurd to atone for it by letting the much larger governmental organizations which the West constructed in the colonial areas disintegrate for lack of policy or conviction. It may be virtuous to abdicate a power that has outlasted its historical justification, but there is little virtue in deserting the common people of Southeast Asia at the moment of their greatest need.

But what hurt the Dutch most at Lake Success was not the intervention of the Security Council, even if it acted *ultra vires* in their legalistic opinion, but the atmosphere of distrust they felt among their nearest allies, sometimes exploding into downright accusations of bad faith. They saw this critical persuasion being goaded on by communist denunciations; they knew that it would revive or strengthen suspicion among the Indonesians and other Asiatics who might otherwise have begun to discern the sound core of their intentions. They would not have objected to the argument that they were mistaken, but they were deeply shocked by the contention that they were perfidious or insincere.

Their greatest grievance was against the attitude of Australia, which needs a few words. Being its neighbour in Indonesia, they expected Australia to have a better appreciation than most others of what they had done and suffered during the war in the Pacific. They could not understand how seven and a half million people, owning an almost empty continent and practising the most stringent exclusion of persons of colour from their country, could take such a hostile attitude and lead the hue and cry against them. Of course there are reasons. There was the influence of the communist left in the Labour party and the unions, which could not be eliminated without endangering the Labour majority in the next elections.

It may be that the threat of Japanese invasion has made the country painfully aware of the proximity of an Asiatic continent so crowded that the people are almost dropping off the edges, and that this has induced its leaders to be more Asiatic than the Asiatics in order to obtain and hold the friendship of the coloured races. But whatever the reason, no policy has so clearly demonstrated the rifts of competition and disapprobation in the Western world, or put such obstacles in the way of a common, constructive, and unambiguous attitude of the West towards Southeast Asia.

As for the United States and the United Kingdom, both were certainly influenced by the desire to ward off Soviet accusations and to avoid every semblance of critical opposition concerning the demands of Asiatic nationalism. But I think they went too far in condoning the often irresponsible actions of the republic and of other national organizations in Asia. And it was perhaps their greatest mistake to ignore and even to condemn all those other Southeast Asiatics who—though not a whit less nationalistic—opposed the revolutionary changes and methods preferred by their more ardent or more vicious compatriots. There again the lack of a positive and realistic policy resulted in the opposite of what was intended. Unconditional surrender of authority and unconditional grants-in-aid could only strengthen the extreme groups and sap the constructive influence which those great powers should have in that part of the world.

History may decide later how far the action taken by the Dutch in July, 1947, was right or wrong. It can never be wholly vindicated or condemned, because it was never completed. But a few facts have emerged.

The rapidity and success of the action, which was stopped on August 4, 1947, was beyond the expectation of most people—certainly of most foreign observers. It met with no popular uprising; on the contrary, in most places the common people evinced a sense of relief, hoping that the period of

unrest and distress would now pass. Those who had chosen co-operation with the Dutch, both outside and inside the republic, approved of the action; and when it was made known that the republican civil servants could carry on in their offices, many of them continued until the intervention of the Security Council raised new doubts and Jogjakarta forbade them to co-operate.

The casualties involved were really slight; the Dutch forces lost only a little over a hundred killed a month in the first three months from the beginning of the action. The number of troops involved was much smaller than was generally supposed; the total strength in Java and Sumatra, administrative troops and other noncombatants included, did not exceed 93,000. In many regions immediate relief was brought in food, clothing, and medicine. The newly occupied areas had some 25 to 30 million inhabitants.

The Dutch troops were carefully briefed against adopting a hostile attitude towards the Indonesians and, generally speaking, maintained good discipline, whatever strain the following guerilla activity put upon them. There was neither contempt nor hate towards the republicans who continued the fight out of patriotism or conviction. But in most cases the resistance deteriorated into destruction of civilian—mostly foreign—property and slaughter among Chinese or Indonesians who were suspected of collaborating with the Dutch. After the action was stopped at the instance of the Security Council, the republicans began to organize a subversive campaign in the Dutch-controlled territories, using threats, kidnapping, and murder as means of action against their less fanatic compatriots. Yet law and order improved constantly for over a year and the change had become very noticeable by August, 1948. The number of people saved from dying of want were many times the number of Indonesian victims of the action.

Most important, however, was the fact that political activ-

ity was only very temporarily interrupted. Very soon consultations began, later followed by larger meetings and sometimes by elections such as never had been possible in the republic. The member states of East Sumatra, Madura, and Pasundan (West Java) were recognized on January 29, February 20, and April 24, 1948, respectively. Pasundan elected a high republican functionary in Jogjakarta as President and showed what amounted to a "republican" majority in its representative body. Yet every state started exercising its internal autonomy in a peaceable way, and the people were for the first time in many years confronted with the arduous duties of real and effective government.

These member states in the parts of Indonesia where the Dutch restored law and order were currently described as puppets. The Security Council in August, 1947, refused admittance to the representatives of East Indonesia and West Borneo, after inviting the delegates of the republic to attend. That this judgment was grossly unfair³ must be clear when one realizes the dangers these people ran of being killed or seeing their families killed by republican partisans. It was acknowledged when this year (1949), at last, they were recognized as the third party in the Indonesian dispute, with full representation at the Round Table Conference in The Hague.

But however things might improve in the territories outside the republic, the problem of the integration of the whole of Indonesia was not solved. Though its non-republican part obtained a favourable trade balance in April, 1948, and saw its production increase by leaps and bounds, the republic remained isolated and all the endeavours to provide at least a temporary co-operation in the matters of economics and trade, let alone of government, proved abortive.

I must now say a few words about the negotiations that

³ Particularly as the Linggajati Agreement expressly mentions the existence of other components of the United States of Indonesia than the republic.

were resumed when the Good Offices Committee, instituted by the resolution of the Security Council of August 25, 1947, reached Batavia on October 27. It consisted of Judge Richard Kirby, Mr. Paul van Zeeland, and Professor Frank P. Graham, designated by the governments of Australia, Belgium, and the United States respectively. The secretariat was provided by the United Nations.

The labours of this committee, of which the personnel was later completely renewed,⁴ have certainly added to the experience of the United Nations. First of all one must observe that its members were not such completely impartial and international figures as Count Bernadotte or Dr. Ralph Bunche. Although they were supposed to use their own judgment, they were inevitably led by the policy—or the lack of policy—of the governments that appointed them. As Australia was definitely pro-republic and Belgium mildly pro-Dutch, the American representative held the balance, which had a tendency to dip to the republican side. I must add that the secretariat was definitely not impartial. Whatever the theory may be concerning the personnel of the United Nations, in practice it shows many national and ideological shades. As the secretaries (first an Indian, then—acting—an Australian who was a naturalized United States citizen and a man with a chequered past) had republican leanings and some of the minor personnel were confirmed communists, its influence cannot be neglected.

Another effect of the composition of the committee was that its real political influence went far beyond good offices alone. Whether it was correct or not, both parties identified the attitudes of the three members with that of Canberra, Brussels, and particularly Washington. As the policies in those capitals took shape or shifted, the committee was expected to reflect them. Any preference shown by its members for the

⁴ The new members were Messrs. Critchley, Herremans and Coert Dubois; the last-named was subsequently replaced by Mr. Merle Cochran.

point of view of either party was seen as an expression of favour in the name of the governments that appointed them. And conversely, the success or failure of those members was clearly felt by those governments as success or failure of their own policy, deeply affecting their national pride in either way.

The first agreement reached, concerning the implementation of the cease-fire, showed how great the influence of the committee could be if it took a clear and firm stand. It succeeded in having the demarcation lines established and in organizing the peaceful evacuation of a considerable number of republican troops from pockets of resistance in recently occupied territory. Politically a number of principles were accepted by both parties,⁵ but there the same unequivocal position was not maintained. For whereas one of the principles said:

Sovereignty throughout the Netherlands Indies is and shall remain with the Kingdom of the Netherlands until, after a stated interval, the Kingdom of the Netherlands transfers its sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia. Prior to the termination of such stated interval, the Kingdom of the Netherlands may confer appropriate rights, duties and responsibilities on a provisional federal Government of the territories of the future United States of Indonesia. The United States of Indonesia, when created, will be a sovereign and independent State in equal partnership with the Kingdom of the Netherlands in a Netherlands-Indonesian Union at the head of which shall be the King of the Netherlands. The status of the Republic of Indonesia will be that of a state within the United States of Indonesia,

the committee declared in a conversation with the republican leaders that this would not change the present status of the republic and that they could continue to have their own

⁵ Both agreements were contained in the so-called *Renville* agreements of January, 1948, concluded on board the United States transport *Renville*, which was used as a neutral meeting ground.

armed forces, finance, and foreign relations. "You are what you are," said Professor Graham.

The ensuing negotiations showed the same unsatisfactory pattern as those following the Linggajati Agreement. The republican authorities organized a general political agitation in the Dutch-controlled territories, particularly with a view to the plebiscites that were to decide in the future about the number and size of the member states. It was accompanied by regular terrorism; certain of the evacuated armed groups were soon found to be returning subversively. Incidents like the export of opium by the republican Département of Finance towards Dutch-controlled territory and Singapore showed how the immunity of the republican delegation, travelling back and forth between Jogjakarta and Batavia, was abused. Foreign contacts and relations were continuously extended until, on May 22, there exploded the bombshell of a consular treaty, concluded by Mr. Suripno, republican envoy at Prague, with the U.S.S.R. Technical agreements concerning economy, trade, etc., though often concluded between the experts, were recurrently squashed by Jogjakarta, and accusations that the Dutch, by controlling commerce in arms and stolen property, were blockading the republic were continually voiced. The notorious Fox contract ⁶ was elaborated in this same period.

During all these months it was the impression of the Dutch that the Good Offices Committee was very critical of their actions and attitudes, while the republican irregularities were ignored or hushed up. Its reports did not present a balanced picture of the situation. Members of the committee were certainly influenced by the conviction that 'extremist and communist tendencies inside the republic could only be suppressed by making continuous concessions to the republican point of view. The Dutch opinion was, on the contrary, that

⁶ See pp. 277 f.

these concessions would simply encourage the extremists behind the scenes to raise their demands.

When finally Mr. Coert Dubois and Mr. Critchley produced a set of proposals, among which a speedy organization of general elections for a constituent assembly figured prominently, a deadlock followed. The proposal was irregular in form, but a graver objection was that general elections under the troubled conditions of the period were absolutely impossible unless every form of intimidation was to be accepted.

The scare of increasing communist influence and activity drove the American representative to recommend this as a solution of the conflict and made him overlook the fact that elections in a disorganized community could only unleash a measure of agitation and turbulence from which neither a clear expression of popular opinion nor a restoration of peace and order was to be expected. It was significant that the republican leaders, who had never yet dared to organize elections within their territory, hailed these proposals as an opportunity to carry their propaganda and their methods of compulsion full blast into the areas controlled by the Dutch. When Mr. Cochran confirmed the position taken by his predecessor in this respect, the implementation of the *Renville* principles became practically impossible. It will be of great, although by now academic, interest to observe how long it will take the newly installed Indonesian government to organize its first free and comprehensive elections.

Shortly afterwards I had to resign because of a political incompatibility with the Netherlands cabinet that had been formed after the 1948 elections in August. I was loath to leave under the extremely confused circumstances, but I had no choice.

What happened afterwards can only be seen as the inevitable result of that confusion. In December, 1948, the Netherlands government decided that only the complete

restoration of law and order could solve the problem, and the police action was continued. But by this time the situation had become much more complicated and unfavourable. Those inside and outside the republic who had approved of the action in 1947 had by now lost confidence and condemned it or held aloof. Resistance was much more violent, and the capture of President Sukarno and Vice-President Hatta (Prime Minister since February, 1948) at Jogjakarta resulted in a series of contradictory decisions about their persons that reflected the general uncertainty of the authorities.

The Security Council reacted violently, as was to be expected. In August, 1947, the Indian member, Mr. Sen, had already declared: "The cease-fire order issued by the Security Council was the first affirmative act of the Council since the institution of the United Nations Organization. This act has raised hope and faith in the people all over the world in the efficacy and the future of the Security Council. It seems to me only proper that this faith should be maintained. . . ." It had become an aim in itself to maintain the authority of the Security Council in the single instance of a political conflict about which its decisions had not been partially or completely disregarded. This unique success could not be jeopardized, whatever the Dutch might contend. And they were not strong enough to resist the Council, as others had done under more favourable conditions.

Finally the Gordian knot into which the situation had become tied was severed by the reinstallation of the republican government in Jogjakarta and the promise of an immediate convocation of a round-table conference at The Hague, which would organize the transfer of sovereignty to an Indonesian government with the shortest possible delay—the only condition being that a cease-fire and a stand-fast in the occupied positions were to be ordered and executed beforehand. The conference in which the Netherlands government, the re-

public, and the member states outside the republic were to participate, assisted by the United Nations Committee for Indonesia (the former G.O.C.), was opened on August 23, 1949. Its materialization was largely the work of the last representative of the Netherlands government at Batavia, ambassador Dr. J. H. van Royen. The fact that notwithstanding frequent insinuations to the contrary the Netherlands had long since accepted Indonesian independence as the goal of their policy made them bear their disappointment over the unfinished job and grant such independence with good grace and liberality. •

The only remaining possibility for the Dutch government was a rapid transfer of sovereignty without the previous re-establishment of an over-all administration that would have given the new national government a fair start. This was done on December 27, 1949, under a series of agreements reached at the Round Table Conference in The Hague and ratified by the several participants between November 15 and December 15. The provisional government of the newly created United States of Indonesia was constituted by a committee, representing the several parts of the country; Mr. Sukarno became its first President and Mr. Hatta its Prime Minister. A system of co-operation with the Netherlands, framed within an equal and mainly consultative partnership—the Netherlands–Indonesian Union—is further embodied in those agreements. Its real purport, however, will depend entirely on the willingness and the ability of the Indonesian government to live up to its obligations and to accept to the fullest extent the assistance of the Netherlands in the generous spirit in which it is offered. • The transfer took place in a very makeshift manner, owing to pressure of time. The task of constitution making and of replacing the provisional government with a more stable and permanent one still lies ahead. Meanwhile the economy, finance, • police, defence, and foreign relations of the

United States of Indonesia stand in need of a tremendous amount of repair and construction work if the nation is to maintain and consolidate its independence.

So the plan to achieve a sufficient measure of internal security and administrative and economic reconstruction *before* the United States of Indonesia was to be declared independent has failed. The course of events forced the Netherlands government to relinquish its responsibility prematurely—a responsibility that has never been and will not be taken over by its former allies or by the U.N. The new government is, at its installation, faced by the terrifying task of governing a country without an administration that is in running condition, with only few organized sources of income, with an inflation that increases daily and, worst of all, with an uncertain but large number of armed groups and individuals who will obey its orders only in part. Even the present partial production may decline when the reactions to this hazardous step further affect the security in the interior for the people on whose industry and ability the continuation of productive labour rests. The thirteen American newspapermen who so tragically perished last August in the crash of the airplane *Franeker* near Bombay had been almost unanimously appalled at the prospect confronting the new nation.

This gloomy story has yet a few redeeming features. In a considerable part of Indonesia people have experienced the practical difficulties of government and the necessity of a federal construction for this composite country. One must hope that the federalists have come to stay. They know that they must have outside, preferably Dutch, assistance. And it seems that the events of the past years and the impending responsibility had a sobering effect on a good number of republican leaders. They too realize the indispensability of such assistance. But will they be able to convince or to hold in check the wilder and more irresponsible and ambitious

elements among their followers? Although the strain of the last years seems to have improved the discipline in part of their army, other groups still are little more than gangs of partisans or robbers. And the lure of power can easily make them deaf to the admonitions of reason. The check which a well-appointed governmental machine, rebuilt in the period of transition, might have provided against reckless experiments will not be available at the outset.

This result of the disunity in the Western world is frightening enough, even if the continued good relations between many Indonesians and Netherlanders might be made effective to pull the country through. But this is possible only if, at long last, the Western democracies begin to realize that only by a very difficult and delicate concerted action can they provide the aid that Southeast Asia needs. Lord Lugard's dual mandate for the colonial powers, towards the peoples in the colonies and towards the world, has lapsed, but no sanctimonious washing of hands can relieve those democracies of the responsibility to stand by the peoples they lately governed in their most fateful hour.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Economic Mainspring

THE POLITICS of this period drew almost all the public attention. They are full of romance, melodrama, tragedy. Their victories lead to brave shows, enthusiasm, and titles; if they lead to death, it is the heroic death in combat or the sinister but sensational death by assassination. The economics, on the contrary, are dull if not dreary. Only black marketing and smuggling hold adventure, but they are as often as not mixed up with politics. The basic facts of economy are generally overlooked in the gaudy scenes of revolution or in the political debates of Lake Success and New Delhi. Even in the social and economic conferences concerning the Far East, politics completely dominate the proceedings. Statistics are unreliable, fragmentary, or completely lacking; the thoughts their uninspiring figures could inspire in former years are not stirred or remain vague. And yet those basic facts of the economy of Southeast Asia are moving events with a force as strong and fateful as that of nationalism itself, and more inexorable. They have the hardness and the insensibility of a mathematical formula. They may spell the death of millions where politics kill thousands, but it is a silent, slow, sordid kind of death.

Before the war a well-organized production, trade, and

finance provided 150 million people in Southeast Asia with the means of living prosperously according to Asiatic standards, and the several countries with the equipment and the conveniences of modern times. A small number, not more than one-quarter to one-half of one per cent, were well off in the Western sense, among them a majority of foreigners: Europeans, Americans, Chinese, Japanese, and Indians. There were hardly any very rich people, and this upper class subtracted but a moderate amount of the total income, not more than 5 to 10 per cent, and contributed decisively to the total production and to the public revenue. Most of these countries had very stable finances; they paid a comparatively low rate of interest on their public debts; they exported and imported at normal world market prices; many of their exports held a strong position. But the then existing equilibrium between income and population has been violently disturbed.

First of all we must realize that that strong position of many export products has been seriously undermined. The free, Allied world had to get on without them during nearly four years of war and developed synthetic or natural substitutes for its basic needs that have come to stay. Other tropical areas, not occupied by the enemy, started or expanded production of the same commodities and have become competitors. Many of the old buyers are impoverished, like Europe and Japan, and potential new buyers, like China, have been set back for long years. These facts were obscured by the initial postwar replenishing of stocks, but they are becoming more and more evident, notably so in the case of rubber, which is back at a pre-war price level. The temporary boom in foodstuffs is subsiding, and it is possible that the protracted interruption of rice exports will stimulate competitive production elsewhere. Only certain minerals have retained their steady value, but even there the competition of new sources is felt, as in the case of cheap and abundant mineral oil from the Near East.

So even if the pre-war machinery could be fully restored, the receipts from exports would remain appreciably lower than before. Only a rapidly expanding world prosperity and the development of new types of production and export could recover the lost ground. Moreover, the possible income from exports is further depressed by the fact that the manufactured import goods, which these countries need, have risen disproportionately in price. It is not yet possible to compute all these factors into one figure, giving the percentage of loss from these causes alone, but it is unquestionably high.

In the second place, the apparatus of production itself has been severely damaged, except in Ceylon. Many estates and factories were neglected or ruined. Irrigation works were not kept in good repair; stations for the cultivation and selection of planting material were destroyed or shut down. The political troubles disturbed or prevented regular agriculture and harvesting; in not a few regions the fields have been abandoned to the jungle, always ready to pounce when man turns his back. The transport system, the communications, the cities and harbours, all suffered destruction and deterioration; replacements were not effected. The fact that the increased price level offsets these losses in a number of cases on the balance sheets cannot hide the other fact that the losses *were* incurred and that production *has* dwindled. Only the improvement of certain plantations, like those of rubber and oil palms, because they were not tapped or harvested or because they increased in productivity with age, offers a slight compensation for this widespread decrease.

The mineral resources, naturally, survived best despite a vast destruction of equipment. Again no over-all statistical estimate of this factor can be given. But though it obviously varies with the incidence of war activities, Japanese mismanagement, and revolutionary devastations, its total influence is high too, both in direct production and transport and in the destruction of buildings and public works. To

regain the old equipment much has to be reconstructed with fewer resources.

From these causes Thailand and Malaya suffered least. In the Philippines and Burma war damage culminated in the havoc wrought in the capital cities; in French Indo-China and Indonesia the political conflicts added heavily to the ravages. Where the fields were not eroded or lost to the forest and the swamp, where the plantations of rubber, tea, oil palms, abaca, or teak had remained standing, production could at least be continued or rapidly resumed, though often with a lower yield. In other cases, however, like those of tobacco, sugar cane, and sisal, a new beginning was necessary, including the preparatory cultivation of planting material. The pepper plantations disappeared because a particular disease was no longer fought. And if intricate technological processes are needed for production the loss of a factory means, of course, that such a beginning is impossible without a considerable amount of new investment and construction.

Another type of loss that must be mentioned in this connection is caused by the fact that many skilled operatives are dead or incapacitated and that the training of younger people for their jobs was discontinued during the occupation. This decline in ability is a general evil in the late Co-Prosperity Sphere; education and practical training under the Japanese and the several revolutionary governments that sprang up after the capitulation withered to a fraction of the former establishment and became exceedingly low in quality.

Economic activity can be further crippled by the state of disorder into which many of these countries have fallen, and the weakness, corruption, and incompetence of the new national governments. This is particularly grave at the present juncture. It is natural that the transfer of authority from skilled colonial civil servants to the nationalist politicians, who are new at the job and are often intoxicated by the unaccustomed

glory of handling power and public money, must entail a certain regression in the efficiency of administration of the country. After some time a new level will be reached. A slowly forming public opinion and the lessons of their own mistakes will gradually improve the standards of government; the damage done need not be calamitous, and the experience gained should be invaluable as long as the country is economically sound enough to pay for it. A new equilibrium will then be reached that can keep its balance through the inevitable political and economic ups and downs of the new nation. Ceylon seems to be passing through this stage; Thailand found such an equilibrium long before the war and appears still able to maintain it.

But it is asking too much if such a transfer takes place in a country where law and order is seriously affected; where the administrative services have disintegrated; where taxes are no longer collected and public finance is in a muddle; where the monetary system has ceased to function and, worst of all, production is at a minimum; unless, of course, well-organized assistance can be provided. It would be sheer foolishness, if not worse, to expect such a new national government to solve all those intricate and hazardous problems while it is yet *in statu nascendi*, while its power may still be contested, and while the machinery of government is a wreck. And yet that seems precisely what is and has been expected of some of the more irresponsible experiments and proposals made in Southeast Asia. Or rather, many people do not seem to care what will be the fate of such a country, if only nationalism may have its way and every semblance of "imperialist" interference can be avoided.

The same applies to the conduct of private business, the regulation of trade, the distribution of income, the attraction of new investments. In a "normal" case of colonial emancipation the conditions will become somewhat less stable and certain methods of obtaining the good will of the authorities

will get a wider and less clandestine application. Licenses may be issued for extra payment and a certain favouritism may enter into the granting of permits. Taxation will be less strictly administered and social security less actively and impartially promoted. And to induce foreign and native capital to run the increased risks, higher profits and interests will have to be offered. But all this need not ruin the country, and the people may learn more by coping with these evils than by having everything done for them by the colonial protector. The reaction of nationalist youth to the recurrence of age-old Oriental abuses is often encouraging.

• But in the situation prevailing in several Southeast Asiatic countries the results will be infinitely worse; the examples of Burma and Kuomintang China are there to instruct us. An uncontrollable inflation will hit the poor and reduce the civil servants and the military to destitution unless they practise graft and pillage as a normal source of income. Business will either come to a standstill or become purely piratical. Production will stagnate still more and investments, except those of an extortionate type, will cease altogether. Everybody will be out for himself, and corruption will become the only basis of public and private transactions, with public works and services decaying and the government going bankrupt. And we can already witness how the vultures and the flies buzz around and the maggots start boring from within a body politic in such a state of decomposition. But before we say something about the forces of destruction that are on the lookout for such developments, we must inquire into their consequences for the common people.

If the total production declines beyond a certain limit, it will no longer be sufficient to keep all those millions alive who were able to get something beyond the mere necessities of existence before the war. Imports will fall rapidly, because export production is hard hit by all the adverse conditions and influences that have been described. Of its diminishing

returns an ever larger share will go to the commercially clever—usually foreigners in Southeast Asia—or to the people in power, the army and the officials. But food production will decline too, because modern improvements can no longer be paid for, existing irrigation systems will no longer be worked with efficiency, technical services will cease to function, and fertilizers or selected seeds will be unobtainable. Then the ever scantier rewards for surplus production will begin to fail to induce the necessary extra effort, and the breakdown of the transport system through lack of maintenance and replacement will restrict the possibility of moving food from those who have to those who need.

For a time—it may be quite a long time—the people may carry on, dropping or selling every little luxury they used to have and enjoy. In many districts, where food has always been ample, they may even carry on without real suffering, unless epidemics begin to visit them, no longer warded off by the sanitary services, or requisitionings for the army take away the margin, or gangs come to live on the country.

But as the margin above the bare needs of life was small even in the good old days, say some 15 to 25 per cent, including the clothes people may do without in a tropical climate, the point will soon be reached where production can no longer sustain the whole population. Of course that will not happen everywhere at the same time or with the same intensity. But it *will* happen and go on happening until sickness and starvation have thinned out the population enough to restore some kind of equilibrium.

Long-suffering and fearful the common man may be, but it will not happen quietly. For such a process of decay produces conflicts and convulsions in the leading groups of the community, and ambitious politicians or genuinely indignant reformers or ordinary gangleaders will seek the support of the masses. And among the common people a slowly increasing despair will at last create that dangerously explosive frame

of mind in which even the meek begin to follow those who hold a promise of better things and times before them, and begin to fight for their existence with any arms that come to hand.

Where those conditions arise the country is lost for the community of peace-loving, democratic nations. It must fall back into apathy and stagnation or become the victim of a new and probably totalitarian ruler. The Western democracies must decide, and decide together, whether they are powerless and unwilling to offer adequate and constructive assistance and wish to accept this lamentable outcome of the colonial period, or whether they will try to save Southeast Asia. To let things drift along with an occasional support or subsidy here and there is not enough in the face of the threatening danger.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that the restoration of Western enterprise alone cannot turn the tide. One of the vital needs of these communities is the development of native economic initiative and wealth. For them the most promising possibilities do not lie in the direction of a feeble imitation of the West; they lack the necessary type of business leaders. Co-operation between the public authority and the industrious and skilled elements of the population offers wider prospects and can help these peoples to lessen their dependence on foreign management and capital. The activation of village handicrafts and small-scale industries with modern techniques has shown remarkable results, at least in Indonesia. Together with larger enterprises, adapted to the social structure, they can reinforce the economic foundations and weave the achievements of modern science and organization into the fabric of the rural Orient.

The nationalist governments will certainly try to lead their countries in this direction if they are not corrupted by offers of easy money from Western or Asiatic big business. Their general predilection for nationalization of or participation in

foreign investments is based on this fear of economic imperialism and on a certain inclination towards socialism, which is closely connected with that apprehension. But for a development that can combine the retention of a sufficient measure of free enterprise with national planning and government participation in national development they will need a sympathetic and constructive understanding from the West and the assistance of able and disinterested experts in the social, economic, and financial fields.

If the West wants to come to the rescue it must act with purpose and decision; maybe it can yet recover Southeast Asia from a kind of misery it has never before known—the misery of foundering between a traditional civilization that has lost its motive power and a new inspiration that cannot strengthen its grip for want of means and maturity. And first of all it must realize that two kinds of people threaten to profit by decay: one type that is universal and that originates from the West as well as from the East; and one type that has its cradle in the world of totalitarian communism.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Capitalist Adventurers and Communist Agitators

IT IS A common notion that relations with an Oriental nation cannot be cordial or profitable without a certain distribution of bribes among the persons in authority who have the power to obstruct or open the way to business and agreement. There is certainly some truth in this point of view; such gifts are less objectionable in the opinion of those communities than in the West, with its more materialistic and at the same time more law-abiding turn of mind. We must not overrate our own probity, because it depends to a great extent on public control and a certain mutual jealousy in matters of rights and money. Of course there is a spiritual, Christian or humanitarian, foundation, but there is no absolute difference in this respect between the Oriental and the Occidental. What differs is mainly the temptation and its correctives in the social structure and the appreciation of wealth as a means or an end.

But even if there is validity in that notion, we would be terribly mistaken if we were to give it an absolute and immutable significance. It is a well-known experience in the Orient that under stable conditions these payments are more

or less fixed by custom and that they are seen rather as gifts and recognitions than as bribes. Only in times of disorder, or when economic forces of an unaccustomed and formidable character enter the field, does real and vile corruption spread. But such corruption always rouses indignation; and of late this indignation has been particularly noticeable among the younger nationalists, who are beginning to realize that it betrays and rots the nation. It certainly in no way promotes respect or affection for the Westerners who practise this outright bribery; on the contrary, it is not only criticized as a social evil, but also felt as an expression of contempt for the coloured and inferior race.

It is therefore a sorry spectacle when we see how the troubles of Southeast Asia are attracting those greedy elements of capitalism and Western economy, which are so easily taken as proof that the profit motive is uppermost in the Western mind. And it is not only deplorable as such; this profiteering always brings increased poverty and confusion in its wake and provides the best possible material for the spread of communism, the Scylla that stands opposite this Charybdis.

Of course the people who try to abuse the prostration of some Southeast Asiatic countries and the dissolution that accompanies the rapid retreat of the West from its former domains do not come exclusively from Europe or America or Australia. On the contrary, the merchants and tradesmen of Asia are foremost in their ranks. There may be a pan-Asiatic spirit and movement when it comes to opposing white superiority, but otherwise the feeling of common responsibility is still very much underdeveloped in Asia outside the family, the village, the clan or—at the utmost—the nation. Where those bonds are not felt, the man from Asia is an individualist and acts accordingly. If he is commercially gifted, like many Chinese and certain Indians, he is out for profit and generally does not feel compelled to cover up that inclination with

high-flown sentiments, though he may revert to nationalist or pan-Asiatic ideals when the West tries to thwart him. But he knows the danger of his actions; the recurring atrocities against the Chinese in times of trouble, in Indonesia, the Philippines, and elsewhere, are the revenge of people who have felt themselves badly cheated.

But Western participation in this kind of plunder does infinitely more mischief, because more wealth and power are behind it and because it kindles a more general racial bitterness. It brings out the worst in those Asiatics who co-operate and share in the gains, because they feel more safe and because a Western example still has the attractiveness of a superior fashion. And its organization is generally better, its style more grand, than that of the Asiatic profiteers, although it may have more difficulty in penetrating all the corners of this very shady market.

A few instances may serve to illustrate the different directions from which these dangers can come. When the Singapore trade with the republican territory in Sumatra began, the Chinese were the prime movers. Their system was simple: the introduction of textiles and the kind of trashy little gadgets and luxuries that excites the covetousness of people in a country starved of import goods for several years was enough to obtain the raw materials stocked in the harbours, of which the export had been impossible during the war. Relatives and business associates on the spot did the collecting; every kind of craft that had escaped destruction or had spilled over from no longer needed stocks of amphibious war equipment could serve for transport.

After this modest beginning a third party joined the enterprise and changed its scope and character. The merchants wanted new supplies from the interior as the available stocks dwindled; they needed the assistance of the local republican bosses, both civilian and military. These, on the other hand,

saw rich possibilities in monopolizing the trade. Some of the import goods had to be reserved for the producers and the public, but with a little gentle pressure and a few patriotic admonishments the initial cost of these export products would remain negligible. Moreover, there were important stocks on the estates belonging to absent Dutch and foreign companies, and all sorts of equipment and movable property. They themselves wanted various commodities to satisfy their followers, who could buy less and less for the Japanese occupation money and the different kinds of republican scrip—sometimes just stencilled notes—in which they were paid. They wanted arms and uniforms. They wanted Singapore dollars to set up shop in Singapore for purposes of propaganda, political agitation, and illegal traffic. And the lucky agents who were sent to that reviving emporium wanted a good deal of money for themselves.

So this trade began to boom, but the clever Singapore traders always made some 100 to 200 per cent profit. And Malaya obtained a lot of extra United States dollars for the rubber and other products that flowed into its ports in a steadily rising stream. The Dutch could not prevent it until they had sufficient small ships to patrol the endless coast, and even then one *prau* in three slipping through meant a nice margin. The colonial government in Malaya could do little about it because every measure of control was met with threats of labour stoppages and with a clamour for the oppressed republic. And perhaps it was in no hurry to stop this profitable commerce at a time when Britain stood sorely in need of hard currency. Only the simple Indonesian was robbed and the republican authorities and fighting clubs were corrupted. When afterwards the city of Palembang in South Sumatra was occupied, we found, for example, that the post office, having little to do in the way of forwarding letters or cables, had quite a textile and miscellaneous goods department, using the strong room as its warehouse. Indonesia

was certainly more than \$100 million poorer before we got this trade somewhat under control.

Quite a different case was that of Mr. Matthew Fox, vice-president of Universal Pictures, New York. He came later, when the republic had obtained so much international recognition that it was invited to attend the conference of the U.N. Economic and Social Council at Havana on international trade organization in November, 1947. This meant that representatives had to be sent, and such delegations are expensive.¹ In a period of distressing lack of credit contact was made with Mr. Fox, and the outcome was an agreement, concluded by the three high republicans on the strength of a modest advance in dollars from Mr. Fox—\$25,000 according to the draft as first initialled in Havana, \$80,000 as subsequent rumour had it. Hardly ever has so much been sold out by such fantastic people for so little.

A corporation in which Mr. Fox was to possess the majority of voting shares was to be set up as the sole and exclusive agent of the republic for every conceivable transaction between the republican government and the United States or its citizens, covering purchases, concessions, licenses, franchises, development enterprises, etc. Every precaution was taken that no outlay should be made unless well covered by Indonesian produce; the remuneration was to be a modest 7½ per cent commission on all payments, including costs of transportation and other items. Moreover, the republican government waived its sovereignty with regard to claims or controversies, submitting itself and its agencies to the jurisdiction of United States courts or to United States arbitration proceedings.

This colourful scheme may sound like a movie plot of the more improbable type, but it was taken quite seriously for a

¹ This particular republican delegation, which contributed nothing to the work of the conference, consisted of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. K. Gani, the Minister of Finance, Mr. A. Maramis, and the republican commissioner in New York, Mr. Sumitro Joyohadikusumo.

while and official pressure was brought to bear to prevent its publication. Of course the authorities concerned saw the impossibility of the transaction, but adverse political agitation was feared in America if this curious monopoly were to be exposed. But a much more serious aspect of the case was the rumours about certain corporations of good standing that were considering joining the foxy deal.²

Again we find in this case how an inexperienced and partly venal group of nationalists can let their country be exploited by an astute promoter, and there are many more business interests that have their agents on the spot to see where easy profits can be made. They are of all nationalities, including Dutch, rigging up new corporations and reserving directorships for Indonesians with influence, all hoping to gain by the relaxation of controls against dishonest or harmful trade and by favouritism in high places. And all these extra burdens, all these special advantages will have to be paid for by the country and its common people.

I only mention in passing the smaller fry of individual adventurers and confidence men. The personal risks they take are a redeeming feature, and some of them act from a kind of idealism that makes them join any fight for freedom. But one more example is interesting, because it constitutes a kind of ink with that other danger threatening these countries, totalitarian communism. It is the case of Mr. Campbell, the first trade commissioner of the republic in Australia.

Mr. Campbell is an Australian manufacturer in a small way, closely allied with communist circles in that country. He offered himself for the job of trade commissioner, asking no pay. The republic, at that time (1946) still in its infancy, gratefully accepted. But after a first round, which was sheer

² It seems that the Fox corporation by now has shut up shop or modified its demands because the prospects are looking less rosy after the publicity it ultimately got. The Indonesian leaders are still apprehensive about the amount they will have to pay in compensation. But the same sort of thing is going on everywhere in Southeast Asia.

comedy,³ it transpired that an Australo-Indonesian corporation was being put together, which was going to monopolize trade between the two countries with republican preferences and the assistance of the wharfies, who would see to it that non-corporation cargoes were delayed by special treatment. Again it sounds like something out of a dime novel, but it was seriously discussed and if there had been people involved with a keener sense of business a great deal of harm might have resulted in those unruly days. Mr. Campbell, of course, was to officiate—but not gratis—in this corporation.

The very serious side of these adventurous doings and speculations is that their sum total may mean a further impoverishment of a badly shaken country and create a state of corruption that may become irremediable except by force. It gives the West a bad name and drives honest men and corporations to the application of the same means to maintain and expand their lawful business interests. It makes for methods of competition that cannot bear the light of day and that create rivalries between peoples and nations which should co-operate for the benefit of these countries. If it is left undisturbed in the name of free enterprise, we must not be astonished when that conception does not gain in respect or popularity. And, worst of all, it is grist to the communist mill.

Communism is not new to Southeast Asia. Rather soon after World War I its doctrine and achievements began to seep through China; other contacts were made via the western European countries and in cover organizations like the Anti-Colonial League. In 1925, during the agitation in China against foreigners and foreign concessions and the seamen's strikes on the China coast, communist activity was intensified, feeding on the hardships caused by the sharp economic fluctuations after the war and on the nationalist sentiment,

³ Mr. Campbell at one time requested the entry of an Indonesian winter sports team in the Australian annual event on Mount Kosciusko; it would be such excellent publicity!

rising in reaction to the conservatism that followed the progressive and even radical mood of 1918. I mentioned the communist disturbances in 1926-27 in the Netherlands Indies and their effects;⁴ unrest and disorders showed similar influences at work elsewhere in the area. In these years a number of people from Southeast Asia found their way to Moscow, voluntarily or because they were threatened with imprisonment; there they received the training and indoctrination, there they absorbed the peculiar communist party spirit that made them the leaders of the movement when World War II made it possible for them to return home.

Although there are several reasons why communist doctrine should not appeal to most peoples in Southeast Asia, it would be unduly optimistic to believe that its influence is limited to a relatively small number of fanatics agitating among the masses in times of depression and misery. There are stronger and more alluring attractions in the creed than the works of Marx and Lenin and the dogmas of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the communization of the means of production, and the inexorable course of historic materialism, particularly for the nationalist and anti-white or anti-foreign sentiment.

The strict hierarchy of society in many parts of Southeast Asia, with its hereditary or otherwise exclusive governing class and its beautiful but submissive manners, causes repressions of feeling that burst forth once the belief that these things are magically ordained falters. What a revelation, then, that there can be a party, a political fastness where even the lowliest can enter and where even Mr. Joseph Stalin is addressed as "comrade"! True, one has to be very strict on the party line and the discipline is cruel, but once one is well inside there is a cosiness that contrasts vividly with the distance maintained by the native *bendoro* or the white *tuan besar* (master, great lord). And communism *in partibus infidelium*

⁴ See pp. 115 f.

does not turn its grimmest face towards its converts; it still is the sympathetic friend and protector who wants to listen to grievances and agrees almost before they have been related. And it is always ready to disparage the people in power, those distant individuals who hold the keys of one's destiny.

For those who knew a little more of modern history there was a particular appeal in the rise of Bolshevist Russia. Here was a country of mujiks and labourers, who had eliminated the nobility, the merchants, the industrialists, and the big land-owners and who were yet building up their nation to terrible power. The war intensified this admiration; simple sergeants had become field marshals of worldwide renown. The greatest war machine on earth had broken down under their blows. And above them all towered mysteriously Stalin, Marshal of the Soviet Union, generalissimo, a renegade priest who had started life as a revolutionary and reached this pinnacle through jails and internment camps and glorious struggles.

The facts that Russia had been a nation for centuries, that though not in the West it was sufficiently of the West to develop the national strength that rests on industrial organization, that it had been and still is an imperialist power, were conveniently overlooked. The tyrannous police state that was the outcome of Bolshevism could not be clearly discerned at such a distance, nor could one realize the meaning of collectivization of farms in the face of the communist propaganda in Asia for the partition of large estates. The terrific devotion, the endless working hours, the deadly seriousness, and the nervous strain of the communist staffs that had gone into the development of Russia, together with the death of millions of starving labour slaves, escaped observation. On the other hand, the five-year plans and the idea of nationalization were particularly inspiring.

Planning the great things to be done in the future was for the nationalists at the same time a realization of their accession to power and an escape from the cheerless facts of

everyday. The lack of realism that often characterizes the economic thinking of nationalist leaders in Southeast Asia made it all the more easy to imagine great achievements without considering by what means they were going to be achieved. And if the facts spoke too loudly, then there was the concept of nationalization, which would give them the tools to procure great wealth for the benefit of all.

No alien structure bore more heavily on most of these colonies and was more difficult to domesticate, to incorporate into the national house, than the structure of modern production, transport, and commerce. To build a really national economy in competition with those efficient Western (or Japanese, Chinese, and Indian) enterprises seemed practically impossible. The foreigners had only very occasionally admitted native citizens into the staffs of big business, and even many publicly owned utilities, factories, and estates were run under their direction. Nationalization of enterprises and jobs offered a way out of this blind alley; the price of less efficient management would have to be paid; compensation to the owners need hardly be considered. And how many social improvements could be introduced once the power of decision was in nationalist hands! Only relatively few could imagine that these profits for some groups of people would have to be paid for by exacting higher prices from, and providing fewer goods and services for, the impoverished masses.

Even for these masses nationalization could be made to look attractive in certain cases. One of the sections of the community that suffered most from Japanese maladministration was the hundreds of thousands of foremen, mechanics, and labourers who saw their regular income stopped by the closing down of factories and estates. They could go nowhere else except into the *romusha* battalions of the Japanese forces or to the overcrowded cities. Many stayed near the site of their former occupation and towards the end began to live

on the gradual sale of stocks and materials that were left on the premises. In many cases they faithfully kept the machinery clean and the plantations weeded. But now and again they had to barter products or equipment for food and scanty clothes; and as the system developed, thousands, including poor relatives, flocked back to this easy life. A communist agitator and organizer only needed to point out that *this* was nationalization to make nationalization very popular indeed. What was to happen when everything was gone far surpassed the capacity of these simple people to think ahead; it was too wonderful while it lasted.

So communism had many traits and slogans to recommend itself to a poor people in its nationalist revolt. And its tactics were excellent. Here was a movement, led locally almost exclusively by compatriots and yet with a mighty international organization behind it, that only offered assistance and asked neither ready cash nor direct control. It could point to the colonial rulers and the capitalist sharks as representatives of the West, concerned only with power and profit. It had its spokesmen from the Russian bloc in the United Nations; Mr. Manuilsky of the Ukraine entered the first plea for the Indonesian Republic and the first accusations against the imperialist British and Dutch in the Security Council in January, 1946. The agents that had been schooled in Russia and China were excellent organizers; their system of penetration, construction of cells, front-building, and propaganda was thorough and well tested. And their line of policy was adapted to the circumstances of the moment in a way which was meant to evoke the admiration of the initiated and could be swallowed by the ignorant masses if they were made receptive by a compound of reiterative demagoguery, fine promises, and cynical terrorism. Totalitarian communism is based in the final analysis on an absolute contempt for the comprehension of the common man.

But this common man, as well as a considerable number of

the educated people in most countries of Southeast Asia, still considers communism a counsel of desperation. As a farmer—and the great majority are farmers—he is very jealous of his ownership of land, which is the foundation of his social status. In his village community he wants to have a say in the public business; he wants to deliberate and decide together with his peers; he wants to elect his headman or at least to have some influence on his appointment. He wants his children to inherit his property. He is submissive to higher authority and bound in many ways by unquestioned traditions. But outside those limitations he wishes to be free; he dislikes to be ordered about, or to be saddled with village commissars, or to be summoned to senseless meetings, processions, and drives. As long as he can live in relative ease he would rather go on in the accustomed way, and he looks upon the unruliness of his sons and daughters with grave concern.

His religion is another obstacle to the spread of communism. The Moslem and Christian faiths are intrinsically anti-totalitarian, and their tenets inspire him with a more direct awe than most Westerners. Hinduism seems completely incompatible with communism as long as its caste system and its priesthood persist, even in the mild form that obtains in Bali. And Buddhism too does not seem conducive to communism, either in its contemplative or in its pantheistic mood.

If all is well the common man wants to leave well alone. The labourer is less immune, even under normal conditions. But labour constitutes as yet only a fraction of the population and is to a great extent rural and bound up with the village. Fishermen and forest dwellers live far away from politics of this ideological kind. Only in the cities has communism a chance when nothing is wrong with daily life, because there it is influenced by the more violent forms of nationalism and the lack of social roots of the inhabitants.

The educated and half-educated may, through their nationalist sentiments, their more vivid sense of being oppressed by colonial rule or white supremacy, their interest in Marxist theories and Russian achievements, their lust for rapidly acquired power, and their relish for nationalization, be drawn towards an ideology that knows no gradualness and promises quick results through militant action. But there is a counterpoise to this weight of revolutionary desire in the aristocratic or feudal nature of the upper class from which most of the educated take their origin and to which most of them want to belong. They know that in a real communist revolution the waters rising from below will swamp them.

Yet everything changes when emotions run high and the standard of living falls low. Then all the arguments given above gain in force. A combination of a nationalist revolution and a wrecked economy presents ideal conditions for communist propaganda. Unemployed labourers, sweated tenants, and all the riffraff that appears and multiplies in troubled times are the foremost recruits for the communist armies. And headquarters are always on the lookout to seize the occasion.

But this general picture would not be complete if we did not take into consideration the fact that personal leadership and ambitions have a great influence in these countries. Thus we find two communist parties in Burma; there have been four at the same time in Java. Leninist and Trotskyist labels that are sometimes affixed to them have only a limited significance; personal rivalries are more decisive than dogmatic differences, although the question of subservience to Moscow may divide the faithful.

Until the beginning of 1948, when meetings between the communist leaders and agents took place in Calcutta, India, communist tactics aimed at an unostentatious infiltration into the nationalist movement in Indonesia and Malaya. Coming out into the open as communists was discouraged; the openly

rebellious Viet Minh of Ho Chi Minh in French Indo-China was almost dropped.⁵ From May, 1948, the party line was changed; the time for more direct action had come. An indication of the fact that this change had its focus in Moscow may be found in the information that the consular treaty, which was concluded in Prague between the U.S.S.R. and the Republic of Indonesia on May 22, 1948, had been repeatedly urged by the republican emissary, Mr. Suripno, but was consistently staved off by the Russian Embassy until it suddenly accepted the proposal shortly before that date.

In Burma, where communists were already in revolt against the government, the effect could only be an increased activity. In Malaya communist terrorism broke out in June. Whether the attitude towards Ho Chi Minh was changed at the time does not seem clear; in any case he has since obtained recognition by the U.S.S.R.

In Indonesia the Dutch-controlled areas, even those which had only recently been occupied by our troops during the first police action, remained almost wholly free from communist activity. Law and order was returning or firmly established, production was resumed, and governmental services began to function again. The fundamental incompatibility of the Indonesian point of view and communist aims and methods had an opportunity to assert itself, and the new political development with its elections and transfer of authority to member states, its successive steps towards the formation of the sovereign United States of Indonesia, could not disturb the situation. Neither the strife of parties nor the continuous republican agitation and intimidation were able to stop or reverse the process.

In republican territory the communist movement obtained increasing support. The several communist factions, more

⁵ On the 20th of March, 1947, when the fighting against Ho Chi Minh's Republic was in full swing, the policy of the French government was approved by the French Chamber without a dissenting vote, the communist members merely abstaining.

divided by allegiance to different leaders than by doctrine, had been in and out of the government majority as the constantly shifting combinations required. Then Mr. Suripno returned from Prague and with him Mr. Muso, one of the communists of older vintage, who had been in exile and now came straight from Moscow. Whether he bore instructions for direct action or whether it was the result of a rebellion among certain cliques in Jogjakarta, in which he became involved, on September 19, 1948, he unleashed the communist revolution in Madiun against the republic of Mr. Sukarno. Among the leaders were the principal republicans who had been in power when Jogjakarta made the first police action inevitable and who had been out of office since the *Renville* agreements: Mr. Amir Sharifuddin, unbalanced and insanely ambitious, who now declared himself a communist of old standing—which he was not—and Mr. Setyajit, organizer of the extremely leftist trade union movement, sleek and evasive, with a strain of fanaticism, in whose political past in the Netherlands were unexplained affiliations with the Dutch communists. The rebellion proved abortive and was beaten down by the republican forces, but the other communist groups remained active and unmolested in Java and Sumatra.

There seemed to be a uniform—or, if one prefers, a cominform—pattern. There were undoubtedly connections with the communists in Singapore, Bangkok, and India; those with Australia had been uninterrupted since Mr. Healy and Mr. Roach had induced the wharfies to boycott Dutch ships in September, 1945. In the Philippines the continuing unrest certainly had communist support. Only Thailand and Ceylon remained unaffected, at least outwardly, though communist agitation went on among the Chinese in the first-named country and a numerous communist party exists in Ceylon. It would seem that the Russians expected their legation in Bangkok to be more effective if troubles did not arise in

its immediate neighbourhood. A more indirect method of compulsion is to be found in the policy of the Soviets which vetoes the coveted entrance into the U.N. of some of the new national states and which seems about to be applied to the case of Indonesia. But behind all this a much more important and threatening force was moving up with the armies of communist China.

Nobody can foretell what the influence of the communist victory in China will be on the whole of South and East Asia. Here is a great nation, the first in that continent, crossing over to the other side. It is certainly not true that the Chinese communists are "really not communist at all" as the naïve and indiscriminating supporters of every Asiatic revolutionary movement in former years used to say. On the other hand, it is very probable that the Chinese will absorb and digest this foreign doctrine and in the long run produce something quite different from the Soviet conception, as they have absorbed and transformed every foreign influence in the course of the ages. But the long run in China means decades, if not centuries, and in the meantime much damage can be done. Already agents are moving among the 7 million Chinese in Southeast Asia. Millions of them, particularly those of mixed descent, are anything but communist-inclined; their whole outlook and living is based on individualistic, commercial capitalism. But their national coherence is the most stubborn and enduring feature in the Asiatic scene, and their attitude towards a communist government in China will adapt itself to the exigencies of the moment and become unpredictably opportunist. Others, of course, will straightaway follow the communist lead; their numbers may be greater than we expect.

The Chinese civil war and its outcome have already had one effect: they have put a scare into the non-communist nationalists of Southeast Asia and maybe also into some of its communists. Not only because China is an example—with

Burma—of what economic chaos and governmental corruption and impotence must lead to. It is important that this be realized, but Chinese communism is more: it is a direct threat. For the Chinese are not liked in Southeast Asia; their persevering acquisitiveness, their egotism, and their indigestibility in the national body politic are feared and resented, notwithstanding the contribution their unremitting industry has made to the economy of the area. This reaction may strengthen the forces of constructive nationalism and lead to the rejection of the policy of "neutrality" that has so much been propagated by India. It may bring Southeast Asia and India together in defence against a common danger and foster closer relations with the Western democracies.

Yet at the same time—such is the curious complexity of Asiatic politics—the Asiatic nations may come to resent a long-drawn non-recognition by the West of the altered situation in China. In their opinion, and they may well be right, the change is the result of a popular upheaval. Continued support to a government that the people have rejected is but another instance of Western high-handedness. If an effort is to be made to keep Formosa outside the iron curtain, it must be based on the co-operation of the Formosans, not on that of a Chinese nationalist government that is very unpopular in the island because it treated Formosa, after its return to the Chinese empire, as a conquered territory and sent over a large number of troops to live on the country.

So for the moment the outlook is gloomy. There is as yet no unity in Southeast Asia. The grip of the new national governments on the affairs of their countries is loosening rather than tightening. In Thailand, though stable conditions prevail, and in Singapore the large Chinese community may be the cause of most difficult problems. Co-operation with the Western democracies is precarious and rather deteriorating in many parts; a common understanding among those democracies is still lacking, although there seems to be an

increasing realization of its urgency and a better understanding of the facts of the case. Co-operation will require more than a mere joining of efforts; the West must develop a clear program of what democracy has to offer to Southeast Asia in preference to totalitarian communism. It must prove that it has no intention of either exploiting these countries or making them bear the burdens of its own conflicts. Time, however, marches on, and the moment may come soon when one country after another will have to give up the struggle and will sink into a state of disorder, anarchy, and permanent economic decline from which only Moscow can reap the profits and in which the West may only remain represented by the ruins of its work and the less palatable leavings of its trade.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Voluntary Association in Southeast Asia

WHEN WE review the situation of Southeast Asia as it has evolved out of the turmoil of war and revolution we cannot escape the haunting impression of a reversion to conditions of centuries long past. But there is a great and decisive difference. The ancient kingdoms have gone; the ancient traditions and hierarchies have been metamorphosed or torn asunder; the ancient balanced economy was first completely modernized and vastly increased in a very one-sided way and then wrecked. And in many places it is even doubtful whether the bedrock of villages and tribes still holds; whether poverty, terror, and corruption have not essentially damaged their communal texture.

The exceptions only accentuate the dismal character of this picture because they prove that another and better transition from the colonial to the national era is possible. An Indonesian friend who has just travelled around the world wrote to me that he found Ceylon and Thailand pictures of serenity compared with the other countries. He particularly contrasted the simplicity, the modesty, and the industry of Ceylon with the empty presumption of other recently formed Asiatic states with their zest for adventure, experiment, and interna-

tional politics while internal conditions are becoming worse every day.

In Ceylon the transition took place without a break and in continuous co-operation with the former mother country—along the way which we all hoped the colonies in Southeast Asia would follow. It proves that Japanese occupation has been the major evil that poisoned the system of these countries and that the Allies did not succeed in eliminating that poison after their victory; for the general nature of the inhabitants of this region does not differ enough to explain the divergence. And Thailand suffered less from that occupation because it was an independent nation of long standing which had digested Western influence in its own way and avoided the forced increase of production, population, and public services which was the result of direct Western activity elsewhere. In the Philippines there is a partial salvation as a result of the great measure of autonomy they already enjoyed, but there are dangerous infections and deficiencies. Malaya is hovering over the abyss of inter-racial conflicts between the Malays and the Chinese; its relative prosperity may help to tide over the most dangerous period, when communist China will begin to exert its influence. Burma, French Indo-China, and Indonesia have been most sorely afflicted and seem in danger of disintegration; their fall may drag down others.

I may be too pessimistic. It is possible that the emotional reactions of people in Southeast Asia to the Japanese venom and to the sudden and convulsive change from subjection to independence will die down in time; that the sobering effect of real responsibility will turn the thoughts of leaders and parties away from the violence, the glorification, and the spoils of power; that the enthusiasm of youth will be forged into a common, constructive effort. But we would be criminally optimistic if we excluded that other possibility of a long-drawn agony in which these communities would slowly sink

back into a chaotic and primitive condition and throw themselves open to a new invasion, whether from the west or from the north.

Whatever the future may hold, there is every reason for the Western democracies to combine in a strong and stubborn effort to provide a foothold for these new nations to raise themselves out of the quicksand and to help them climb back to security and well-being. The dangers are too evident to delay such an effort much longer, and neither the depredations of the Japanese nor the rising tide of nationalism offers a sufficient excuse for the West to leave their patrimony in such an unholy mess.

In considering this problem, however, we have to realize that we cannot contribute to its solution if we look upon them as pawns in the cold war or as objects for exploitation in a suitably revised way. They have been too direly involved in the power politics of the West and too deeply aware of Western economic domination to find any attraction or compensation in assistance offered on those grounds. Only the interest and prosperity of the people themselves can be our point of departure.

To effect such a co-ordination we can start from a fact and a conception. The fact is that, whatever their form or value may be, the powers which had colonies in Southeast Asia all have concluded or will conclude certain agreements with those colonies upon their transformation into nations and that all those agreements contain an offer of assistance by the former mother country. These obligations point out the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands as the states that should constitute the nucleus of an organization to pool resources and to co-ordinate policies for such aid. By taking this fact as a basis we can enroll the special relationship between these countries and their former overseas territories for the purpose of serving those territories, and at the same time eliminate the narrow nationalism and its rival-

ries that have contributed so much to the dissensions of the West.

The conception is that marvellous gesture of well-founded and practical altruism that has been christened the Marshall Plan. Co-ordinated assistance for Southeast Asia must scrupulously avoid even the semblance of joint exploitation or joint control: it must be acceptable to and accepted by the Southeast Asiatic nations concerned. The system of the Marshall Plan provides for specific agreements with regard to the amount and the application of the aid; it brings the beneficiary into the discussion and the management of its activities. If, at the same time, an organized co-operation among the participating Southeast Asiatic nations themselves can be achieved in this way, somewhat after the pattern of the OEEC in Europe, that would be a great gain over the present lack of unity. The similarity of interests and the common menace of totalitarian aggression should be sufficient incentives to combine in the work of reconstruction, once those nations have regained their balance.

The discussion of economic problems within an organization, where the best economic talent of the West can be made available, might become a source of important and efficient education for Southeast Asia. But this depends to a large extent upon the spirit in which the organization would be conceived.

We have to reckon with the touchiness of young nationalism: the long-enduring suspicion of hidden imperialist motives that will have to be overcome by a slow process of persuasion and practical demonstration. On the other hand, it would never serve the purpose if aid were to be more or less unconditionally dumped into the treasuries of those countries or the pockets of their leaders. Certain guarantees for efficient spending and honest administration must be demanded—guarantees which may well take the form of a mandatory appointment of certain experts and advisers and of a certain

accountability to the organization or the fund which furnishes the means. This is not objectionable to Western nations which receive Marshall aid or obtain loans of the International Bank, but it may hurt susceptibilities in the Orient. Yet guarantees are unavoidable if we do not want a repetition of what happened with UNRRA grants and American subsidies in China. If they cannot be given, the aid had better be omitted.

To surmount this difficulty two things are necessary. First of all it must be beyond doubt that the Western powers concerned are firm in their recognition of the sovereign nature of the Southeast Asiatic nations. The combined acceptance of this position may put an end to all doubts that may still linger in this respect about the final intentions of one or two colonial powers. It seems to be more important still that the organization for aid itself accept as its sole directive the economic and social interests of the country to be assisted. It must particularly avoid the suspicion that it is acting as an agent of Western industry, commerce, and finance, or that it is trying to further the interests of one of the participants in the fund. The profits for the Western nations must be seen in the general advantage of stability and economic development in Southeast Asia, not in any special deal.

This requires a certain type of men as executives of the organization: people who are businesslike and practical, but not allied with specific interests; who can think and act as if they were nationals of the countries they are helping. Of course, they will have to work along agreed lines of economic conduct, aiming at the greatest possible expansion of production and trade and at the avoidance of any form of discrimination. But within those limits they should be free—and willing—to put the cause of Southeast Asia first.

Such an altruistic attitude may be less difficult than it seems because the aid needed by Southeast Asia might well prove to be more of the character of an investment than of a grant. Apart from certain measures of economic rehabilita-

tion, like food relief or monetary reform, Southeast Asia offers enough possibilities for profitable production and industrialization to render it unnecessary to make large gifts. The main condition should be directed towards honest and efficient management,¹ but such a condition becomes less irritating as it becomes evident that the aid will be exclusively for the benefit of those countries and will not entail any political dependence or any subjection to economic servitude or exploitation. Both parties must realize the need of such conditions; both are free to accept or reject the suggested co-operation.

Although the organization will most probably aim at stimulating free enterprise, no objections in principle should be made against requests on behalf of state undertakings, provided that reasonable standards of management are ensured. The formation of native capital in Southeast Asia is difficult without the intervention of the government, and the nationalist sentiment would certainly and naturally object if all the loans went into foreign investments. A well-balanced reconstruction of these disrupted and vulnerable economies without government planning and participation is hardly thinkable. Moreover, the participation of the state may facilitate the spread of modern economic skill, of which the Southeast Asiatic peoples still stand in great need.

If resources are pooled, obviously the United States will be able to make the greatest contribution through the implementation of Point 4 of President Truman's program and through the wide educational facilities at its disposal in its schools and its great business concerns. But it need not be the only financial participant. The other countries named are surely capable of granting credits for which capital goods and raw materials can be bought. They can offer expert knowledge and a schooling which is specially adapted to the needs of Southeast Asia. Their individual participation should be

¹ Including regular payment of interest and repayment of loans; extra support may be given by low rates and easy redemption clauses.

subject to mutual agreement and if possible take into account the particular position of each of the Southeast Asiatic nations.

If such an organization is to be based on the existing agreements between each of the four Western nations mentioned and its former colonies, it follows that in the matter of executive personnel the nationals of those Western countries should be used in and for the Southeast Asiatic nations with which a special relationship exists and with which they are most familiar. The advantages are too obvious to be overlooked. But the combination will make it possible and profitable to exchange men and information and to abrogate the exclusive character of those relations.

A further question will arise with regard to the participation of others in the organization, both for contributing and for receiving aid. This is apt to be a ticklish problem which must not be exacerbated by any activity of the organization that would tend to exclude or hamper bona fide investments of the nationals of other states. However attractive it may seem to widen the circle of co-operation, it should not be done so liberally that problems of a completely different nature than those of Southeast Asia would become involved. One could imagine Australia and New Zealand acceding as providers. Perhaps India could enter into that category, if India should be able to offer real assistance and if she should not need such assistance herself. But India would be less easy to accommodate on the receiving side of the organization than, for instance, a country like Pakistan, because her size and her large population as well as her economy give her a character which differs greatly from the countries that have been considered thus far. Her interest in the problem is, however, undeniable, and some form of co-operation should be found.

The organization might well try to relate its activities to the social and economic functions of the U.N., but it must be obvious that a sponsorship by the U.N. is impossible under the present conditions. It would bring political conflict where

a scrupulous avoidance of such a conflict is imperative. The ultimate tests for membership should be a sincere desire to assist the young nations and the capacity to render assistance on the side of the contributors, and a free acceptance of co-operation, without any feeling of renewed subjection or burdensome obligations on the side of Southeast Asia. Every partner who can reinforce the total effort more by joining than by separate action should be welcome.

I have tried to give the sketchiest outline of what might be done by the West and by Southeast Asia on a basis of voluntary association to retrieve some of the losses that were sustained as a result of unpreparedness and lack of co-ordination in the last few years. There are, of course, other possibilities. There is the great and fertile field of cultural relations, where the facilities for study and for practical experience—both of private business and of government administration—in Western countries could be greatly enlarged for people from Southeast Asia, whereas Southeast Asia could continue to admit and invite Western scientists and artists. There is the grave and difficult problem of defence, as yet but vaguely organized and resting on a system of military bases for the West and foreign instructors for Southeast Asia. It could be much more integrated and could lead to an alliance in which the Southeast Asiatic members might feel that they were reaching the fulness of nationhood and deciding freely about their place in the pattern of security for the democratic world.

But it cannot be the purpose of this book to elaborate a system when we have not even reached the point where the idea of such a voluntary association is accepted: I would be merely drawing the blueprints for a house that has not yet been ordered and that can only be designed and built by the combined efforts of many people. There are certain indications that the idea is spreading, although the material and psycho-

logical obstacles still seem enormous. I have only tried to indicate why it should be taken up and taken up quickly by those nations whose responsibility in Southeast Asia has not yet ended because they still have a great debt to redeem and because democracy itself is at stake in Southeast Asia.

This should not be misunderstood. The nations of Southeast Asia are not democratic in the sense which we give to the word when we are not talking nonsense. There is a primitive, direct democracy in many villages, but representative institutions and elections are as yet hardly incorporated in the political system on a democratic foundation of real parties and platforms. But Southeast Asia is *not* totalitarian: people love to discuss things and even to deliberate until everybody agrees. They wish to be enlightened and persuaded. They have a growing fondness for personal liberty that can thrive only in a democratic world.

But in their precarious and exposed position, in their youthful ardour and inexperience, they need an integration in the community of democratic nations that can give them an assurance of equality and a feeling of security at the same time. The fact that obstacles are put in the way of the admission of some of them to the U.N. renders such an organization of similarly minded nations of East and West doubly desirable. And the extension of the co-ordination of Western democracies towards Southeast Asia, on a footing of full and practical partnership, can prevent the resurgence of the old imperialistic competition for privilege and monopoly and the growth of a new, anti-communist imperialism that would rot the roots of democratic thought and procedure among men and nations before those roots have taken hold in this new and fertile soil.

All these promising beginnings may be lost if the present deterioration persists. They can be saved only by the people, of their own free will; the time when we could command them

to be free is past. But that does not mean that the time has come when we may tell them to take their cares elsewhere and be done with them. For we can still make up as friends for what we left undone as rulers.

Index

- Abaca, *see* Manila hemp
 ABDA (American-British-Dutch-Australian) Command, 133 n., 137, 164
 Abreu, Antonio de, 42
 Achin, 61, 63, 78, 216, 238
 AFNEI (Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies), 187
 Agriculture in Southeast Asia, 32, 53, 64, 65, 109, 110, 117, 118, 265-267, 270
 Aguinaldo, Emilio, 93-96
 Albuquerque, Affonso de, 42, 43
 Allies in World War II, 13, 16, 17, 131, 134, 150, 151, 154-156, 158, 159, 161, 176, 183, 190, 192, 193, 236, 237 n., 265, 292; allied war policy, 162-174; allied military government in French Indo-China, 178, 246; in Indonesia, 179-181, 185-187, 207, 210, 211 n., 213-215, 218, 246
 Almeida, Francisco de, 42, 43
 Along Bay, 204
 Amboina, 149 n., 220
 Amboinese, 114, 149, 199, 210
 America, American, *see* United States
 Amsterdam, 42, 44, 221 n.
 Animism, *see* Paganism
 Annam, 27, 32, 36, 37, 61, 63, 79, 120, 142, 174, 176-178, 184, 193, 197, 202, 205, 237, 238; *see also* Viet Nam
 Anti-Colonial League, 279
 Apolinario, 80
 Arabia, 34, 35, 38, 39, 47, 141
 Argenlieu, Thierry d', 178
 Armaments, irregular distribution of, 161, 185, 187, 192-194, 206, 210, 217, 247, 271
 Asia, 14-16, 18, 20-22, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43-49, 51, 55, 56, 58, 60, 62, 68, 72-82, 85, 86, 101, 102, 113, 120, 125-128, 141, 144, 145, 149, 195, 229-232, 248-253, 265, 271, 274, 275, 288, 289
 Assam, 166
 Atlantic, Battle of the, 162
 Atlantic Charter, 17
 Aung San, 158, 200, 233
 Australia, 68, 124, 135 n., 136, 138, 168, 180, 182, 274, 297; forces in Indonesia, 165, 174 n., 184; attitude regarding Indonesia, 184, 241, 243, 252, 256, 278, 279, 287
 Australian Command, 174
 Axis, 132, 162
 Backward tribes, 29, 32, 39, 61, 72, 101, 102, 114, 119, 120, 199, 200, 205, 220

- Bali, 38, 39, 219, 220, 284
 Balikpapan, 165, 174 n., 180
 Ballantine, Joseph W., 127 n.
 Bandung, 134, 139
 Bangkok, 62, 237, 287
 Bantam, 209, 239
 Bao Dai, 159, 237
 Bataan-Corregidor, 134, 137
 Bataks, 29
 Batavia, 106, 112, 116, 132, 164,
 184, 185, 187, 196 n., 208, 209,
 211 n., 212, 218, 220, 242, 246,
 256, 258, 261
 Bauxite, 65, 67, 155
 Belgium, 245, 256
 Benkulen, 78
 Berlin, 132
 Bernadotte, Count, 256
Bersiap period, 210
 Black Flags, 89
 Blockade, alleged: of Indonesian Re-
 public, 217, 258; of borders in
 Java and Sumatra, 218, 240
 Boer, F. K. de, 221 n.
 Boer war, 63
 Bolshevism, 88, 281
 Bonifacio, 93
 Borneo, 32, 39, 61, 106, 114, 184 n.,
 193 n., 199, 219, 220, 222
 Bose, Subhas, 158
 Brisbane, 180, 183
 Britain (Great), 42, 51, 60-64, 78,
 80, 107, 116, 124, 125, 130, 132,
 133, 135, 144, 151, 168, 169, 173,
 182, 183, 204, 240, 283, 293;
 colonial policy, 49, 56, 57, 71, 76,
 119, 161, 200, 201, 231-233, 235;
 policy in French Indo-China, 178,
 246; in Indonesia, 186-188, 207,
 211-213, 218, 221, 246, 247, 253,
 276; in Thailand, 236
 British Borneo, 33, 61, 64, 68, 142,
 165, 166, 173, 235
 British Commonwealth, *see* Britain
 British Eastern Fleet, 160, 166, 180
 British Empire, *see* Britain
 British-Indian forces, 133, 135, 158,
 166, 174, 178, 184 n., 218
 Brooke, James, 61
 Brooke-Popham, Sir Robert, 133
 Brunai, 165
 Brussels, 256
 Buddhism, 37, 39, 145, 284
 Budi Utomo, 81
 Buitenzorg, 53 n.
 Bunche, Ralph, 256
 Burke, Edmund, 56
 Burma, 14, 21, 27, 29 n., 32, 33, 36,
 38, 39, 57, 60, 61, 63, 99, 163, 166,
 167, 174, 267, 269, 289, 292;
 economy of, 64, 66, 68, 234 n.;
 nationalism in, 79, 119, 197; dis-
 sensations in, 119, 175, 192, 199,
 200, 233, 286, 292; the Japanese
 in, 140, 142-144, 158; independ-
 ence of, 175, 200, 233, 235; com-
 munism in, 200, 233, 285, 286
 Burmese Union, 233
 Cadiz, 44
 Calcutta, 285
 Calicut, 35, 41
 Cambodia, 32, 34, 36-38, 61, 63, 64,
 120, 159 n., 199, 205
 Camp Columbia, 180
 Campbell, 278, 279
 Canberra, 256
 Capitalism, 169, 170, 273, 274, 283,
 288
 Cebu, 42
 Celebes, 39, 61, 114, 149 n., 219, 220
 Central National Committee of In-
 donesia, *see* KNIP
 Central Trade Union Organization,
 240
 Ceylon, 14, 33, 35, 37-39, 57, 60,
 119, 140, 161, 166, 194, 268, 291;
 economy of, 66, 160, 266; nation-
 alism in, 79; dominion status in,
 235, 236, 292; communism in,
 287
 Chadbourne Agreement, 117
 Chartered Companies, 42, 47-49, 56,
 60, 61, 64
 Chiang Kai-shek, 173
 China, 14, 21, 27, 33-35, 38, 39, 42,
 47, 50, 51, 59-64, 66-68, 89, 95,
 124-126, 128, 131, 140-142, 164,
 166, 169, 170, 173, 231, 232, 237,
 245, 249, 265, 269, 289, 295;

- position of, in Southeast Asia, 68, 82 n., 96, 105, 112, 118-120, 141 n., 149, 186, 199, 201, 210, 218, 254, 265, 275, 282, 289, 292; communism, 101, 129, 234, 235, 237, 279, 283, 287, 289; action in Southeast Asia, 158, 159, 174, 176, 179, 193, 202, 204, 206, 217, 274, 275
- Chinese forces, 158, 167, 173, 177, 201, 203, 204
- Christianity, 41, 43, 45, 46, 48, 50, 60, 71, 80, 92, 102, 107, 114, 119, 145, 149 n., 152, 199, 207, 220, 273, 284
- Christison, General Sir Philip, 187, 246
- Chulalongkorn, 62, 80
- Chungking, 170, 176
- Churchill, Winston, 163, 169
- Cinchona, 53, 67, 109, 117
- Cinnamon, 37, 53
- Civil affairs: in French Indo-China, 178; in Indonesia, 186, 187
- Clark Kerr, Sir Archibald, 213
- Coal, 64, 67, 109
- Cochin, 42
- Cochin-China, 27, 61, 202, 203, 205, 237
- Cochran, Merle, 256 n., 259
- Coffee, 52, 53, 110
- Collaboration with the Japanese, 143, 148, 150, 154, 160, 207, 208, 211, 236
- Colombo, 180
- Colonialism, 16, 18, 20, 58, 69, 80, 101, 118, 156, 171, 215, 229, 250, 251, 285; Japanese, 195, 196; *see also* Imperialism
- Combined Chiefs of Staff, 182
- Comintern, 129
- Commission-General, 221, 241
- Committee for the preparation of independence in Indonesia, 157
- Common people, *see* Villages
- Communism, 17, 19, 85, 101, 114-116, 128, 131, 170, 176, 177, 184, 200-207, 209, 216, 229-231, 233-235, 237, 242, 249, 252, 256, 258, 259, 272-274, 278-290, 292, 299
- Copra, 64, 67, 110, 201
- Co-Prosperity Sphere (Great East Asia), 16, 127, 141, 142, 157, 190, 267
- Corruption, 100, 216, 217, 239, 267, 269, 271, 273, 274, 276, 279, 289, 291
- Critchley, 256 n., 259
- Culture System, 52-54, 64, 66, 108
- Cumberland, H.M.S., 185
- Curaçao, 181, 214, 223
- Customary law, 39, 108, 110
- Dai Nippon, *see* Japan
- Dalat, 204
- Decoux, 159
- Democracies, *see* Western democracies
- Democracy, 18, 19, 21, 73, 83, 106, 112, 113, 299
- Digul internment camp, 116
- Domei, 209
- Dorman-Smith, Sir Reginald, 175
- Dubois, Coert, 256 n., 259
- Dutch, *see* Netherlands
- Dyaks, 29, 199, 220
- East Asia, 125, 127
- East Borneo, 165
- East Indonesia, 29, 184 n., 193 n., 221, 222, 255
- East Sumatra, 216, 221, 255
- Economy of Southeast Asia, 21, 32, 35-37, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 64-68, 77, 78, 87, 282, 294-297; war damage to, 154, 155, 190-192, 217, 265-268, 282, 283; present state of, 230, 252, 264-272, 274, 275, 291
- Education, 50, 51, 54, 59, 70, 71, 79-81, 83, 86, 87, 99, 100, 110, 111, 147, 150, 152-153, 267, 296, 298
- Egypt, 241
- Eisenhower, Dwight D., 163
- El Alamein, Battle of, 162
- Elections, 255, 259, 286, 299
- Elton, Lord, 76
- England, *see* Britain

- Eurasians in Indonesia, 107, 111, 148, 210, 240
- Europe, 15, 42-48, 51, 52, 55, 56, 58, 62, 65, 75, 79, 81, 92, 94, 106, 112, 117, 124-126, 135, 138, 166, 168, 191 n., 195, 196, 231, 265, 274, 279, 294
- Exports, importance of, in Southeast Asia, 66, 67, 154, 265, 266, 269, 276
- Extraterritoriality, 62, 123
- Far East, 68, 125, 126, 131, 162, 168, 201, 264
- Fascism, 131
- Fashoda incident, 63 n.
- Fiji, 138
- Filipino, *see* Philippines
- Flores, 220
- Forbes, Cameron, 100
- Formosa, 33, 128, 289
- Fox, Matthew, 258, 277, 278 n.
- France, 42, 57, 60-64, 78, 107, 124, 132, 133, 143, 144, 159, 169, 172-174, 176-178, 193, 246 n., 293; colonial policy, 120, 179, 202, 204-206, 231, 237-238, 286 n.; agreement with Viet Nam, 203-206, 213
- Free enterprise, 272, 279, 292
- French forces, 159, 178, 202-204, 246
- French Indo-China, 14, 29 n., 33, 39, 57, 73, 107, 120, 133, 140, 166, 179, 202, 236, 292; economy of, 66, 292; the Japanese in, 133, 143, 144, 159; nationalism in, 159; Chinese occupation of northern, 173, 174, 179; British occupation of southern, 174, 178, 184; revolution in, 176, 178, 193, 199, 201, 204, 205, 267; communism in, 176, 177, 286; *see also* Viet Nam
- French Union, 203, 204, 237
- French-Viet Nam agreement, 203-206, 213
- Führerprinzip, 131
- Furnivall, J. S., 51 n.
- Gaimusho*, 157
- Gama, Vasco da, 41, 47
- Gandhi, 85, 129
- Gangsterism, 89-91, 161, 175, 192, 198, 208, 215, 263, 270; and revolution, 91, 96, 160, 185, 205, 225, 233, 235
- Gani, A. K., 277 n.
- Gaulle, General Charles de, 159
- Germans, 109, 133, 162, 172 n.
- Germany, 62, 124, 125, 131-133, 156, 162, 178, 182, 229
- Ghormley, Robert L., 165
- Goa, 42
- Gokhale, 81
- Gracey, D. D., 178, 246
- Graham, Frank D., 256, 258
- Great Britain, *see* Britain
- Great East, *see* East Indonesia
- Great East Asia Conference, 142
- Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, *see* Co-Prosperity Sphere
- Greece, 246
- Guerilla warfare, 158, 160, 175, 192, 193, 237, 254
- Gunsei*, 146
- Hague, The, 108, 116, 119, 174, 212, 223, 255, 260, 261
- Haiphong, 203, 265
- Halsey, William F., 165
- Hanoi, 177, 202-205
- Harrison, F. B., 100
- Hart, Thomas C., 137
- Hatta, Mohammed, 151, 157, 158, 208, 209, 216, 222, 260, 261
- Hauteclouque, Philippe Leclerc de, *see* Leclerc, Jacques Philippe
- Havana conference, 277
- Hawaii, 136 n.
- Healy, 287
- Heiho*, 153, 209
- Herremans, 256 n.
- Heutsz, J. B. van, 73, 107
- Hindu, Hinduism, 34, 37-39, 80, 284
- Hitler, Adolf, 132
- Ho Chi Minh, 159, 177, 203, 204, 206, 286

- Hoge Veluwe, discussions at, 214-216
 Holland, *see* Netherlands
 Hollandia, 180
 Hong Kong, 94, 137, 166
 Hovas, 33
 Hué, 174
 Hukbalahaps, 160
 Hurley, Patrick J., 102
 Huu, 237
- Igorots, 29, 199
 Imperialism, 22, 57, 59, 62-64, 68, 70, 72, 73, 76, 106, 119, 120, 123, 124, 127, 128, 131, 141, 161, 167, 229, 234, 249-251, 268, 272, 281, 294, 299
 Imphal, 166
 Independence, 14-16, 19-22, 70, 84-86, 171, 197, 229, 232, 234, 292; of the Philippines, 14, 59, 95, 100-102; of Thailand, 14, 62, 64, 119, 292; as offered by Japan, 142, 143, 150, 157, 160; in Indonesia, 151, 154, 156, 216, 220, 260-262; of Viet Nam, 204, 237; of Burma, 233; of Ceylon (dominion status), 235
 India, 14, 33-35, 37-39, 41, 45, 47, 51, 56, 57, 64, 66-68, 76, 80, 81, 89, 107, 112, 116, 141, 158, 180, 258, 287; position of, in Southeast Asia, 68, 119, 129, 141 n., 161, 216, 233, 234, 243, 265, 274, 282, 297; and communism, 285, 287
 Indian Mutiny, 55
 Indian National Congress, 116, 129
 Indian Ocean, 22, 35, 42
 Indigo, 52, 53
 Indirect rule, 49, 53, 55, 69, 76, 108
 Indo-China, 29, 32-34, 37, 39, 61, 78, 154, 166, 173
 Indo-Chinese Federation, 203, 204
 Indonesia, 14, 23, 27, 32, 33, 37-39, 42, 45, 51-53, 57, 61, 63, 73, 91, 99, 106-119, 127, 129, 132-134, 136, 141, 165, 166, 173, 174, 176, 179, 180, 182-184, 186, 187, 189, 199, 202, 235, 246-248, 263, 275, 288, 291, 292; economy of, 64-66, 68, 108-110, 116-118, 146, 154, 155, 216-218, 239, 240, 242, 255, 258, 262, 267, 275-279; nationalism in, 79, 81, 106, 112-116, 136, 140, 143, 150, 152, 153, 156, 188, 197, 206, 211, 220, 278; independence of, 84, 142, 150, 151, 154, 156, 157, 216, 220, 260-262; communism in, 101, 114-116, 207, 209, 216, 242, 259, 278-280, 285, 287; education in, 110-111, 118; political developments in, 111-113, 115, 118, 119, 180-182, 212-216, 218-225, 238, 241-243, 254, 255, 257-262; federalism in, 116, 219, 220, 221 n., 262; the Japanese in, 138-140, 142-158, 184, 185, 206-209, 211, 212; collaboration in, 143, 148, 150, 154, 207, 208, 211; revolution in, 184-188, 193, 201, 206-212, 225, 238-241; British policy in, 186-188, 207, 211-213, 218, 221, 246, 247, 253, 276; police action in, 243, 248, 253, 254, 260; U.N. action in, 243, 246, 252, 254, 256-261; *see also* Republic of Indonesia and United States of Indonesia
 Industrial Revolution, 51
 Industry, 55, 67, 68, 109, 110, 118, 124, 296
 International Bank, 295
 International Court of Justice, 245
 Internees and prisoners of war, 143, 147-149, 155, 159, 164, 177, 178, 185-187, 212-214, 236, 240
 Inverchapel, Lord, *see* Clark Kerr, Sir Archibald
 Investments, foreign, in Southeast Asia, 14, 267, 271, 272, 295-297
 Isbrandtsen Line, 217 n.
 Isio, *Fapa*, 96
 Islam, 38, 39, 41, 71, 145, 151, 207, 216, 220, 236, 239, 284
 Italy, 131, 132, 162, 229
- Jambi, 238
 Japan, 16, 20, 33, 35, 42, 45, 62, 63,

- Japan (*continued*)
 67, 68, 80, 95, 109, 116-118, 120,
 129, 130, 135, 136, 141, 142,
 144, 162-167, 173, 179, 182-185,
 200, 211, 214, 215, 231, 236,
 251, 265, 282; occupation of
 Southeast Asia, 13, 17, 71, 141-
 160, 168, 173, 176, 190, 192-198,
 202, 206-209, 247, 266, 267, 276,
 292, 293; aggression, 15, 66, 133-
 140, 143, 253; propaganda, 16,
 128-129, 146, 147, 151, 155, 157,
 160, 167, 185, 192, 198, 207, 209,
 247; imperialism, 123-128, 130-
 133, 161, 167, 229; and com-
 munism, 131, 177, 207; surrender,
 143, 153, 158, 161-163, 167, 172,
 174-177, 184, 194, 201, 207, 209,
 215, 219, 236, 246, 267
 Japanese forces, 128, 134, 137, 138,
 143, 146, 149, 153, 157, 173, 185,
 187, 192, 193 n., 210, 212
 Java, 27, 28, 34, 35, 37, 39, 47, 52,
 53, 64, 107, 114, 133, 135, 137,
 146, 151, 154, 166, 173, 180, 184,
 185, 187, 191, 193, 196, 201, 207,
 212, 214, 218, 219, 222, 238, 241,
 243, 246, 254, 285, 287
 Java rebellion, 55
Jawa Hoko kat, 151
 Jogjakarta, 28, 215, 216, 218, 238,
 241-243, 254, 255, 258, 260, 286
 Jones Law, 98
Joyoboyo, 196

 Kandy, 160, 166, 180
 Kapok, 67, 110
 Karens, 27, 29, 61, 119, 199, 200,
 233
 Kashmir, 192 n., 246
Katipunan, 93
Kaibodan, 152
 Kemal Atatürk, 80
Kempeitat, 144, 147, 148
 Khmers, 32
 Killearn, Lord, 221
 Kirby, Richard, 256
 KNIP (Kumite Nasional Indonesia
 Pusat), 222 n.
 Kolso, Kuniaki, 142, 157

 Korea, 124, 128
 Kota Bahru, 137
 Kuomintang, 80, 164, 170, 173, 176

 Labuan, 61
 Lake Success, 252, 264
 Land tenure, 92, 93, 103, 114, 115 n.,
 119, 160, 199, 200, 281
 Language problem: in the Philip-
 pines, 99, 104, 231, 232; in In-
 donesia, 110
 Laos, 29, 61, 63, 120, 199, 205
 Laurel, José P., 160
 Law and order, 19, 194, 230, 235,
 267, 268; in the Philippines, 160,
 200, 231; in French Indo-China,
 202, 206, 237, 238; in Indonesia,
 225, 238, 243, 247, 254, 255, 260,
 262, 286; in Burma, 233
 Leclerc, Jacques Philippe, 178, 202
 Lenin, Nikolai, 280
 Leninism, 285
 Lesser Sunda Islands, 61, 219
 Leyte, 165, 180
Liga Filipina, 93
 Lingajati Agreement, 221-225, 238,
 242, 243, 245 n., 255 n., 258
 Lisbon, 42
 London, 19, 42, 77, 132, 166, 174,
 180, 187
 Lugard, Lord, 263
 Luzon, 27, 32, 61, 64, 93, 102, 133,
 165

 Mabini, 95
 MacArthur, Douglas, 130, 137, 160,
 165, 173, 180
 Macassar, 219
 Madagascar, 33
 Madiun, 286
 Madura, 191, 222, 255
 Madurese, 114
 Maeda, 184, 209
 Magellan, Fernando, 42
 Majapahit, 34
 Malacca, 35, 42, 61, 78
 Malaya, 14, 27, 29 n., 32-35, 38, 39,
 42, 57, 61, 73, 82 n., 107, 132,
 133, 135, 140, 141, 166, 167, 173,
 175, 184, 236; economy of, 64, 66,

- 67, 201, 217, 267, 276; nationalism in, 79, 158, 200, 201, 235; racial problem in, 105, 119, 158, 199, 201, 292; the Japanese in, 137, 142, 144; troubles in, 158, 193, 201, 235, 286; political reform in, 201; communism in, 201, 235, 285, 286
- Malayan Federation, 201
- Malayan Union, 201
- Malay Peninsula, 78
- Malay States, 61, 63, 158
- Malino conference, 219-221
- Manchukuo, 142
- Manchuria, 124, 128, 130, 164
- Mandalay, 167
- Manganese, 64, 67
- Manila, 94, 95, 98, 127, 136, 137, 164, 165, 174, 180, 193
- Manila Bay, Battle of, 64, 94
- Manila hemp, 52, 67, 267
- Manipur, 166
- Manuilsky, 283
- Maramis, A., 277 n.
- Marshall Plan, 232, 294, 295
- Martin Behrman*, 217 n.
- Marx, Karl, 280
- Marxism, 285
- Mas, Sinibaldo de, 59, 60
- Mashumi*, 151, 153
- Matsuoka, 132
- Mayo, Katherine, 101
- McKinley, William, instructions of, 97, 98, 102
- Medan, 240
- Melanesians, 29, 114
- Melbourne, 180
- Mestizos, Spanish and Chinese, in the Philippines, 105
- Mexico, 42, 50
- Middle East, 231
- Minahassa, 149 n., 220
- Minahassans, 14, 149, 199
- Mindanao, 39, 61
- Mindoro, 165
- Mining, 64, 65, 67, 68, 109, 117, 265, 266
- Mtnset*, 147
- Missouri*, U.S.S., 175
- Moderates, 197, 253, 285; in the Philippines, 93, 94, 96; in Indonesia, 113, 215, 247; in Viet Nam, 237
- Moluccas, 37, 39, 42, 43, 52, 61, 114, 149 n., 165, 219
- Monetary problems, 190, 225, 239, 262, 268, 269, 276
- Money, J. W. B., 52, 53
- Monopoly, 35, 36, 41, 47, 48, 55, 117, 276-278, 297, 299
- Moros, 60, 61, 199
- Morotai, 165, 174 n., 180
- Moscow, 129, 132, 176, 201, 203, 280, 285-287, 290
- Moslems, *see* Islam
- Mountbatten, Lord Louis, 166, 180, 185, 187
- Muso, 287
- Mutsuhito, 80
- Nacionalistas*, 104
- Nanking, 149
- Nanyo, 133
- National Congress, *see* Indian National Congress
- Nationalism, 13, 18, 20, 58, 72, 74, 79-91, 93, 94, 97, 101, 102, 106, 112-116, 118, 119, 125, 128, 129, 136, 140, 143, 150, 152, 153, 156, 158, 167, 171, 188, 190-225, 229, 235, 248-250, 253, 264, 275, 278-282, 284, 285, 288, 289, 293, 294, 296
- Nationalization, 206 n., 216, 234, 271, 280-283, 285
- Native states, 33-37, 74-76, 78, 108, 201
- Naziism, 131
- Near East, 141, 241, 265
- Negritos, 29
- Negros, 96
- Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, 129, 248
- Netherlands, 42, 57, 60, 61, 63, 78, 124, 127, 136, 137, 140, 144, 149, 150, 168, 169, 172, 174, 177, 179, 183, 184, 189, 193, 197, 202, 231, 251, 276, 278, 287, 293; colonial policy, 52-54, 106-112, 115-119, 171, 172, 180-182; Japanese economic negotiations, 132, 135;

Netherlands (*continued*)

and Japanese occupation, 147, 148, 155, 156; and the British in Indonesia, 186-188, 207, 211-213, 218, 221, 246, 247, 253; and the Republic of Indonesia, 188, 210-216 (*see also* Hoge Veluwe), 217-219, 221-225 (*see also* Ling-gajati and Truce), 238-243 (*see also* Police action), 248, 253, 254, 256-259 (*see also* Renville Agreements), 259-261 (*see also* Round Table Conference), 262, 263; and the non-republican territories, 219-221 (*see also* Malino), 241, 254-255, 260-262, 286; and the U.N. Security Council, 243-246, 252, 255-261, 283

Netherlands forces, 176, 179, 182-184, 217, 224, 240, 254

Netherlands Indies, *see* Indonesia

Netherlands-Indonesian Union, 223, 224, 257, 261

Netherlands States General, 107, 222, 223

New Delhi, 166, 175, 180, 264

New Delhi conference, 248, 249

New Guinea, 29, 116, 149, 162, 165, 180, 199, 219

New York, 180, 217 n., 277

New Zealand, 297

Nickel, 65, 67, 155

Nimitz, Chester W., 165

Nippon, *see* Japan

Noumea, New Caledonia, 165

Oahu, 138

OEEC (Organization for European Economic Co-Operation), 294

Oil, 64, 68, 109, 132, 133, 136, 155, 165, 265

Okinawa, 165

Open door, 70

Orange, House of, 149 n.

Ormuz, 35

Osmeña, Sergio, 175

OSS (Office of Strategic Services), 168, 177 n.

Ottawa Agreements, 116

Owen Stanley Range, 165

OWI (Office of War Information), 168

Pacific Area Command, 165

Pacific Ocean, 22, 42, 129, 132, 138, 163, 166

Pacific war, 132, 163, 252

Paganism, 37-39, 46, 61, 102, 119, 145, 199, 220

Pakistan, 66, 233, 297

Palembang, 276

Palestine, 246

Palm oil, 64, 67, 266, 267

Pan-Asianism, 75, 128, 274, 275

Papuans, 220

Paris, 120, 174, 204

Pasquier, 73

Pasundan (West Java), 255

Pearl Harbor, 73, 127, 134, 136, 138, 165, 167

Pemudas, 185, 198, 211

Penang, 61, 67

Pepper, 37, 53, 67, 110, 267

Perry, Matthew Calbraith, 62

Persia, 35, 47

Peta, 153, 155, 209

Philippine Commission, 97

Philippine Commonwealth, 98, 105, 130, 175

Philippine Republic, 95, 96

Philippines, 13, 23, 27, 32, 33, 38, 39, 42, 43, 50-52, 57, 59-61, 64, 73, 78, 91-106, 107, 140, 163, 165, 173, 175, 198, 231, 232, 267, 275, 292; independence in, 14, 59, 84, 95, 98, 100-105, 142, 143, 199; education in, 50, 51, 99, 100, 102; revolution in, 64, 93-96; economy of, 64-67, 93, 104, 105, 175, 232; nationalism in, 79-81, 92-94, 96, 97, 101, 105, 106; troubles in, 101, 102, 104, 160, 192, 199, 200, 231; the Japanese in, 142-144, 160; communism in, 200, 287

Pibulasonggram, P., 159, 236

Police action: in French Indo-China, 205; in Indonesia, 243, 248, 253, 254, 260

Poll, M. van, 221 n.

- Population trends, 53, 65, 68, 70, 191, 192, 292
- Port Arthur, 125
- Portugal, 35, 41, 42, 47
- Portuguese Timor, 33, 235
- Potsdam conference, 173
- Prague, 258, 286
- Prince of Wales*, H.M.S., 135, 137
- Prisoners of war, *see* Internees
- Puppet states and governments, 142, 149, 150, 177, 219-221, 255
- Quebec conference, 166
- Quezon, Manuel L., 101 n., 160, 175
- Quinine, *see* Cinchona
- Race relations: with the West, 45, 46, 58, 63, 70-72, 86, 125, 126, 195, 198, 250, 251, 274; Spanish-Filipino, 50; Dutch-Indonesian, 107, 112, 199, 211, 218; French-Annamite, 120, 206 n.; Japanese, in Southeast Asia, 145, 194, 195; towards backward tribes, 199, 200; Australo-Asiatic, 253; Sino-Malay, 292
- Rangoon, 164, 167, 175
- Red River (Tonkin), 176
- Renville, U.S.S., 257 n.
- Renville Agreements, 257, 259, 287
- Republic of Indonesia, 215, 219; armed groups in, 153, 209, 210, 215, 224, 225, 243, 247, 258; proclamation of, 184, 207-209; conditions in, 185, 209-211, 216, 218, 238-240, 255; and the British, 187, 211-213, 221, 246, 247; and the Netherlands, 188, 210-215; 217-219, 221-225, 238-243, 248, 253, 254, 256-263; illegal trade of, 201, 216, 217, 275-277; communism in, 216, 259, 278, 279, 283, 285, 286; foreign relations of, 216, 224, 240, 241, 258, 286; and the U.N. Security Council, 245, 246, 254-261; international recognition of, 245-247; and Matthew Fox, 258, 277, 278
- Repulse*, H.M.S., 135, 137
- Rice, 32, 37, 40, 47, 61, 64, 67, 216, 234, 236, 265 •
- Rivera, Primo de, 94
- Rizal, José, 81, 93
- Roach, 287
- Roger, Jean, *see* Sainteny
- Romushas*, 149, 154, 282
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 85, 130 n., 136 n., 163, 169, 173
- Round Table Conference (The Hague), 119, 180, 255, 260; agreements of, 261
- Royen, J. H. van, 261 •
- Rubber, 64, 67, 109, 110, 117, 136, 160, 201, 265-267
- Rural communities, *see* Villages
- Russia, 60, 63, 88, 124-126, 128, 130, 132, 133, 164, 169, 170, 231, 237, 253, 281, 283, 285, 288; and Burma, 233; and Viet Nam, 286; and Thailand, 287; and Indonesia, 258, 285
- Russian Army, 128
- Russo-Japanese war, 63
- Saigon, 61, 158, 164, 177, 178, 246
- Sailendras, 34
- Sainteny, 177, 202, 203
- Sakdalistas*, 104
- Salim, Haji Agus, 241
- San Francisco Conference, *see* UNCIO
- Sarawak, 61
- Sarikat Islam* (Moslem Union), 114
- Schermerhorn, W., 221 n.
- SEAC (Southeast Asia Command), 158, 160, 166, 167, 173, 174, 184 n., 185, 187
- Security Council, *see* U.N. Security Council
- Seinendan*, 153
- Sen, 260
- Senanayake, 236
- Sequeira, Diogo Lopez de, 42
- Setyajit, 287
- Seville, 42
- SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces), 182
- Shan, 29, 61, 233
- Shantung, 125

- Sharifuddin, Amir, 208, 242, 243, 287
 Shahrir, Sutan, 208, 211-213, 215, 216, 221, 241, 242
 Sherwood, Robert E., 130 n.
 Siam, *see* Thailand
 Siberia, 125, 128, 132
 Singapore, 61, 67, 119, 127, 130, 133-137, 164, 201, 217, 221, 258, 275, 276, 287, 289
 Singhalese, *see* Ceylon
 Sino-Japanese war, 63
 Sissal, 64, 267
 Socialism, 207, 208, 272
 Solomons, 162, 165
 Somerville, Sir James, 182
 Southeast Asia, 13, 15, 17-23, 27, 28, 33, 34, 36, 38, 51, 52 n., 60, 61, 63-68, 73-75, 80, 82, 84, 89, 91, 95, 101, 126-130, 134, 138, 141, 143, 145, 146, 167, 168, 170, 172-174, 188, 191-194, 196, 199, 204, 218, 221, 230, 231, 235, 236, 249-253, 264, 265, 268-272, 274, 278 n., 279, 280, 282, 284, 288-299
 South Pacific Area, 165
 South Sumatra, 276
 Soviets, *see* Russia
 Spain, 42, 61, 63, 64, 78, 94, 96, 97, 99, 104, 105; colonial policy, 48, 50, 59, 60, 92, 103; and the Filipino revolution, 93-95
 Spanish-American war, 63, 94, 104, 105
 Spices, 37, 47, 52, 67
 Stalin, Joseph, 169, 280, 281
 Stalingrad, Battle of, 162
 Stilwell, Joseph W., 167, 173
 Straits Settlements, 61
 Suez Canal, 21, 63, 64
 Sugar, 52, 53, 67, 105, 110, 117, 267
 Sukarno, 151, 153, 157, 158, 202, 208, 209, 211, 216, 222, 260, 261, 287
 Sulu, 61
 Sumatra, 32, 34, 35, 37, 39, 42, 61, 78, 106, 114, 154, 165, 166, 187, 193, 201, 207, 214, 216, 218, 219, 222, 238, 240, 241, 243, 246, 254, 275, 287
 Sumitro Joyohadikusomo, 277 n.
 Sundanese, 114
 Sun Yat-sen, 80
 Surabaya, 210, 212, 239
 Surinam, 181, 214, 223
 Suripno, 258, 286, 287
 Swettenham, Sir Frank, 73
 SWPA (Southwest Pacific Area), 165, 174
 Taft, William H., 73, 97, 100
 Tagus, 44
 Tamil, 236
 Tangerang, 218
 Tanjung Priuk harbour, 185
 Tan Malaka, 209
 Tapanuli, 238
 Tapioca, 64
 Tarakan, 165, 174 n.
 Tea, 53, 67, 109, 110, 117, 160, 267
 Teheran conference, 169
 Tenants, 92, 93, 103, 114, 115 n., 160, 200, 231, 285
 Terauchi, 157, 185
 Terrorism, 19, 194, 283, 291; in French Indo-China, 178, 202, 205; in Indonesia, 211, 239, 243, 254, 255, 258, 259, 286; in Malaya, 235, 286
 Thailand, 14, 21, 27, 29 n., 32, 33, 36-39, 61, 63, 80, 119, 120, 133, 142, 166, 173, 175, 176, 184, 194, 206, 237 n.; independence of, 14, 64, 78, 119, 292; economy of, 64-67, 176, 236, 267; the Japanese in, 142, 158, 159; stability in, 236, 249, 287, 289, 291
 Thailand-Burma railroad, 148, 159
 Thakin Nu, 233
 Thames, 44
 Thamrin, Mohammed Husni, 129
 Third Reich, 131
 Tilak, 80
 Timor, 114
 Tin, 64, 67, 109, 117, 136, 201
 Tobacco, 52, 53, 64, 67, 105, 267
 Tojo, Hideki, 142

- Tokyo, 130, 132, 136, 142, 143, 155, 163, 167
- Toyko Bay, surrender in, 175
- Tokyo ceremony, 145
- Tonari gumi*, 151
- Tonkin, 33, 39, 61, 89, 120, 176, 177, 193, 199, 205, 237
- Totalitarianism, 19, 106, 116, 169, 231, 271, 272, 283, 284, 290, 294, 299
- Trade, 35-38, 41, 43, 47, 48, 55, 62, 66, 67, 117, 118, 154, 255; illegal, 201, 216, 217, 275-277
- Treaty of Versailles, 129
- Tribes, *see* Villages
- Tripartite Alliance, 132
- Trotskyism, 285
- Truce: in French Indo-China, 203, 205, 206; in Indonesia, 221, 222, 224, 238, 243, 245, 257, 260
- Truman, Harry S., Point 4 of, 296
- Trusteeship, 17, 22, 170-172
- Turkey, 80
- Tydings-MacDuffie Act, 14, 98
- Ukraine, 283
- U.N. (United Nations), 17, 169, 170, 172, 223, 229, 231, 244, 256, 260, 262, 283, 288, 297, 299
- U.N. Assembly, 172, 244
- U.N. Charter, 17, 172, 213, 244, 245
- UNCIO (U.N. Conference on International Organization), 17, 170
- U.N. Committee for Indonesia, 261
- UNESCO (U.N. Economic and Social Council), 277
- U.N. Good Offices Committee (Indonesia), 256-259
- United Kingdom, *see* Britain
- United States, 14, 15, 55, 57, 62-65, 67, 78, 79, 94-107, 116, 124, 125, 128, 130-137, 140, 144, 151, 155, 160, 162-170, 173, 180, 184, 191 n., 195, 217, 232, 236, 242, 251, 253, 256, 259, 262, 265, 274, 277, 293, 295, 296; colonial policy of, 14, 84, 95, 97-105, 231, 232; and the Philippine Republic, 95, 96
- United States Asiatic Fleet, 137
- United States forces, 128, 134, 136, 137, 155, 160-163-167
- United States of Indonesia, 221-224, 240, 242, 255 n., 257, 261, 262
- United States Pacific Fleet, 134 n., 136
- UNRRA (U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), 295
- U.N. Trusteeship Council, 170, 171
- U.S.S.R., *see* Russia
- Van Royen, J. H., 261
- Versailles treaty, 129
- Vichy Government, 133, 159
- Viet Minh (League of Annamite Revolutionaries), 176, 202, 205, 237, 286
- Viet Nam (Annam), 21; Empire of, 143, 159, 176, 177, 237, 238; Republic of, 177, 178, 201-206, 237, 246, 286 n.; agreement between Republic and the French, 203-206, 213
- Villages, villagers, 28, 29, 32, 35, 39, 40, 51, 69, 75, 86-90, 103, 108, 113, 154-156, 176, 199, 200, 220, 233, 253, 269, 270, 276, 278, 282-284, 291
- Volksraad*, 115, 119, 196 n.
- Wang Ching-wei, 149
- Washington, 95, 100, 102, 103, 132, 174, 180, 213 n., 256
- Washington treaties, 129, 130
- Wavell, Sir Archibald, 133 n.
- Wedemeyer, A. C., 173
- Welles, Sumner, 18 n., 167
- West Borneo, 149, 221, 255
- Western democracies, 18, 22, 83, 86, 103, 106, 169, 188, 230-234, 249, 250, 263, 271, 289, 293, 298, 299
- Western influence, 14-16, 18, 20, 22, 43-58, 65, 68-73, 75-80, 250, 282, 292, 298
- West Java, 43, 52, 134, 209, 221, 255
- Wilberforce, 57
- Wilhelmina, Queen, 107, 180
- Willekens, Msgr., 152

- Wingate, 158
Wood, 64, 67, 109, 267
Wood, Leonard, 73, 100
Worcester, Dean C., 102
World War I, 66, 100, 107, 114, 118,
125, 126, 279
World War II, 13, 19, 85, 91, 103,
105, 109, 118, 130, 280
Wulfften Palthe, P. M. van, 140 n.
Xavier, St. Francis, 45
Xuan, 237
Youth and nationalism, 86, 87, 150,
152, 153, 156, 159, 185, 197, 207-
209, 216, 267, 269, 274, 292
Yunnan railroad, 203
Zeeland, Paul van, 256

